

# WATER & SEWER INFORMATION SESSION AND PUBLIC HEARING

*MAYOR KATJANA BALLANTYNE*

**MAY 15, 2023**

**Demetrios G. Vidalis P.E., SHEP**

Director of Water & Sewer  
Water & Sewer Department

**Stephen C. Haynes II**

Director of Finance & Admin.  
Water & Sewer Department



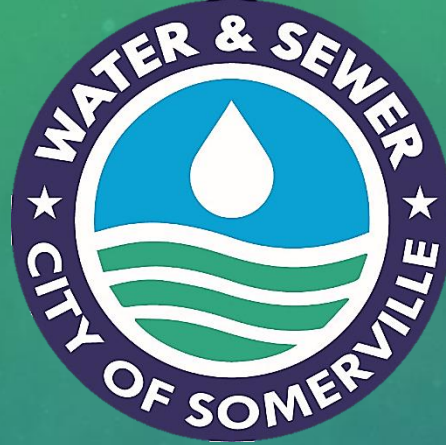
# AGENDA

6 to 6:30 PM

- Presentation of Rate Proposal

6:30 to 8 PM

- Public Hearing
  - Accepting public testimony for the record (Please provide your name and address when you testify)



# WATER & SEWER SERVICES

## Public Health

- Clean water to your home or business
- Sanitary sewer and stormwater service for a city of nearly 85,000 residents

## Fire Suppression

- Sufficient water pressure and volume for fire suppression and firefighting.



OUR CITY'S  
WATER & SEWER  
SYSTEMS  
INCLUDE:

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**116 miles** of water mains

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**183 miles** of sewer mains

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**29,000+** water & sewer  
connections

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**4,800+** manholes

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**1,600+** fire hydrants

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**3,600+** catch basins

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# WATER & SEWER IS A NOT-FOR-PROFIT SERVICE

Rate Adjustments are dictated by upgrading/replacing and maintaining the city's aging infrastructure (Capital Investment Plan [CIP]), and the support of ongoing efforts to provide adequate public health and fire suppression services.



Without sufficient revenue, we cannot

- |                   |                        |                                    |                                     |
|-------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Maintain services | Make necessary repairs | Replace and improve infrastructure | Comply with regulatory requirements |
|-------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|



# WATER & SEWER ENTERPRISE FUNDS ARE SEPARATE FROM THE CITY'S GENERAL FUND BUDGET



# COST DRIVERS TO FY24 RATE RECOMMENDATION



INCREASE IN  
MWRA FEES



\$500M FOR NEEDED  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
UPGRADE AND  
REPLACEMENT



