



# Newsletter

January & February 2023

## Hartstene Pointe Water-Sewer District

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**Billing Office Hours**  
Mondays: 9:00 am—2:00 pm  
Tuesdays: 9:00 am—2:00 pm  
Thursdays: 9:00 am—2:00 pm

Board of Commissioners meetings are held on the 1st & 3rd Thursdays of the month at 1:00 pm in the District Office, 119 E Liberty Rd. All meetings are open to the public.

*Hartstene Pointe Water-Sewer District is not associated with or governed by the Hartstene Pointe Maintenance Association. Please direct water-sewer service related questions to the District.*

*Hartstene Pointe Water-Sewer District is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

## Where to Properly Dispose of Medications

Medicines that are flushed or poured down the drain end up polluting our waters, impacting aquatic species and contaminating our food & water supplies. Most medicines are not removed by wastewater or septic treatment. Scientists find medicines in surface, ground and marine waters as well as soils and sediments in the PNW. Even at very low levels, medicines in the environment hurt aquatic life. Using a medicine take-back program is a simple, sensible way to reduce the amount of medicines entering the environment. At least three locations in Mason County where you can safely drop off medicine include:

- Mason General Hospital
- Shelton Pharmacy
- Neil's Pharmacy

If you are unable to drop off your medicines for disposal, the WA Dept. of Health offers a mail-in service: <https://doh.wa.gov/you-and-your-family/healthy-home/safe-medication-return>  
As a last resort, dispose in the trash instead of unsafely flushing down the drain.

## Commissioner Seat to Open for Candidates

The District announces an upcoming vacancy on the three-member Board of Commissioners. This is an opportunity to serve your community in a significant and unique way. The Board is tasked with ensuring the overall efficient operation and financial well-being of the District. Position #1 will be on the Mason County General Election ballot in November of this year. This is a six-year term, beginning 1/1/24. Filing to run for the position is open the week of May 15-19. To qualify, a candidate must be a citizen and a registered voter living within the District.

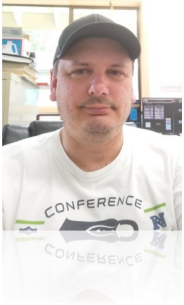
While there are no additional requirements, anyone interested in running for office is encouraged to be familiarized with the roles and responsibilities of a commissioner and to attend some meetings. No one approaches this position with a "work history" as a water-sewer commissioner, so there is much to learn once sworn in! That said, a person familiar with water-sewer systems, budgetary processes, policy-making, or funding procurement may feel more effective more quickly. Principle duties are to establish and carry out *policy* while meeting regulatory requirements; *supervise* the GM; follow laws for record-keeping; and provide *financial accountability* to assure that District revenue covers operations, debt service and reserves.

There is a significant amount of reading in preparation for meetings (including contracts, monthly billing/financial reports, a water utility management handbook, regulatory changes and new policies) and reading that supports a commissioner's efforts to stay on top of the ever-evolving state of the industry. It is of the utmost importance that potential candidates be well-aware of the fact that a major infrastructure replacement project is on the table, as we currently await the results of funding applications.

All interested individuals are encouraged to contact the District Office to express their interest and receive support in the exploration of candidacy. The Board meets for two to three hours on the first and third Thursdays at 1:00 pm. We look forward to new working relationships!

- Stacy Swart, Commissioner #3

## Wastewater Treatment Tours



In December, my wife and I went away for our 34th wedding anniversary. Anytime we travel, I always suggest we tour the local wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). For some strange reason, she always disagrees. I'm sure many of you might feel the same way. Before I ever got into this line of work, I felt that way too. There was absolutely no way I would ever visit one, much less work at one—you couldn't pay me enough! As it turns out, I was wrong. I have been in the wastewater industry for 17 years and have found that I really enjoy it. There is something incredibly satisfying about taking raw sewage and turning it into clean water (just not drinkable).

So, I have to ask: Have you ever stopped and thought about it? I get it, it's gross. But everything that goes down your drains in your home ends up at the WWTP. How is it that all of that comes in, but clean water (effluent) goes out? Why do we include articles in our newsletters about what not to flush down the toilets or drains? Why is there always noise coming from the WWTP? Why do we occasionally have septic trucks down there? Recently, I had two different conversations with people about what happens after things go down the drain.

The Hartstene Pointe WWTP is part of this community. It brings value to your homes. So you have a very good reason to be interested in it. Which brings me back around to tours. I may not be able to interest my wife in a tour, but my offer stands for all of you. If anyone would like to have a tour and answers to the above questions, or any others you may think of, let us know. I understand that it's not possible for everyone to be able to take a physical tour, but we can always do a virtual tour. Even if you'd prefer not to see it, but would like to hear about, I'm always happy to talk about it...just ask my wife!

—Jeff Palmer, General Manager

## Collapsible Water Barrels



There are some great products on the market designed to collect rainwater to store for later use. Many of the options to choose from are surprisingly low in cost and extremely durable. These storage barrels come in many colors and sizes—here at the Pointe, green seems a good fit.






Are you a gardener or plant enthusiast? Do you have a pea patch plot? Rainwater is the best water you can possibly water your plants with. This is because rainwater contains *nitrates*, the form of nitrogen that plants best absorb. Nitrogen is a key micro-nutrient that plants need to thrive.

Stored water can also be used for other purposes, such as washing vehicles or having a supply for emergencies.

Using rainwater in place of drinking water also helps conserve drinking water, something we can never stress enough the importance of.

You can find collection barrels at your favorite home center or online.

## Saving Water in the Kitchen

-  **Use your dishwasher *instead* of washing by hand**  
It may seem counterintuitive, but dishwashers use less hot water in comparison to washing by hand
-  **Wait until the dishwasher has a full load**  
Your dishwasher will use the same amount of water to wash a full load of dishes as it would for just one dish
-  **Just scrape food off dishes, instead of pre-rinsing**  
Dishwashers have improved over the years and pre-rinsing is simply a waste of water, time and effort
-  **Don't leave your kitchen faucet running**  
Combine fruits and vegetables to rinse in a pan or sink with water
-  **Install a low-flow aerator on your faucet**  
Low flow aerators might sound like compromising performance, but most users won't even notice a difference

If you've paid attention to the news lately, you may have heard of "Forever Chemicals" or PFAS. These are chemicals that have been widely used for the past few decades, but now are showing up in places like water supply. Below is a link to Department of Health that will tell you more about it. Some water systems are more vulnerable than others, particularly if near an airport, fire training facility, or military base. Thankfully, HPWSD is not close enough to any of these to cause a problem, but it is still something that the District will be mandated to test for. The District signed up for preliminary testing that was offered at no cost. Even though there shouldn't be any issues with PFAS here, staff wanted to let you know they continue their commitment to providing you safe drinking water.

<https://doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/contaminants/pfas/>