

Wastewater/Equipment Operations Position Request

Dear Board of Trustees,

We are requesting an additional operations staff position be created to make a significant proactive effort at sewer main line maintenance and upkeep. This will allow the district staff to make a noticeable line cleaning and inspection effort over the next few years.

Currently, there are 7 full time operations field positions, with one dedicated full time to the Ashland system. Currently, 3 operators are required to maintain the wastewater treatment facilities, leaving three operators to maintain the collection system. The three operators that care for the collection system are also used to fill in gaps during sick leave, vacation time, and training and professional development time. On average, this only leaves one 2-person line collection crew for a significant percentage of working hours. These crews also perform emergency maintenance, address service calls and are frequently pulled from preventative maintenance activities to address emergency services. This leaves very little time for actual preventative maintenance. This can be remedied by the addition of an 8th field position.

By adding another field position, the field collection crew will be able to split into a pair of two-man crews. The advantage of this arrangement is that most major maintenance activities require two people to perform. By having a pair of crews, one crew will be able to address emergency services and support of the treatment operators. The second crew will then be able to focus primarily on preventative line maintenance and inspection.

Consider the following maintenance activities that require a two-person crew:

- Camera Inspections
- Line Jetting and Cleaning
- Acoustical Line inspections (SL RAT equipment)
- Septic tank Cleaning and Effluent Pump Maintenance
- Lift Station pump pulling via Crane Truck
- Right of Way Clearing activities
- Line Repairs and Dig-ups
- Confined Space Entry activities

We believe this will result in a full-time crew being dedicated to preventative maintenance activities, and this will result in some of the following advantages:

- Performing acoustical testing of the entire BCRSD Gravity network (100 miles) over the course of the next two years. This will provide key data collection for engineering decisions and where best to spend maintenance dollars in the collection system.
- More camera investigations can be conducted and on a regular basis, and documented.
- Repairs of sections of lines that need frequent cleanings.
- Additional maintenance of lift station pumps, prolonging pump life, and minimizing after-hours service calls.

- Additional inspections of septic tank and wet well floats and pumps, which will prolong pump life.
- Provides protection to the district in the event of an unexpected health issue, retirement or departure.
- Provide an additional staff member to the on-call rotation, which will improve staff morale by decreasing on-call commitments for the existing crew.

Additionally, with a relatively new staff this will allow time for proper staff training and professional development. It is critical that time is dedicated so that new operators can obtain the proper CDL certifications, which are required to drive the maintenance equipment needed to perform service activities and on-call services. Safety training hours are also necessary.

There was \$25,000 budgeted to hire temporary summer help, but we believe now is the time to pivot and redirect these resources to a permanent full-time position. Due to staff changes, it is now projected that we will underspend the 2025 personnel budget by approximately \$173,000. A portion of that surplus will be more than adequate to cover another operations position. See the budget projection below.

Current Vs Budget (Salaries/Overtime)	CURRENT 2025 PROJECTION	2025 APPROVED BUDGET
Administrative	\$ 319,245.26	\$ 396,111.91
O&M	\$ 577,395.10	\$ 599,530.60
Project Management	\$ 139,910.93	\$ 213,951.74
Total	\$ 1,036,551.30	\$ 1,209,594.25
PROJECTED BUDGET SURPLUS	\$173,042.95	

Hiring another operations staff position will come with the need to purchase another service vehicle. We are in the process of selling surplus property that is no longer reliable. Current estimates are that a standard service vehicle may be purchased for \$45,000 or less.

By hiring another position, this will have budget implication for the 2026 budget. We presume that either an engineering or executive director position will be advertised and hired in the 4th quarter of 2025 or the 1st quarter of 2026. It is likely that a budget increase in 2026 would be required, but by redirecting the temporary staffing line item, this will be approximately two thirds of a full-time employee.

Now is a key time to make this effort before the existing senior equipment operator retires. We appreciate your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,



Jesse Stephens
Interim Executive Director