INFLATION AND  
HIGHER  
INTEREST  
RATES

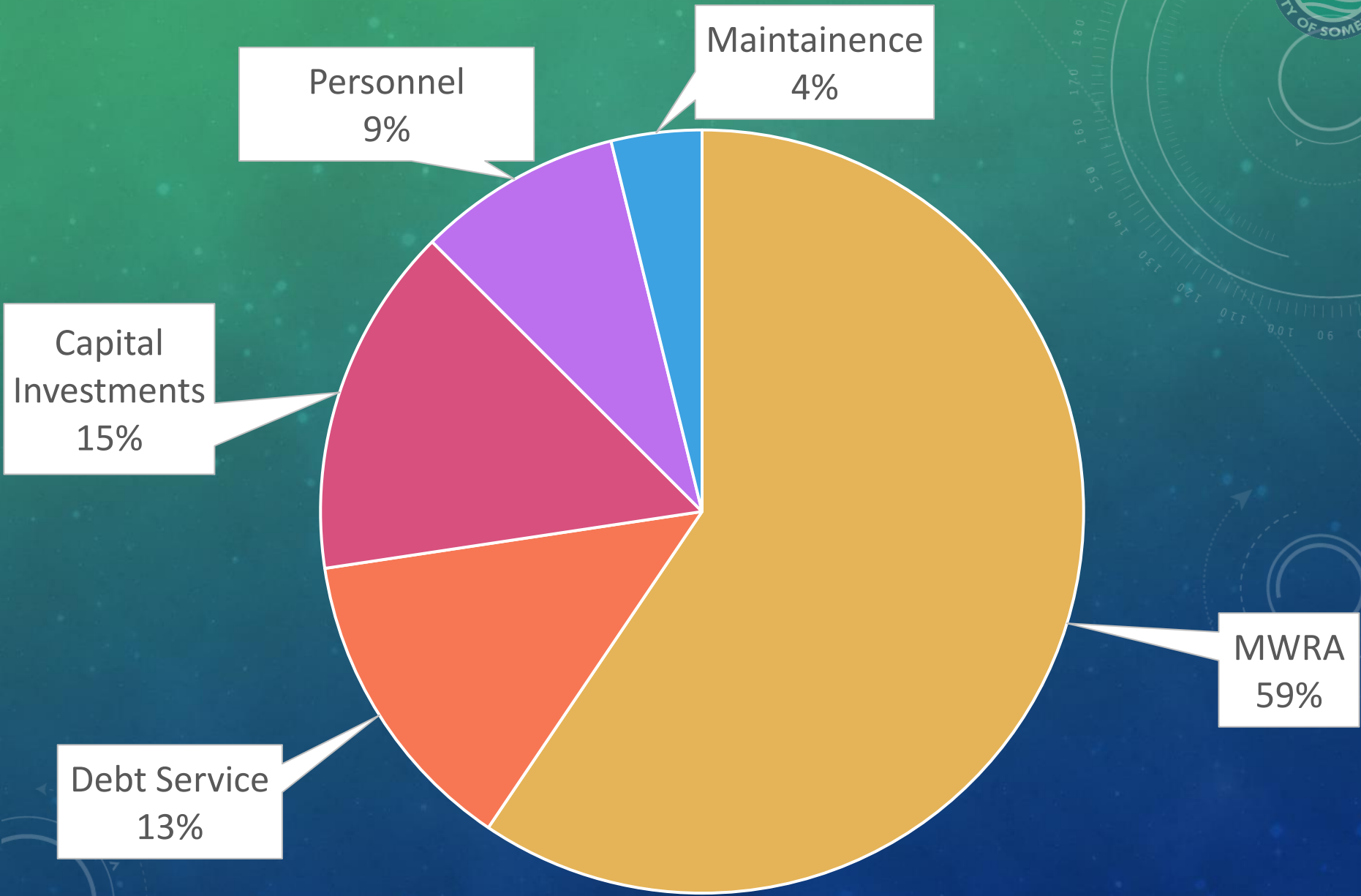


REGULATORY  
REQUIREMENTS

**5%** MWRA Sewer Assessment  
Change for FY24

**.25%** MWRA Water  
Assessment Change for FY24

# Water & Sewer Dept Finances



■ MWRA ■ Debt Service ■ Capital Investments ■ Personnel ■ Maintenance



# MAJORITY OF WATER AND SEWER EXPENSES GO TO MWRA ASSESSMENTS



WATER

50%

Cost of **water** supply from  
MWRA as a percentage of  
Water Enterprise Fund  
Expenses

