Straight Talk about Water

Ins and outs of your water supply

What Is and Who Are the VDE ?

- The VDE is a Municipal Overlay District which serves portions of three towns and is completely independent of the ECA.
- It provides drinking water to more than 1,360 Eastman properties and wastewater service to 535 homes.
- Three elected Commissioners are the equivalent of a Town's Board of Selectmen.
- Other elected officers are the Treasurer, Clerk, and Moderator.
- All officers are volunteers who are not compensated.

What Is and Who Are the VDE ?

- In other words, the VDE is your Municipal Water and Wastewater Utility
- It is not a company or a corporation that earns a profit
- All revenues come from VDE's Drinking Water and Wastewater customers
- Any "net income" that is achieved at the end of an operating year is "rolled over" into the succeeding years' budgets
- Commissioners are keenly aware that VDE's customers and ECA's owners are the same people and bills paid to VDE and ECA "come from the same pockets"

Pros and Cons of VDE as a Municipality?

- The power to tax
- Access to low-interest “Municipal Bond Bank” financing
- Municipal budgeting procedures overseen by State of NH DRA
- Customer confusion over who to contact & responsibility
- All elected officials must be registered as voters within the Eastman Community boundaries
- ECA Board members are only required to be “owners” but not registered voters

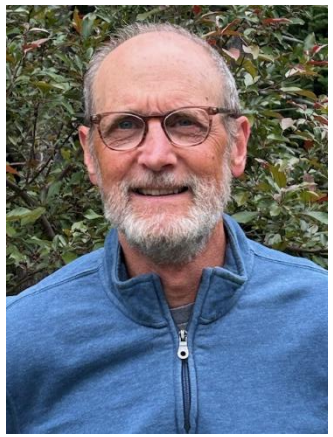
Terry Large
Commission Chair

Brad Moses
Commissioner

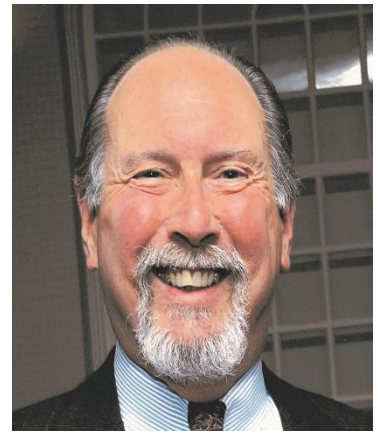
John Tomasz
Commissioner

2026 VDE Elected Officials

Bill Weeks
Clerk



Bill Samuels
Treasurer



David Cole
Moderator

2026 VDE Staff

Amy Lewis
General Manager

Sherrill Zani
Executive Assistant

Josh Ruel
Lead Operator

Seeking a third operator to replace a retired employee

TBD Operator

Steven Chervincky
Operator

Where does my water come from?

The VDE is a groundwater treatment plant, meaning that all water supplied to the system comes from underground aquifers. We do not pull water from Eastman Lake.

We have six permanent wells that provide water to the community. Five of these wells are overburden wells, which means that they are shallow enough to use subsurface sand and gravel as a natural filter when the well pumps are running. The sixth well is a deep bedrock well, drilled to approximately 1400 feet below surface.

In 2024 we began construction on a supplemental well site off Glenwood Road. This new source is expected to go online by the end of 2026.

How is our water made safe for use?

We have sophisticated treatment methods to ensure the potability of our water. Raw water, or untreated source water, flows into greensand+ filters where iron, manganese, and other organics are removed, and chlorine disinfection occurs as the filtered water is pumped out of the plant to the distribution system and storage tanks. Water quality is checked daily in our lab at the treatment plant, and water sampling for various components is done on schedule through NHDES.

Is treatment an easy process?

It is not. VDE staff are certified water system operators by NHDES and are trained to work with the chemicals involved in water treatment, and the process in which to apply them. Chemical dosing is based on raw water flow and will change with any adjustment to well pump speed.

What's up with the water main breaks?

