



## Financial Services Audit Committee Communication

**Date:** May 26, 2023

**To:** Great Lakes Water Authority Audit Committee

**From:** Matthew S. Lane, MPA, Charges Outreach and Modeling Manager

**Re:** Charges Outreach & Modeling Update

**Background:** The Charges Outreach & Modeling (CO&M) Team was established in Fiscal Year 2023 as part of the Financial Management & Planning Group to facilitate internal communication and external outreach with GLWA Member Partners as it relates to the charge methodology and charge-related financial matters. This team also serves as liaison between GLWA and third-party consultants in the development, maintenance and review of the annual water and sewer charges.

**Analysis:** This month we present an update on activities related to charges initiatives.

### Professional Development/Outreach Activities

1. In early April, I completed the Accounting and Rate Setting course through the Institute of Public Utilities at Michigan State University. I was joined in this three-day class by finance and regulatory staff from utilities and public service commissions from across the country. This was an opportunity for me to network with colleagues from various organizations including water & sewer utilities, electric utilities, railroad commissions, industry regulators and even the Postal Regulatory Commission. Additional CO&M updates include the following:
2. Contributed to the quarterly trade magazine, *Water Works News*, as an active member of the American Water Works Association - Michigan Section Communications Council. In the Spring 2023 Edition published in April, I provided a teaser for a new semi-annual feature article series titled, "*Water Warriors: Teams on the Frontline of Water Quality.*" This series will tell stories of teamwork and problem-solving from utilities across the state, including GLWA. The articles will be featured in the Spring and Fall editions.
3. Participated in an annual leadership retreat as a member of the MI-AWWA Communications Council on Friday, May 12 in East Lansing.
4. Presented on Sewer SHARES 101 presentation at the Charges Work Group meeting on April 25<sup>th</sup>.
5. Attended the Water Analytical Work Group meeting on April 18<sup>th</sup> at UofM Detroit Center.
6. Attended the Wastewater Analytical Task Force virtually on April 20.
7. Honored to participate in the Inaugural GLWA Environmental, Social, & Governance (ESG) Framework Initiative, the Linear System Integrity Program, and newly-formed cross-functional outreach team with an objective of an improved Member Partner database.
8. The position for the Charges Outreach & Modeling Management Professional position was posted. We are currently reviewing resumes.

## **Outreach & Charges Activities**

1. Water Charges Work Group
  - a. This group is made up of Member Partners and staff from GLWA. It was established to review water and sewer charge methodology and to make recommendations regarding potential changes.
  - b. The Water Charges Methodology Review Subgroup is made up of interested volunteer Member Partners and is convened to work closely with GLWA on the technical analysis and provide input on charges scenarios. The Subgroup meets twice per month and reports its findings and updates to the larger Charges Work Group as-needed. We received valuable feedback from Member Partners at-large during the Charges Rollout process that will help guide future discussions for this subgroup.
  - c. The Water Charges Third-Party Rate Consulting firm has provided multiple presentations regarding their work including Member Partner interviews and peer reviews. They presented to the overall Charges Work Group on Tuesday, April 25<sup>th</sup>.
  - d. The most recent in-person meeting of the Water Charges Methodology Review Subgroup was held on May 5, 2023 at the Dearborn Center for the Performing Arts.
  - e. The next in-person Water Charges Methodology Review Subgroup Meeting is scheduled for June 2, 2023 at the UofM Detroit Center.
  
2. Wastewater Charges Work Group
  - a. Wastewater Charges Work Group met on Tuesday, May 9 via Zoom.
  
3. Combined Water and Wastewater Charges

The overall Charges Work Group met Tuesday, April 25, 2023 via Zoom for an update on the work of the Water Charges Methodology Review Subgroup.
  
4. One Water Partnership Meetings
  - a. The most recent OWP was held in-person on March 23, 2023, at the Michigan First Conference Center (The Mint) in Lathrup Village.
  
  - b. The next OWP meeting is on the Outreach schedule for June 22, 2023 with the location to be determined.

**Proposed Action:** Receive and file this report.