SEWER

49%

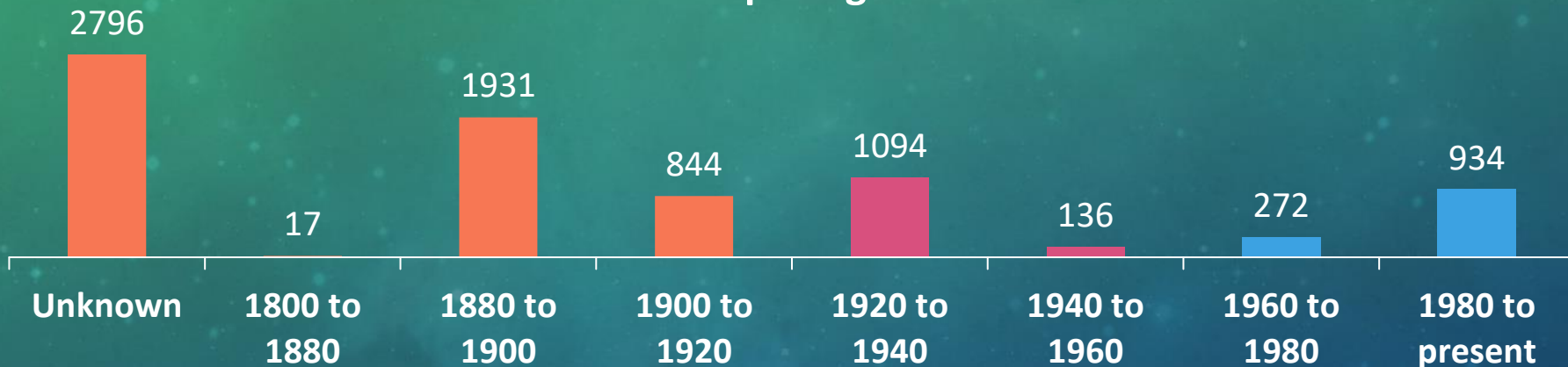
Cost of treatment of  
**wastewater** by MWRA as a  
percentage of Sewer Enterprise  
Fund Expenses



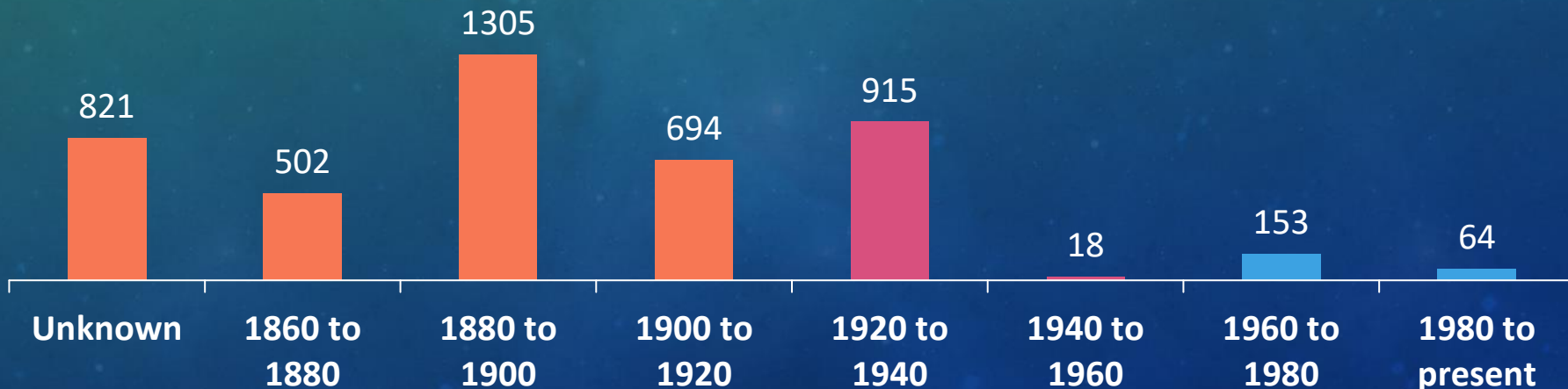
# 90% OF OUR PIPES ARE OVER 50 YEARS OLD

## 70% ARE OLDER THAN 100 YEARS

### Water Line Pipe Segments Built



### Sewer & Drain Line Pipe Segments Built





# IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS FY2024

Sewer Projects	Amount
Somerville Ave Improvements	\$1.5M
Sewer System Evaluation Study	\$1M
Poplar St Pump Station	\$102M
Sewer Improvements	\$150K

Water Projects	Amount
MWRA Lead Line Replacement	\$200K
Spring Hill Phase 1 – Water	\$200K
City Wide Meter Replacement	\$200K
Water Improvements	\$400K

