



Upper Moreland - Hatboro Joint Sewer Authority

News

Spring/Summer - 2022

The Authority publishes this newsletter to keep its service area customers up to date on important activities and to provide helpful tips.

MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER – The Authority acknowledges that our economy is recovering, but inflation is a major concern, currently running over 7%. It impacts the Authority in its purchase of gasoline, equipment, chemicals, and other operational items. Although the Authority does everything we can to control costs, we did institute a rate increase of 4% on water use fees in January. **This is the first-rate increase for flow since 2016** and we do not anticipate a rate increase next year. For a minimum user ($\leq 5,000$ gallons per quarter), this comes to less than \$0.50 per month increase.

This year's operating budget is \$7,421,100 and the capital improvement budget is \$4,657,500. Significant capital projects have occurred recently and will continue through next year to achieve Reliability, Redundancy, and Resilience in our operations, mostly through updating and rehabilitating our sewer infrastructure. The major capital projects that either have been completed, are ongoing, or are scheduled for next year include:

- Installing an emergency bypass pump station to allow work to be performed on the main influent pump house (MPH) and improve pumping capabilities during excessive wet weather (high flows).

- Upgrading the pumping, instrumentation, electrical, and HVAC systems of the MPH, replacing 30-year-old equipment and insuring its reliability.
- Upgrading our odor control systems.
- Replacing and upgrading the 30-year-old thickeners that perform initial dewatering of the waste from approximately 0.5% to 6% solids.
- Replace and upgrade the dewatering press system that takes the thickened solids from 6% to 25-30% prior to incineration of the solids at $\geq 1,300^{\circ}\text{F}$.
- Lining 15.4 miles of our 125 miles of sewer main to regain integrity against leaks and tree root penetration, and prolong the life of our sewer main. Lining of the pipes also eliminates the need to open cut the roads.
- Fortifying our plant to protect against flooding due to the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events.

Because we operate 24/7/365, all of our modifications/improvements must be performed while the plant is still treating the wastewater. In 2021, the Authority treated over 2,116,000,000 gallons of wastewater, an average of around 5,800,000 per day. Our dedicated staff continues to do an excellent job meeting our permit requirements.

Of our 44 employees, four have worked for the Authority for more than 40 years this year and another five employees have worked here for over 35 years – 20% of our employees have over 35 years of experience.

SEWER BILL PAYMENTS - Our Administration Office hours are Monday through Friday, 7:00 AM to 3:30 PM. Payments may be put in the office mail slot after hours using checks/money orders. Online payments are available by credit/debit card, or from your bank account, through UMHJSA.MyGovHub.com. Remember that there is a 2% transaction fee when paying by either credit or debit card, which offsets approximately half of the fees charged to the Authority. Our website (www.umhjsa.org) has an online tutorial that guides you through the payment process. Note that your quarterly sewer bills reflect water use during the previous 2 to 5 months.

Do not pay your bill on DOXO.COM, which comes up when you perform a web search for UMHJSA. This for profit, non-approved vendor will delay your payment and charge you additional fees.

Online Payment - We appreciate those customers that are using our e-commerce bill paying system, which allows you to receive your bills online and pay your bills electronically by either credit/debit card or check through your bank on our UMHJSA.MyGovHub.com portal. You can also monitor your account online. If you are interested in the convenience of receiving your bill by email, please visit our website and use the ecommerce tab.

SEWER BACKING UP? If your sewer is backing up, call us before you call a plumber. We will evaluate where the problem is for free and advise you what should be done. Call 215-659-1462.

Sewer Backup Insurance - It is the property owner's responsibility to maintain the lateral (the pipe that connects your property to our collection system in the street) and safely remove tree roots and other blockages.

Most home insurance policies do not cover sewer backups. We strongly recommend that you contact your insurance agent to discuss adding a sewer backup rider to your property's insurance policy. **This insurance is particularly important if you have a fixture such as a toilet in the basement.** In the event of a sewer backup, a sewer backup rider may mitigate the costs of cleanup and replacement of furnishings.

If your home does not have a cleanout, it is recommended that you install a two-way cleanout on your lateral. The cleanout will allow you to remove blockages and maintain your sewer lateral towards both your home and the main sewer. Tree roots are a continual problem in any sewer system. Roots in a customer's lateral are the responsibility of the homeowner. Please review our policy at UMHJSA.ORG/FAQ.

KEEP WIPES OUT OF PIPES - Adult or baby wipes, along with paper towels and other material, are not designed to be processed by the sewer system. Even though they say "flushable," they impair the proper functioning of the sewer system (unlike toilet paper). These are common causes of sewer backups, especially when they combine with grease and/or tree roots in your lateral. The wipes can get stuck in the lateral or sewer main, resulting in hundreds of dollars in repairs. Even if they do not get stuck in the pipes, they cause problems with our removal and disposal of these products. Your fellow ratepayers will appreciate it if you move from a "flush it and forget it" to a "toss them, don't flush them" mindset. It is recommended that you discard these wipes with your regular trash and do not flush them down the toilet.

