

Pipeline

A Newsletter of South Walton Utility Co., Inc.

September 2022

SWUCI Annual Members' Meeting

November 17, 2022 at 5:00 p.m.

369 Miramar Beach Drive
Miramar Beach

All members are encouraged to attend. Elections for the SWUCI Board of Directors will be held. The annual audit report will be presented by Warren Averett, LLC.

As a member owned company it is important to be involved with your utility.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

SWUCI News

Water Conservation

How to Nominate a Director

Letter from the President

Be in the know

Meet the SWU Board

Free E-billing & EFT

Locate your meter box and know how to turn off your water before you may need to shut it off for repairs.

Find us on
Facebook &
Twitter



A note from your General Manager

As I reflect on this past year at South Walton Utility, we have tackled so many issues that it absolutely amazed me. Regulatory changes have brought to us new challenges that our utility must implement in the next two years.

First there is lead and copper, asset management, biosolids, sanitary sewer overflows, valve maintenance, back flow preventer testing, aging infrastructure are just a few to name. Next we have Fats, Oils and Grease program, PFAS, this list could go on and on...with these topics there is a cost to each one that will affect you our members and we want you to be aware of their impact to our utility. Each year as we prepare the budget, we must address these costs to make sure that our system remains reliable and viable for the future.

On top of the demands from the government our system is ever-changing with local development, everyone wanting to move to our beautiful beaches. With that comes infrastructure changes, more stringent testing conditions and stricter procedures to run our system. Walton County is implementing new drainage improvements that will increase our need for piping relocations, sewer lateral improvements and waterline adjustments. And with those demands come increased cost of doing business for you, our member. It is our top priority to keep your rates as low as possible but with these projects being passed down to us we must make the hard decision to increase our rates to make sure that we can still provide that reliable service to you our members. You will see the impacts in your November bill as we make the needed changes to sustain our water and sewer systems this coming year and years to come.

We welcome your comments and input on how you can reach out to your local, state and federal government to tackle these items that are coming to us in forms of development projects, new laws and regulations from Tallahassee and Washington, D.C. We encourage you to be informed on these decisions that are affecting your utility.

In closing I want to thank those that come to work every day to supply a service that often goes unnoticed until there is a problem, our employees at South Walton Utility. They are a valuable asset to us, and we appreciate every minute they spend to protect and maintain a safe and reliable water and wastewater system. They are the heart of SWUCI.

Your general manager,
Alicia Keeter



No Water = No Life



Conserve

Water Conservation

SWUCI has a retrofit program in place. We will provide showerheads, faucet aerators, and leak detection tablets to you at no charge. Here are simple ways you can save.

Ask at our office front desk for more information.

****Be sure to Thank your utility workers for their efforts on the frontline, because as long as the water flows and the toilets flush, it's just another day in paradise here at South Walton Utility.****

In just 10 minutes, you can search your home for leaks and crack down on water waste.

Many common household leaks are quick to find and easy to fix.

<https://www.epa.gov/watersense/fix-leak-week-0>

Credit Card Fees

Beginning January 1, 2023 a convenience fee of \$2.00 will be charged per credit or debit card transaction when paying your bill through Paymentus. This will help offset the fees SWU pays to process credit cards.

Make Your Voice Heard

South Walton Utility Company, Inc. (SWUCI) is a member-owned and operated utility that relies on a key group of volunteers to keep the company headed on the right track. As a member of SWUCI, you have the opportunity to help to decide who sits on the Board of Directors.

Members of the Board of Directors are elected to three-year terms. The current Board appoints a nominating committee to recommend candidates for upcoming vacancies. Individual members can also make Board nominations.

Directors and officers receive no compensation for their services.

Proposed Rate Increase

The Board of Directors will consider a 5% increase in water and sewer rates. If approved, members will see the increase in their bill beginning in October.