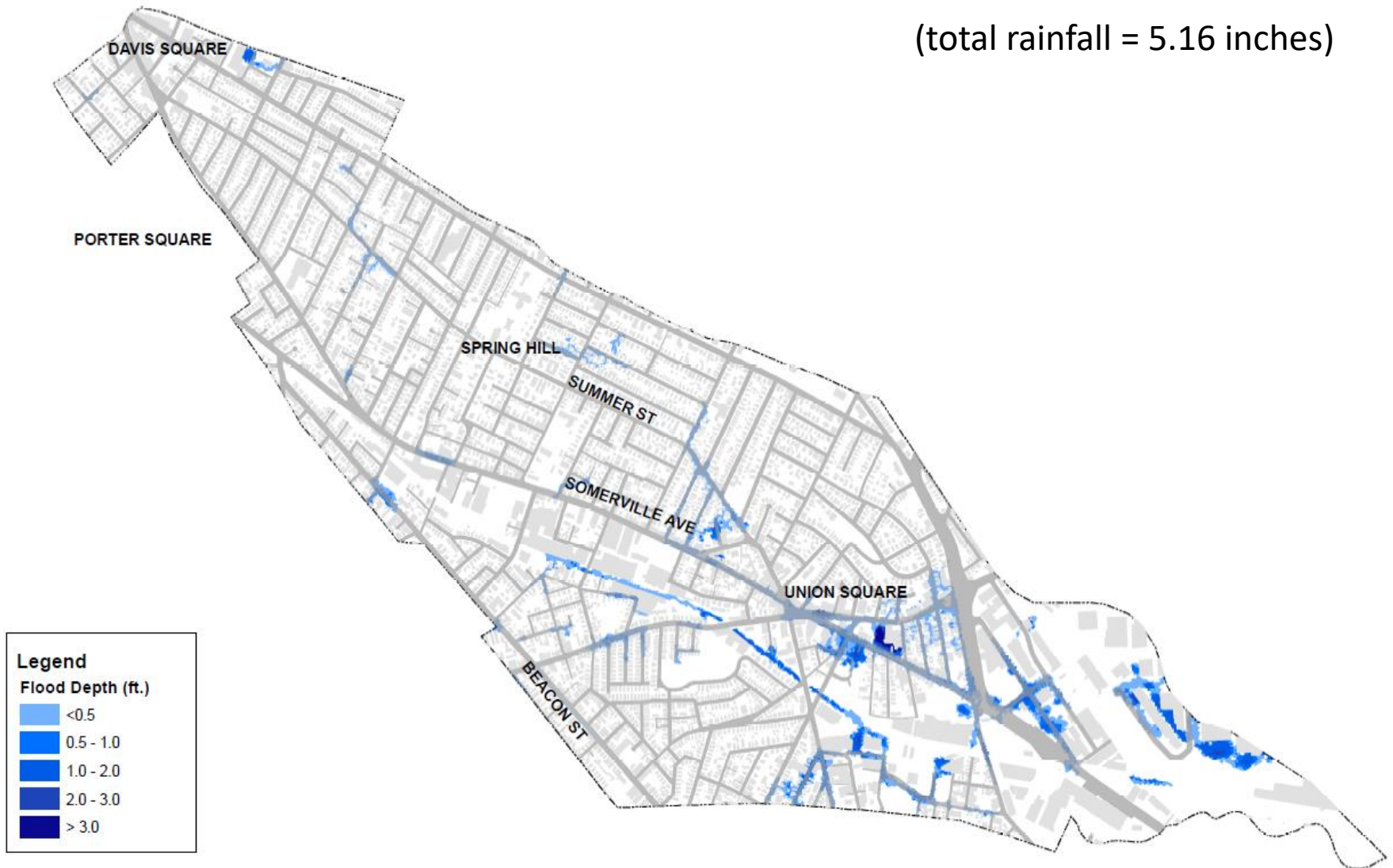
# LEGACY FLOODING PROBLEMS



# FLOODING BEFORE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION



10-year, 24-hour storm event  
(total rainfall = 5.16 inches)





# CITY WIDE METER REPLACEMENT PROGRAM

- No Charge for Meter or Replacement Work
- Replacement currently underway
- Property owners will be/have been notified to schedule an appointment (3<sup>rd</sup> party vendor Mass Installation, Inc.)