Other Items Not to Flush Down the Toilet As with "flushable" wipes, the sewer system is not a magic way to get rid of all your waste. Some material can be toxic to our biological treatment plant resulting in upsets or cannot

be treated before they are discharged into the Pennypack Creek. A general rule of thumb is "if it doesn't come out of you, it doesn't belong in the loo." Only flush the three "Ps" down the toilet: **Pee, Poop** and (toilet) **Paper**.

HOW TO DEAL WITH FOG – Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) can result in significant plumbing problems for homeowners. Pipes collect all kinds of debris such as soap scum, hair, and greasy cooking substances that build up over time and can clog pipes.

It is recommended that you:

- Scrape It – Wipe FOG and food scrapes from plates and pans.
- Can It – Pour FOG into a container.
- Cool It – Allow FOG to cool and solidify (better than solidifying in your pipes).
- Trash It – Dispose of FOG properly with your trash.

TO GRIND OR NOT TO GRIND – Not using your kitchen's garbage disposal can help the environment. While a common modern-day convenience, in-sink household garbage disposals send high concentrations of organic material to the treatment plant and are not the greenest way to dispose of food waste (organics). Grinding food in a garbage disposal adds more solid waste to the incoming load at the wastewater treatment plant. The amount of energy and other resources used to process food waste disposed in the kitchen sink increases the amount of water, chemicals and energy needed to treat the wastewater.

Households can contribute to the efficiency of the waste management system by composting. Conscientious consumers should consider the "greener" solution and most environmentally sound method for disposing of food waste by bypassing the garbage disposal in favor of composting - all-

natural recycling. The practice saves water, reuses nutrients, protects water quality, eases pressure on landfills by keeping organic material out of landfill where methane (a global warming gas) is released, reduces the burden on the wastewater treatment system, and turns kitchen food waste into a useful product that can enrich soil and promote the growth of houseplants, trees, lawns, flowers and vegetable gardens. Ultimately, the wastewater treatment system is not an environmentally sound substitute for the trash can or a compost pile.

IMPACT OF TROPICAL STORM IDA – On September 1st and 2nd, approximately 7 inches of rain fell in the area, overwhelming our collection system. Instantaneous flows increased from approximately 5 million gallons per day (MGD) to a peak of 32 MGD. Both the Pennypack Creek and its tributaries rose above their banks, resulting in up to 4 feet of water inside our plant, but it fortunately did not overflow our tanks. Dedicatedww plant personnel stayed through the night and maintained continuous treatment.

The Authority is currently working towards a FEMA Public Assistance grant to offset costs for materials destroyed during the flooding, address issues that occurred during the flooding, and fortify plant operations to improve resiliency against future events.

SAVE TWICE BY CONSERVING WATER – You can easily save twice by consuming less. You can save on your water bill and sewer bill by installing water flow restrictors on faucets and shower heads. The local hardware store sells these devices. Also, only wash full loads in your dish and clothes washer. Remember that water is a finite resource and we must take care of what we have, as there is no more to replace it!

LEAKS - Toilets are a major source of undetected leaks. To check if your toilet is leaking, especially if you hear the water running from the toilet when not being used:

- Squeeze about 10 drops of non-staining food coloring into your toilet tank.
- Wait about 30 minutes.
- Then check your toilet bowl (not the tank). If you see the color dye in the bowl, you have a leak that should be fixed.

DEALING WITH WET WEATER – PADEP performed an inspection on April 8, 2022, right after a storm event that dumped over 3.25 inches of rain over our collection area. Our staff again did an excellent job of managing the high flows as noted by the PADEP inspector:

This facility is operating extremely well . . . The plant dealt with the wet weather extremely well, producing clear effluent the entire time and well within permit limits. The plant was operated very efficiently and prevented all potential issues related to wet weather. This plant is in full compliance throughout the calendar year and is a model facility for compliance with their NPDES permit and exceptional operation.

LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLD WATER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHWAP) –

The federal Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 and American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 provide funding for the Pennsylvania Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP). Households that meet financial guidelines may be eligible for assistance in paying their water and sewer bills. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania administers LIHWAP. **The Authority is not involved in its operation or determining eligibility.** Please visit our web site for additional information and an application to send to the Commonwealth.

Additional information can be located at:
www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Assistance/Pages/LIHWAP

The Authority has six members of its Board of Directors – three from both Hatboro and Upper Moreland. The current Members are:

Alex Kalnajs, Chairman
Hank Sokolowski, Vice Chairman
Bill Tompkins, Secretary
George Hartman, III, Treasurer
Dave Kistner, Asst. Treasurer
Suzanne Dougherty, Asst. Secretary