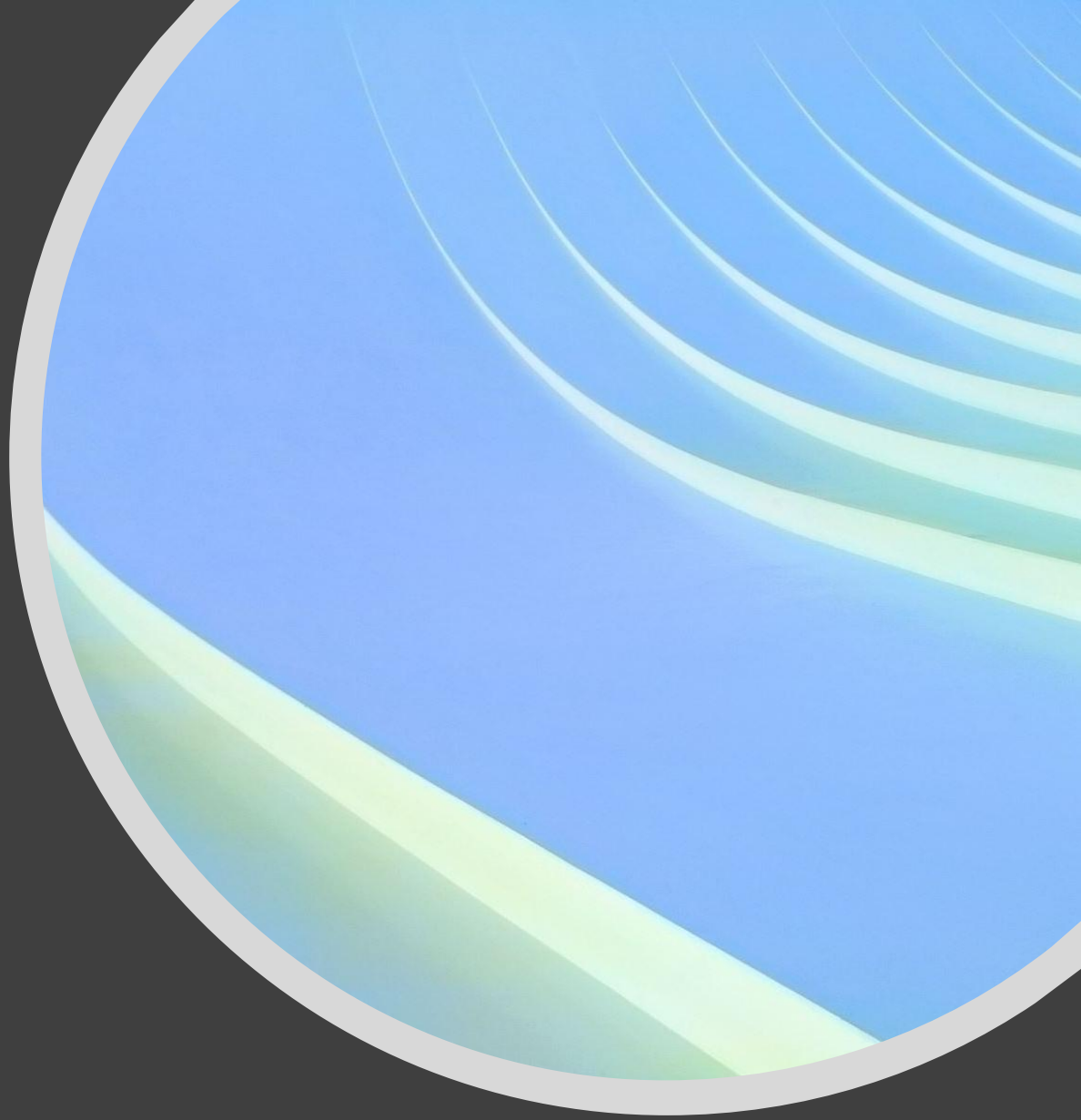
Age, pressure, and poor fill material.