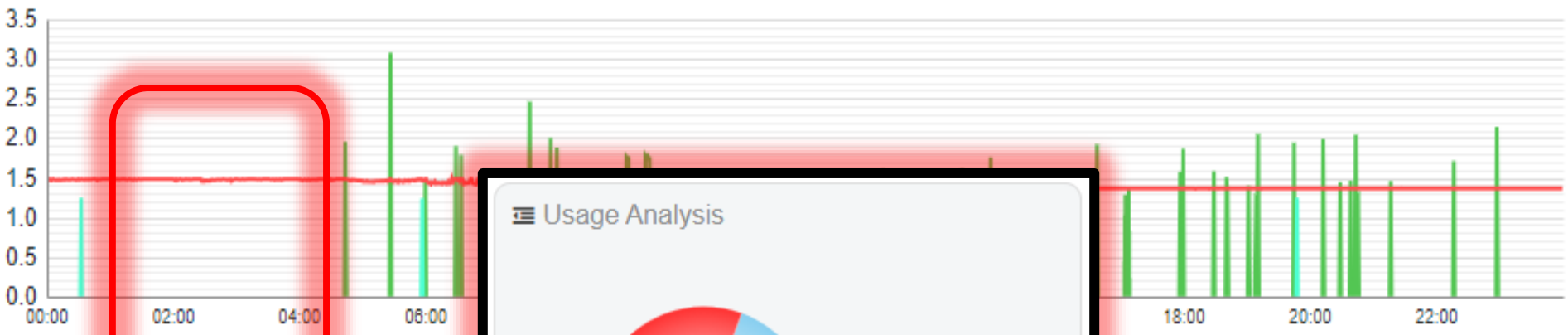
# PLEASE, KEEP YOUR PROPERTY'S PHONE NUMBER UP TO DATE!



If you would like to receive information/alerts on your water/sewer usage please contact Mass Installation, Inc. at 1-800-933-1360 or email the information to [customerservice@massinstallation.com](mailto:customerservice@massinstallation.com) with the Subject: WaterScope Opt-In

## Daily Usage

Flow Rate(GPM)



### Usage Analysis

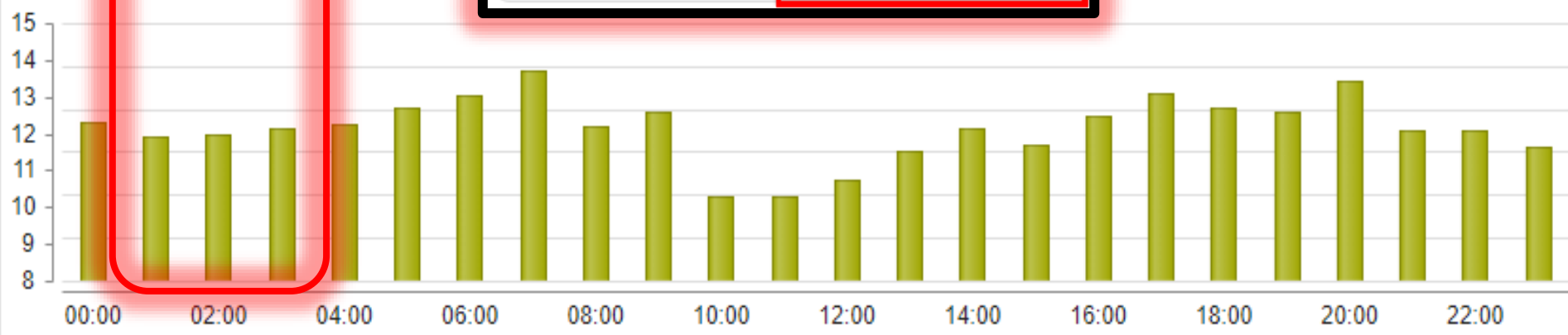


- Residential
- Irrigation
- Leak

Leak: 264.52 FT<sup>3</sup>; 90.70%

## Consumption History

Consumption(Ft<sup>3</sup>)







