

# MARBLEHEAD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION



# THE FLOW N' GO

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 4

APRIL, MAY, JUNE 2026

## TOWN MEETING: YOUR ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Town Meeting is quickly approaching on May 4, 2026 and we hope you all will attend.

The MWSC will be in attendance to present the two articles that they sponsor. These articles support the capital improvement projects for the Water Distribution System and the Sanitary Sewer System. Article 13, for water and sewer consent articles, is a standard article broken into three sections. Water

construction (a), sewer construction (b), and water and sewer claims (c). Part C allows the Water and Sewer Commission to work with the Selectboard and Town Council should a claim be filed.

Article 14, MWRA Local Water System Assistance Program, is a an interest free loan for projects. Articles 13A, 13B, and 14 are explained in this edition.

## Article 13, Part A: Water Department Construction

Each June, the Commission holds a public hearing to set the water rates for the upcoming fiscal year. For the water department, the rate revenue must fund four cost centers: the water salary budget, water expense budget, purchase of water from Massachusetts Water Resource Authority, and a proposed budget for capital improvements.

All revenue derived from the sale of water is invested back into the water system. The water department retained earnings are the portion of revenue remaining after all the expenses for the department have been paid for a fiscal year. The vote for Article 13, part A will transfer money from the department's retained earning fund into a construction fund.

The Commission sets a rate to provide funding for all operations, maintenance, purchase of water, and a future construction article. This water rate uses a three-year average of consumption to better forecasted sales. Water consumption can change drastically based on weather and the personal choices of residents. For example, the vast majority of Marblehead's water use comes from outside watering in the warmer months. If we have a lot of rainy days during this time,

outside watering is reduced and so is the water departments income.

The construction article is a crucial part of the water distribution system's survival. As Marblehead's circa 1890s water distribution system continues to age, cast iron water mains experience a buildup called tuberculation. Tuberculation is the formation of iron oxide rust on the interior of the iron pipe. This build up decreases pipe diameter which in turn limits fire flow and can effect water quality. The most common capital improvement projects are cleaning and lining or replacement of water mains. See the before and after photos from a recent cleaning and lining project.

This year, the water department is presenting \$2.4 million dollars to be transferred for FY27 construction. With this, the water department will closeout Contract 190 with the replacement of Doane Street, Laurel Street, and Laurel Court as well as the cleaning and lining of the Prospect Street area water main. If you are in the work area, keep an eye on your front door for the construction schedule and neighborhood meeting information. Weekly updates will be posted on the town website.



## RATE SETTING



## Contact Information

781 631-0102  
781 631-2694

Website

[Marbleheadma.gov/  
water-sewer-  
commission/](http://Marbleheadma.gov/water-sewer-commission/)

Superintendent  
**Amy McHugh**

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The Flow N' Go Creator  
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Sump Redirection Program  
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## MARBLEHEAD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION

### Article 13, Part B: Sewer Department Construction

Exactly like the water rate setting, the sewer rates are set each June during the public rate hearing. For the sewer department, the rate revenue must fund four cost centers: the sewer salary budget, the sewer expense budget, payment for sewerage treatment at South Essex Sewerage District, and a proposed budget for capital improvements.

All revenue derived from the collection and treatment of sewerage is invested back into the sewer collection system. The sewer department retained earnings are the portion of revenue remaining after all the expenses for the department have been paid for a fiscal year. The vote for Article 13, part B will transfer money from the department's retained earning fund into a construction fund.

The Commission sets the sewer rate using a three year usage average to provide funding for all operations, maintenance, treatment of sewerage, and

a future construction article.

The construction article is crucial to the sewer system operations. Marblehead's sewer system dates back to the 1900's and is mostly clay. As the collection system ages, cracks develop in the pipe which allow ground water to seep into the collection system. The sanitary sewer system is designed for the collection of sewerage, the additional groundwater received during wet weather events (infiltration) can surcharge the system.



Marblehead is required by the regulatory bodies to remove all infiltration and inflow from the sanitary sewer system in 10 years. This requires a minimum of \$1 million dollars to be invested on sewer lining projects each year to seal out groundwater (see the below for a photo of sewer lining).

The Commission also plans for rehabilitation of the 28 Sewer Pump Stations in Marblehead. 7 of the 28 pump station have been rehabilitated. The remaining 21 stations still require updating of the technology and equipment for better operations. Station rehabilitation projects run from \$500,000 to \$1,500,000 depending on the size of the station.

This year, the Sewer Department is requesting \$2.1 million dollars to be transferred from the retained earnings fund to the FY27 construction fund.

Keep an eye on the website as areas for construction are finalized.

### Article 14: MWRA Local Water System Assistance Program, Interest Free Loan, Water Distribution Improvements

The Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA) offers a 0% interest loan option for their water communities. Marblehead has utilized this loan option three times previously.

1. Tedesco Street Cleaning and Lining: ~5,000 LF
2. Humphrey Street Cleaning and Lining: ~7,000 LF

3. Pleasant Street Cleaning and Lining: ~2,000 LF

This year, the water department is requesting approval for the ability to utilize the Local Assistance Program for up to \$3.5 million dollars for future work.

This approval is only the first step to acquiring the money from the MWRA and doesn't mean the Commission will

opt to participate in the local assistance program. The Commission determines if participating in this program will benefit the customers by stabilizing rates and completing large projects in one season to minimize disruption to the Town. This Local Assistance Program is yet another benefit to being part of the MWRA Community.

### THE ORIGIN OF THE FLOW N' GO

The Flow N' Go was created in 2013 by our then Office Manager Paul Jalbert. Since then, we have released a new edition of the Flow N' Go every quarter; that is 52 editions total!

The purpose of this newsletter is to create a space for rate payers to learn about all things water and sewer. We find it very important to continue to spread this knowledge and inform the rate payers.

Paul Jalbert retired (unfortunately for us) and with him went the spirited

edition of the newsletter that many know and love. We hope that we are at least partially living up to the very high expectations that Paul created.

All past editions of the Flow N' Go are available on the Marblehead Website under the Water and Sewer Commission page. See "documents" under helpful links to find them or use the following link:

<https://marbleheadma.gov/water-sewer-commission/>

If you have any suggestions for future editions, please email [water@marbleheadma.gov](mailto:water@marbleheadma.gov).



Paul Jalbert  
Pictured To Left