Our water system is over 50 years old. At the time it was built, there were different standards for materials used in this type of infrastructure. Advances in the technology have brought us fittings and pipes that are stronger and more durable, but that doesn't help what is already in the ground. We have over 48 miles of water line – close to 220,000 linear feet. We have developed Asset Management Plans to use with capital expense forecasting to strategize the replacement of the water mains in the community.

How does lead and copper get into drinking water?

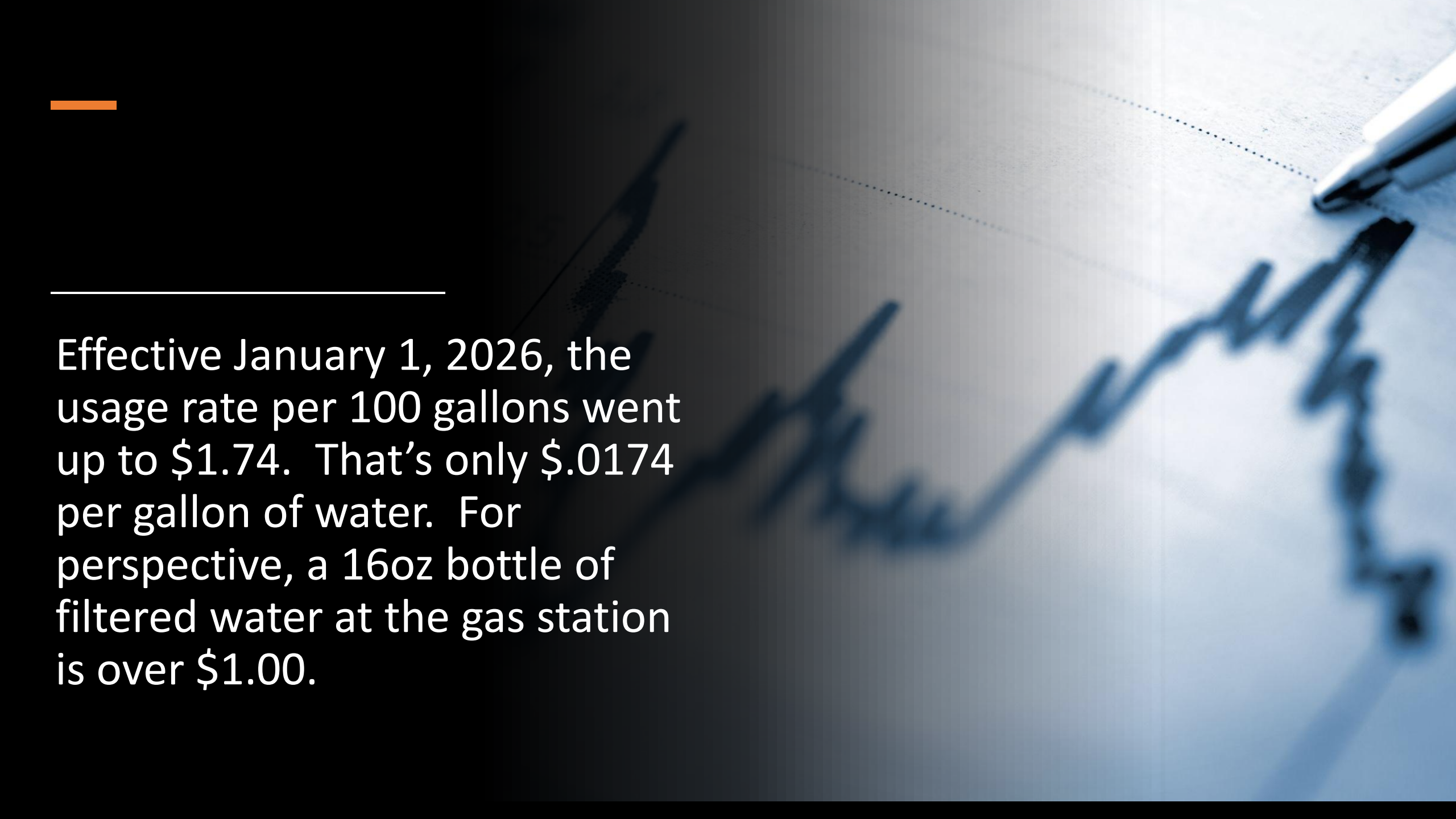
Lead and copper are minerals that can leach out of brass and/or copper lines and fittings in a consumer's home. Older homes may have copper fittings and lines joined by lead-based solder. Water, as a universal solvent, can gradually wear at the inside of pipes which releases bits of material as sedimentation. We keep the pH of our finished water at neutral, 6.8-7.2, which helps mitigate corrosion.