# PROPOSED RATE ADJUSTMENTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024

Base  
Charges

No  
Change

Water  
Rates

11%  
Increase

Sewer  
Rates

17%  
Increase



# FY24 WATER AND SEWER RESIDENTIAL RATES

<b>FY 2024 Residential Volumetric Charges (\$/Billing Unit*)</b>				
<b>Tier</b>	<b>Tier Range (per CCF)</b>	<b>Water</b>	<b>Sewer</b>	<b>Combined</b>
Discount Rate	0-8	\$5.53	\$11.41	\$16.94
Tier 1	9-13	\$6.17	\$12.68	\$18.85
Tier 2	14-67	\$8.88	\$16.18	\$25.06
Tier 3	68-133	\$9.30	\$16.97	\$26.27
Tier 4	Over 133	\$9.67	\$17.57	\$27.24



# FY24 WATER AND SEWER COMMERCIAL RATES

<b>FY 2024 Commercial Volumetric Charges (\$/Billing Unit*)</b>					
<b>Tier</b>	<b>Tier Range (per CCF)</b>	<b>Water</b>	<b>Sewer</b>	<b>Combined</b>	
Tier 1	0-13	\$6.17	\$12.68	\$18.85	
Tier 2	14-67	\$8.88	\$16.18	\$25.06	
Tier 3	68-133	\$9.30	\$16.97	\$26.27	
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# KEY CUSTOMER IMPACTS

<b>Total Change in Annual Costs for Various Billing Units (including base &amp; volumetric charges, amended)</b>				
<b>Total Units per Bill (in CCF)</b>	<b>FY 2023 Annual Total</b>	<b>FY 2024 Annual Total</b>	<b>\$ Change (FY 2024 - FY 2023)</b>	<b>% Change</b>
15 (average condo unit)	\$919	\$1,020	\$101	10%
18 (average single-family home)	\$1,118	\$1,245	\$127	10%
30 (average two-family home)	\$1,912	\$2,147	\$235	11%
42 (average three-family home)	\$2,707	\$3,050	\$343	11%
110 (average 8-unit apartment building)	\$6583	\$8,318	\$971	12%



INCREASE IN  
MWRA FEES



UPGRADE AND  
REPLACE  
AGING  
INFRASTRUCTURE



INFLATION  
AND HIGHER  
INTEREST  
RATES



REGULATORY  
REQUIREMENTS



# FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR RESIDENTS

- Ongoing policy of no water shut-offs for non-payment
- Exemptions for seniors and others (e.g., clauses 17D and 41C)
  - *Visit the Assessor's office page on the City Website <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/finance/assessing>*
- *Water Affordability program*
  - *Call (617)665-6234*
  - *[cambridgema.gov/iwantto/applyforfuelassistance](https://www.cambridgema.gov/iwantto/applyforfuelassistance)*



# WATER AFFORDABILITY PROGRAM





# UPCOMING CITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



- Preliminary program details:
  - Owner-occupied households
  - This program, initially, will be a three-year pilot program, set to begin accepting applications in 2024
  - \$500/\$1000 tiered assistance
- Updated Abatement Policy





# UPCOMING CITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TIERS

<b>Eligible Income Range</b>	<b>Number of Owner-Occupied Homes</b>	<b>Prospective Annual Assistance Amount</b>
<b>\$0 to \$19,999</b>	<b>959</b>	<b>\$1000</b>
<b>\$20,000 to \$49,999</b>	<b>1251</b>	<b>\$500</b>



# PUBLIC HEARING



- Public Hearing will begin promptly at 6:30PM
  - **Please write your name in the Q&A box and you will be called on in order**
- Written comments may be submitted by 6:00 p.m. on Monday May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 to:
  - [water@somervillema.gov](mailto:water@somervillema.gov) or mail to
  - Demetrios Vidalis, P.E., SHEP,  
Director of Water and Sewer  
17 Franey Rd,  
Somerville, MA 02145