Fire hydrant maintenance

Water Conservation

- ◆ Check for leaking toilet flappers
- ◆ Retrofit aging plumbing fixtures
- ◆ Adjust toilet fill valves to conserve water
- ◆ Encourage guests to conserve water while on vacation
- ◆ Know where your meter shut off valve is located.
- ◆ Wash full loads of dishes and laundry to conserve water
- ◆ Use Xeriscape Landscaping and keep irrigation use to a minimum.



Employee Toy Drive 2021

Rules for Nominations from the Membership

HOW TO NOMINATE A DIRECTOR

Any member of SWUCI can nominate a candidate for election to the Board of Directors by following these guidelines:

The individual(s) being nominated must be an eligible member of SWUCI.

- To be an eligible member of SWUCI, the individual must have an active account as of the nomination record date of September 16, 2022.
- Once elected to the Board of Directors, an individual can serve on the Board only so long as that individual remains an eligible member of the company.

You must prepare a petition nominating the individual of your choice on which you have presented sufficient information to validate that individual's status as an eligible member of SWUCI. A separate petition is required for each individual being nominated.

- The petition must include the signatures, addresses and account numbers of fifteen (15) eligible members of SWUCI **in addition to the individual being nominated** who are eligible as of the nomination record date of September 16, 2022.

You must provide a short (one page) biography of the individual being nominated which specifically sets forth the qualifications you feel this individual possesses which will make him/her an asset to SWUCI and its members by serving on the Board of Directors. Please keep in mind that this individual, if elected, will be expected to attend the monthly Board meetings, the Annual Member meetings and any special meetings as properly called.

All of this information must be delivered to SWUCI by mail or delivery to the Administrative Offices of SWUCI, 369 Miramar Beach Drive, Miramar Beach, FL 32550-4938.

This information must be received **no later than 4:30 p.m., on September 30, 2022.**

- This time frame is required to permit the individual's name and biography to be included on the printed ballot that will be mailed to all members.
- Petitions received after that date cannot be accepted and will not be considered.

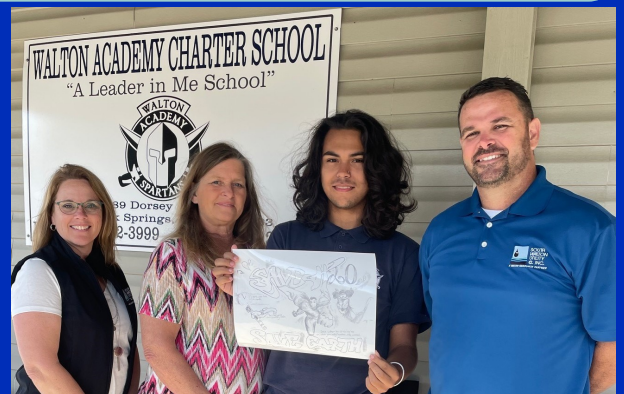
Nominations for Directors will not be accepted from the floor at the Annual Meeting.

FOG - Fats, Oils and Grease

Remember to drain your fats oils and grease and place in a disposable container and dispose of properly, not pour them down your sink. Over time this creates clogs in your sewer lateral that will back up into your home and create costly plumbing repairs.

Flushable doesn't mean it is biodegradable.

Products labeled as "flushable" such as baby wipes, paper towels and diapers do not break down in the collection system and creates clogs in our pumping equipment and cause sewer overflows. We encourage you to throw these items in the trash.



Drop Savers Winner 2022

A Letter from the SWU Board President



South Walton Utility began serving this area in 1968 with only 100 members. Our service area has grown to 10,777 members in 2022. Our goal has not changed in over 50 years: To serve our members by providing the highest quality water and sewer services.

The training program for our employees is second to none. They are specifically trained for their position and then cross trained in other areas to make sure every possible scenario is covered. This again, is to make sure our members get the best quality and service possible. In a time of workforce shortage our staff remain loyal to SWUCI and it shows by our low turnover rates. Some of our employees have served for over 25 years. We are so thankful to have some of the best in the business!

