



# Upper Moreland - Hatboro Joint Sewer Authority

*News*

Spring 2025

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

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**MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER** – Since 2016, when the Commonwealth made it easier for private, for-profit companies to purchase public, not-for-profit water and wastewater authorities, many authorities in the State have been bought. The purchasing company works for their shareholders and not the public. Therefore, the overriding common feature of these purchases is the local ratepayers pay more for their water and sewer services than what they would pay had it remained a public entity. Rates in some cases have increased by over 50% in a few years.

The Authority is committed to providing value to our ratepayers and keeping the Authority as a not-for-profit public sewage treatment service. This status has allowed us to only raise rates a modest (4%) in January 2022 and July 2024, despite the much greater recent inflation. **Based on our projections, there will be no rate increase in 2025.** This is consistent with our mission to provide our ratepayers with cost-effective wastewater treatment and to be good stewards of your money.

This fiscal year's operating budget is \$8,512,200 and the budget for capital improvements is \$4,174,200. Some

significant capital projects have recently been finalized to achieve the desired Reliability, Redundancy, and Resilience in our operations. The major capital projects that have just been completed, are ongoing, or are scheduled within the next year include:

- Upgraded our grit channels that remove grit (e.g., stones, coffee grounds) and large debris (e.g., flushable wipes, rags).
- Replacement of our old dewatering press with one that will be more efficient, require less maintenance/repair, and greatly reduce overall energy costs.
- Lined an additional 3,183 feet of sewer main in 2024 to regain integrity against leaks and tree root penetration, as well as prolong the life of our sewer main. The Authority has lined over 17.2 miles of our 125 miles of sewer main since 2009.
- Modify our primary settling tanks and replace worn out components.
- Upgraded our primary effluent pump station and return activated sludge system with new pumps and electrical control equipment.
- Designed a replacement ultraviolet (UV) disinfection system to mitigate the discharge of harmful organisms into the Pennypack Creek and reduce energy costs.
- Upgrade various electrical systems to replace systems that are past their useful life and improve operational efficiency.
- Upgraded our plant security systems.
- Placed large stones known as riprap on a tributary of the Pennypack Creek to

stabilize the stream bank and protect our collection system.

Because we operate 24/7 every day of the year, all our modifications/improvements must be performed while the plant is still treating the wastewater. In 2024, the Authority treated over 2,109,509,000 gallons of wastewater, an average of around 5,779,000 gallons per day. Our dedicated staff continues to do an excellent job meeting our permit requirements.

During extreme weather events, flow through our plant can increase dramatically (over quadruple) due to groundwater infiltration, surface water inflow, leaking laterals, etc. Another source is illegal sump pump connections that pump water from basements into our collection system, where this flow exacerbates the high-flow situation. **It is illegal to discharge sump pumps into the sanitary sewer.**

Electrical costs in this energy-intensive industry are a major budget item and the Authority has taken strides to reduce our carbon footprint in a cost-effective way. We recently underwent a major energy audit and will implement many of the recommendations to further reduce our energy consumption.

**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](http://UMHJSA.MyGovHub.com) or by scanning the QR code in this newsletter. Payment can also be made by check through your bank with no fee. Our website ([www.umhjsa.org](http://www.umhjsa.org)) has online instructions that guide you through the payment process. **If you are interested in the convenience of**

**receiving your bill by email, please visit our website and use the Billing & Payments tab.** Remember that there is a 2% transaction fee when paying by either credit or debit card, which offsets approximately half of the credit card fees charged to the Authority.

Note that your quarterly sewer bills reflect water use during the previous 2 to 5 months. Our billing vendor has provided a feature that now allows customers to automate their sewer bill payment. Please visit [www.umhjsa.org](http://www.umhjsa.org) - Billing & Payments tab to read the instructions on how to set up your account for autopay.