If you haven't already identified your service line material, please contact us.



Meter Upgrades!

- We are moving from manual-read meters to units that will record usage and provide that information through a cellular network. Upgrading older meters to the new Beacon meters also provides each homeowner access to an account that shows usage trends. Homeowners can set alerts for high usage, and see monthly, weekly, daily, and even to-the-minute usage.
- Upgrading the meters also reduces the amount of estimation the VDE office must do for each quarterly billing cycle. Please contact the VDE for more info, and/or to schedule an installation - no charge!



Effective January 1, 2026, the usage rate per 100 gallons went up to $1.74. That’s only $.0174 per gallon of water. For perspective, a 16oz bottle of filtered water at the gas station is over $1.00.

Why can’t the VDE find my service line?

Always call DigSafe (811) before digging in your yard!

DigSafe will mark all utilities with the exception of your water line. Unfortunately, the VDE can’t mark your water line either. Your curb valve will be painted or flagged, but because the VDE did not install the service lines past the curb valve, we have very limited records on where individual lines actually are. Service lines should be buried at least 4’ below the surface, but that may not always be the case.

Is there Fluoride in the water?

Fluoride occurs naturally in our deep bedrock well, so we do not fluoridate the finished water. The most recent measurement is .59mg/L. EPA provides a standard maximum level of 2.0mg/L of fluoride in drinking water.

Why is there occasionally a high chlorine smell or taste to my water?

- This could be a result of a few different things. Fresh chlorine will be stronger than “old” chlorine, so when a chemical delivery is made and the new chlorine is mixed with the old, there is a balancing process to go through to get the dosing correct with the stronger chemical. Water main flushing will re-chlorinate lightly populated areas, so seasonal flushing can bring a heightened awareness of the chemical. Backwashing, the process of cleaning the treatment filters, can also increase the chlorine output once the cleansing is complete.
- The maximum contaminant level (MCL) of chlorine per the EPA is 4.0mg/L. Our finished water chlorine residuals range from .8mg/L to 1.6mg/L.

Explain backwashing please…

Backwashing is the process that cleans the filter media. When the water plant is running, source water is pumped into the plant and flows down through the filters. The filters are layered with greensand, anthracite, and gravel to remove iron & manganese, and other potential contaminants. Filtered water then flows out the bottom of the filters, is disinfected with chlorine, and sent out into the distribution system. The filter media needs to be cleaned every few days to remove accumulated iron & manganese, so backwashing is a term that describes the process of pulling finished water back into the plant and up through the filters to clean and “fluff” the media.

What chemicals are added to the water for treatment?

Sodium hydroxide, or caustic, is added to the raw water when all sources are blended together before filtration. Caustic helps with pH adjustment. The filters are optimized at a pH between 6.5 and 8.0, so the pH of our water is kept between 6.8 and 7.2, or neutral.

Sodium permanganate is injected into the raw water just before filtration. The primary purpose of this chemical is to remove iron and manganese, although it can be used as a disinfectant in other applications.

Sodium hypochlorite (chlorine) is the disinfectant used post-filtration. Chlorine can be in gas or liquid form; we use liquid chlorine because it is much safer to handle than the gas.

Change in After Hours Contact Information

EFFECTIVE JULY 15:

- Eliminate use of ECA Security interface during “after hours”
- VDE contracting with utility-experienced call center for after hours issue triage and forwarding to VDE on-call operator or management
- If customers have a VDE water or wastewater emergency, question, or concern, call
  - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, **603-863-6512**
  - Office Business Hours
    - Monday-Thursday 8am to 4pm, Friday 8am to noon