South Walton Utility has received various awards this year for our water quality and sewer processing system. Our system was awarded the Best Tasting Drinking water for FSAWWA Region IX and the FDEP Water Treatment Plant of the Year for the State of Florida for medium size water systems. We are proud of all their accomplishments and say THANK YOU for a job well done!

2022 has seen many improvements to the existing water and sewer lines, including increasing the size of the lines for the larger volume needed for new developments in our community, upgrading aging equipment at our wastewater treatment plant to prevent sewer overflows and meter system upgrades to ensure more accurate billing. All our 13 wells are being upgraded periodically to provide our members with the quantity and quality of water needed. Our team does a lot with the resources provided to keep the water flowing.

We cannot forget the staff at the front desk, lab techs, managers, and accounting staff that are amazing at their jobs as well. They have handled this past year's growth in a remarkable way. They put forth great effort to make sure you have the best service possible.

All 7 board members are invested in our community and committed to service in keeping the utility operating in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible. In this ever-changing environment of short supplies, new regulations, and increase in demand, we will always have our member's best interest in mind.

Thank you for allowing me to serve our community by being a part of the South Walton Utility organization.

Mike Richardson, President



**EVERY
DROP
COUNTS**



**DRINKING
WATER
WEEK**

**MAY 7-13,
2023**

AWWA.ORG



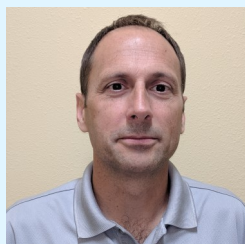
Best tasting drinking water Region IX

FDEP water treatment plant of the year award

Meet your SWUCI Board of Directors:



**Vice President
Dave Brown**



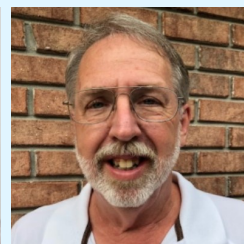
**Secretary
Steve Dixon**



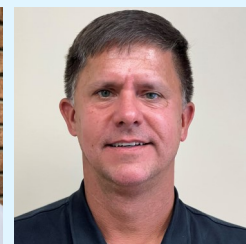
**Treasurer
Dewayne Youngblood**



**Director
Dustin Terry**



**Director
Mike Abt**



**Director
David Smith**



South Walton Utility
Co., Inc.

369 Miramar Beach Dr.
Miramar Beach, FL 32550

Presorted First Class
US POSTAGE PAID
Fort Walton Beach, FL
Permit No. 182



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

E-Billing & Electronic Funds Transfer

South Walton Utility offers **two free services** to our members to help you make payments fast and easy:
E-Billing and Automatic Draft.

E-Billing allows you to receive your bill each month by email. This is an excellent way to receive your bill fast, especially if you live out of town. Send an email to admin@swuci.org to request this free service.

Automatic Draft is a hassle-free way to pay your bill on time each month. Your bank account will draft on the first business day of each month. To sign up for this free service, complete and return the attached form or download the form off our website

www.swuci.org

SWUCI Lab



AUTHORIZATION FOR ELECTRONIC TRANSFER OF FUNDS

South Walton Utility Co. Inc.
369 Miramar Beach Drive, Miramar Beach, FL 32550
Phone: (850) 837-2988; Fax (850) 837-7648

Customer Name _____

SWUCI Customer Numbers:

Please deduct payments from my:

☐ Checking Account

☐ Saving Account

South Walton Utility Company, Inc. is hereby authorized to process an electronic debit from the Account described above once a month in the amount of my monthly water/sewer bill.

Signature _____

Date _____

Please be sure to include a voided check for bank account verification, and mail together with this completed form to:

South Walton Utility Co., Inc.
369 Miramar Beach Drive
Miramar Beach, FL 32550

Do we have your current
email address and phone
number?
Please update your contact
info for up to date
information from our office.

Visit our website <https://swuci.org/>

Review your account, pay your bill, find forms for new service, read important news bulletins, water saving tips and view our annual water quality report. We also post advisories, holiday hours, financial statements plus much more.