**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.**

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**ASSISTANCE WITH SEWER BILLS** – The Pennsylvania Homeowner Assistance Fund (PAHAF) administers a fund that supports homeowners in the Commonwealth who were financially impacted due to the pandemic. This program can assist qualified homeowners for delinquencies on your mortgage and utility bills. The Authority is not involved in the operation of this fund and does not determine eligibility. We do encourage homeowners who are having financial difficulty and are behind on their sewer bill to visit our website for additional information and to obtain an application to send to the PAHAF. Additional information can be found at: [www.pahaf.org](http://www.pahaf.org)

**SEWER BACKING UP?** If your sewer is backing up, call us before you call a plumber. We will evaluate if the sewer main is causing the problem 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 main 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 in the basement, such as a toilet.** In the event of a sewer backup, a sewer backup rider may mitigate the costs of cleanup and replacement of furnishings.

**Cleanouts** – Please check your lateral (sewer pipe connecting your property to our collection system pipes) for open cleanouts, which are a source of unwanted storm water during heavy rain events. If you need a cap, we will help you get one installed – just call us at 215-659-1462. If you do not have a cleanout or are considering having one installed, a two-way cleanout near the curb can facilitate removing blockages in the future. Details of the cleanout can be found on our website under FAQ.

**Flushable Wipes** - Please remember to “Keep the Wipes Out of the Pipes,” even though they say "flushable." 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 magical way to get rid of all your waste. Some material (pesticides, for example) may be toxic to our biological treatment plant, resulting in plant upsets. Some products, such as medications, cannot be treated before they are discharged into the

Pennypack Creek and should be tossed in the trash or other proper disposal method. 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**.

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**HOW TO DEAL WITH FOG** –Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) are found in common foods and food ingredients such as meat, butter, cooking oil, sauces, mayonnaise, and food scraps. If not managed properly, FOG solidifies and sticks to the sides of your kitchen drains and sewer pipes. The most common accumulation comes from your daily dishwashing process. Over time, FOG buildup can plug pipes and cause sewer backups in your home or business, resulting in costly repairs and maintenance. It also reduces the efficiency and effectiveness of our treatment process.

Here are a few simple steps you can follow at home to help prevent sewer backups: Pour cooled fats, oils and grease into a covered, disposable container and toss it in the garbage. NEVER pour fats, oils or grease down sink drains or toilets. Put the FOG monster on a fat-free diet. **Cool it, contain it, and trash it.**

Soak up the remaining fats, oils and grease with a paper towel and dispose of it in your garbage. Before you wash dishes, scrape food scraps from your plates, pots, and pans into your trash. Remember, FOG aren't just bad for your waistline and arteries, they are bad for the sewer too.

**Grease Trap Inspections** – The Authority has experienced significant problems with excess FOG in the sewer main that have resulted in sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) into nearby water ways and requiring expensive cleanups. Due to this problem, the Authority anticipates conducting random

inspections or disposal documentation reviews of commercial properties that have grease traps to make sure they are properly maintained and not causing excess FOG to enter our collection system.

**GARBAGE DISPOSALS** – Garbage disposals are not the greenest way to dispose of food waste. These organics can put additional energy and chemical demands on our plant. Please consider composting most of your food waste, which has the added benefit of making excellent topsoil for around your house.

**SAVE TWICE BY CONSERVING WATER** – You can easily save twice by consuming less water. You can save on your water bill and sewer bill by installing water flow restrictors on faucets and shower heads. These devices are available at your local hardware store. Other water saving ideas include inspecting your fixtures for leaks and drip, taking shorter showers, and using the dishwasher instead of hand washing your dishes. Also, try to wash only full loads in your clothes washer and dishwasher.

**The Authority Board of Directors** – There are three Board Members from both Hatboro and Upper Moreland. The Authority appreciates their dedicated service to the community. The current Board Members are:

Bill Tompkins (HAT), Chairman  
George Hartman, III (UMT), Vice Chairman  
Suzanne Dougherty (HAT), Secretary  
Dave Kistner (UMT), Treasurer  
Bill Rollin (HAT), Asst. Secretary  
Kent Nelson (UMT), Asst. Treasurer

**SAVE A TRIP!  
TIME!  
US IN YOUR FAVORITES!**



**USING YOUR CELL PHONE, SCAN THE QR CODE  
TO QUICKLY AND EASILY PAY YOUR SEWER BILL!**