

Gull Lake Sewer + Water Authority -- Authority Director announces retirement!

Retiring Director:

Rich Pierson

Incoming Director:

John Crumb



Update: March 2018

The Gull Lake Sewer + Water Authority announces that Director Rich Pierson, age 64, has announced his retirement effective March 28th, 2018, after 33 years of Authority management. Pierson came to the Authority in 1985, 2 years after the public sewers around Gull Lake were constructed. (The public sewer was constructed 1982- 1983, and the Authority purchased their current building in 1984.)

Prior to 1985 he worked for Williams & Works Engineers out of Grand Rapids, and before that, he worked as a utility operator in Youngsville, Pennsylvania, his home town. He moved to Michigan in 1977 to obtain a 2-year Associates Degree in Water Purification from Bay College, Escanaba, Michigan, and upon graduation in 1978, went to work for Williams & Works and then Gun Lake Authority (not Gull).

In 1985 he left Gun Lake and came to Gull Lake Sewer + Water Authority. While working for the Authority, he obtained his MBA from WMU (1987) and has been at the helm of the Gull Lake Sewer & Water Authority for over 30 years.

The GLSWA initially had 998 connections around Gull Lake in Ross, Richland, Barry and Prairieville Townships. These Townships created the Authority, a separate utility enterprise, in 1980 to obtain a federal grant to construct the sewer system. The Authority service district has since expanded to over 2400 connections including Cooper Township, the Village of Richland, and portions of Charleston Township.

Director Pierson believes deeply in customer service and has ingrained that belief within the organization. He believes that the customers, the paying customers, are the true "owners" of the system, and each member of the staff pledges annually to uphold this "Commitment to Excellence", recognizing the sanitary sewer service provided is on behalf of each and every customer.

In 2014, Mr. Pierson was considering retirement when the State of Michigan offered a \$1,000,000 Asset Management Grant for the Authority to develop, over a 3-year period, a detailed 50-year plan to manage, maintain and replace its capital assets. Mr. Pierson agreed to extend his tenure with the Authority through 2017 to guide the Board (Supervisors of each of the 4 Townships) and staff through the Asset Management process.

The Authority will be presenting its recently completed Asset Management Plan to its seven municipalities, detailing the core components of the AMP and the need to continually improve and replace the assets. The Asset Management plan projects annual increases of the sewer use rate of approximately 3.6%, beginning April 1, 2018.

Transition: In the Fall of 2017, the Authority advertised for a replacement Director, and chose John Crumb from the Holland Board of Public Works. Welcome to John Crumb! Mr. Pierson has agreed to remain as a part-time consultant/advisor to Mr. Crumb and the Authority Board through 2018, and an Open House for Pierson is planned for Wednesday afternoon, August 22nd at the Authority offices at 7722 N 37th Street to commemorate his retirement and long service to the Authority and the community.