

What's Happening With Our Water System

Rep. Jason Shoaf plans to introduce a local bill that would create a new government entity called the Apalachicola Water and Sewer District. A “local bill” is a law written specifically for one community or area.

This bill would open the door for the City of Apalachicola to hand over the entire water and sewer system—the staff, equipment, property, money, and debt—to this new district. That means the system would no longer be controlled by the people of Apalachicola or by the City Commission you elected. Supporters of the bill say it could be the first step toward combining water systems across the region.

It's true that our water system has had problems in the past, including aging infrastructure and possible mismanagement. But under our current City Manager, Chuck Anderson, the system has been improving. In fact, we have met all state water-quality standards for the past several months, and we are in the process of recruiting a public works director to oversee the entire system.

Rep. Shoaf and Sen. Corey Simon have visited Apalachicola three times this past year:

- Visit 1: June 25, 2025, the elected officials hosted a town hall where residents shared concerns and ideas.
- Visit 2: August 21, 2025, a local delegation meeting with a short introduction to a local bill expanding the boundary of the Eastpoint Water District to include Apalachicola, followed by both officials voting to move the bill forward.
- Visit 3: December 16, 2025, a local delegation meeting where Rep. Shoaf presented a new concept creating an Apalachicola Independent Water District, instead of joining with Eastpoint. A tense meeting followed with city commissioners and residents asking for a delay in filing, or for the bill to be withdrawn. Despite this, the representatives again voted to keep the bill moving.

You can find the draft bill, City Attorney memos, meeting videos, and a partial transcript of the December 16 meeting on the City of Apalachicola website under Agendas and Meetings. If you haven't been able to attend meetings, these documents are a good place to start.

What This Means for You as a Water Customer

The Water System Belongs to the People of Apalachicola

- The water system has been paid for over the years by the customers and city taxpayers. It belongs to the City of Apalachicola.
- The water system consists of real property and personal property. All of the real estate, structures and equipment was paid for by citizens and rate payers.
- The City Commission has a statutory obligation to review the terms of any transfer and provide a report supporting or objecting to any sale or transfer of the system.

A Special District Takes Control Away From Local Residents

- The majority of the district's board would be appointed by the Governor—not elected by you.
 - Customers would have no power to remove a majority of the board members.
 - The district can only raise money through your water bill and sewer bill
 - Once the city loses control of the utility, it is very unlikely we would ever get it back.
 - The District would be utilizing the same water, equipment and processes as we use now, just under a different management and reporting system.
 - The District will operate with no greater oversight requirements than the under the City Commission (Sunshine Laws, audits).
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Your Voice Matters

- We want to make sure everyone understands the process and the long-term consequences for Apalachicola as this bill moves forward.
- Rep. Shoaf has said he will notify us when the bill is scheduled for committee hearings in Tallahassee. Residents will be allowed to speak at those hearings, and we will share the dates as soon as we receive them.
- If you need more information before forming an opinion, talk with the City Manager, City Commissioners, and your neighbors.
- If you already know how you feel, you can call or write Rep. Shoaf's office at **850-717-5007** or **850-295-5680** (Jason.Shoaf@FLHouse.gov) and share your views.