

From: [Charlene A. Sharpe](#)
To: [Karen M. Hammer](#)
Subject: FW: Public Comment For Hearing Tonight
Date: Tuesday, May 5, 2026 10:01:00 AM

From: Kate McCloskey <k8mccloskey@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2026 10:00 AM
To: commissioners <commissioners@worcestermid.gov>
Subject: Public Comment For Hearing Tonight

Dear Worcester County Commissioners,

Please enter my comments below into public record for tonight's budget hearing, if possible, as I am unable to attend in person.

As a homeowner and taxpayer in our county for over 21 years, I was shocked (and then angry) to hear about the fraud and embezzlement by one of our Board of Education Senior Administrator, Ms. Shorts, that was happening undetected for a minimum of 6 years. The only reason that fraud and embezzlement were found (wasn't because of any internal safety measures) but because an external financial audit was conducted. An audit that almost didn't happen if the Superintendent, Lou Taylor, had gotten what he requested, which was an audit waiver until 2032. I'm so thankful to all of you County Commissioners, as you were not ok with that, and the waiver was denied.

I have real concerns questioning Mr. Taylor's odd request to skip the audit while one of his direct reports was stealing from our taxpayers, and our schools. That is something someone would do if they were guilty or complicit in some way, but I'll leave that for another day.

What is seriously concerning to me right now is how the Board of Ed (led by Ferrante) and the current Superintendent are publicly handling this crime. One was recently quoted stating that this embezzlement is an "isolated" incident ... Problem is that they can't possibly know that. The Assistant Superintendent Ms. Shorts was not the only employee with a school issued credit card. There are many others with those cards. If Ms. Shorts was able to steal \$118k by simply doctoring her receipts --with NO ONE internally noticing there was nothing to show for it -- than others could to.

The way I see it, the Board of Ed's top priority right now is to – restore public trust. And while implementing more stringent protocols moving forward is needed, yes – THAT DOES NOT solve the bigger question. What other waste, fraud or abuse has been happening, past tense --up to this point? THE ONLY WAY to find that out (and to show how serious they are about safeguarding public resources they have been entrusted with) is to launch a more thorough FORENSIC AUDIT, as I believe that only the tip of the iceberg has been revealed so far that now begs a deeper dive.

I want to formally and publicly go on record strongly requesting the Commissioners demand a FORENSIC audit as soon as possible. I do not trust that this was an isolated incident when accountability was so terribly lacking, along with weak protocols that set the stage for such rampant fraud.

Please know that us taxpayers do NOT want to be on the hook paying for either "paid leave" or "pensions" of any hired staff who have been stealing from us in our county. Is there anything you can do to demand a forensic audit before any Board of ED budget for this next year is fortified, as well as demand that pensions would be terminated (and any paid leave be reimbursed) by anyone found guilty of fraud and/or embezzlement?

Thank you for your attention to this matter,

Kate McCloskey
Ocean Pines, MD

From: [Candace Savage](#)
To: [Karen M. Hammer](#)
Subject: FW: Public Comment For Hearing Tonight
Date: Tuesday, May 5, 2026 3:53:27 PM

*Candace Savage, CGFM
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Worcester County Administration
Government Center
1 West Market Street
Snow Hill, MD 21863
phone: 410-632-1194 ext 1040
fax: 410-632-3131*



From: Michelle Varela <mustangsally2005@verizon.net>
Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2026 3:23 PM
To: commissioners <commissioners@worcestermd.gov>
Subject: Public Comment For Hearing Tonight

Dear Worcester County Commissioners,

Please enter my comments below into public record for tonight's budget hearing, if it's possible, as I am now unable to attend in person. Thank you

I want to publically state that we need to conduct a Forensic audit of the Board of Education after learning of Ms. Shorts embezzlement of over \$100,000. How in the world could this happen. There are teachers dipping into their own pockets to fund classroom needs while all along Ms. Shorts was stealing money. This was money that was also for low-income students.

I find it very suspicious that the prior Superintendent, Mr. Taylor requested a waiver on all audits, which thankfully our county commissioners did not think was right, and pushed for an audit anyway.

I'm now questioning everything. I've lost all trust. That's why I firmly believe that a forensic

audit be done. How do we know it was only one person stealing funds. As a taxpayer, I don't believe that. Many other school staff have a school provided credit card as Ms. Shorts did. Getting a forensic audit is the only way to be sure there is no other fraud in the school board.

I strongly request that anyone who stole money from us taxpayer's Do Not Ever receive Paid leave, or Pensions. They should also pay back the money they stole.

Us taxpayers will be watching this.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Michelle Varela

Berlin, MD

[Sent from AOL on Android](#)

From: [Deborah F. Polly](#)
To: [wchearing](#)
Subject: May 2026 Proposed Water and Wastewater Rate hearing
Date: Friday, April 17, 2026 1:28:59 PM

Comment: Why do seasonal owners pay for water when it is not being used? We own a house at 44 Fairway Lane in Ocean Pines, and pay \$1000+ a year for water when we are only at that residence 3 months of the year. Is there or will there ever be a rate based on water usage?

I look forward to your response.

Mrs. Deborah F. Polly
Pikesville, MD

From: [Olga N. Chistyakova](#)
To: [wchearing](#)
Subject: Water and WasteH2O rate adjustment written comments
Date: Friday, April 10, 2026 11:31:19 AM

Hello Commissioners,

My comment for the hearing on May 5 is if you raise rates, then please use that money to also modernise your payment system so customers can pay online to you directly via autopay. Using a third party website carries cybersecurity risks and third party payment website should generally not be trusted due to unknown level of security they offer customers.

Mailing checks is antiquated and prone to error when there are so many payments that are on autopay these days.

I encourage the county to promptly modernise its payment system so customers can directly pay via an auto pay feature, without a third party involved.

Thank you,
Olga Chistyakova
Ocean Pines property owner

From: [Joi](#)
To: [wchearing](#)
Subject: Public Hearing on Tuesday, May 5, 2026 at 6 pm - Public Comment by a resident of Assateague Pointe
Date: Sunday, April 26, 2026 9:29:22 AM

Dear Worcester County Commissioners,

Past water and wastewater increases decreased the value of my part year residence. Our Assateague Pointe owners are paying \$786 a year even if they're only up there for a two week vacation. Or use no water at all. For a 750 sq. ft. modular residence on less than 8% of an acre, this is excessive. The maximum time we can reside at Assateague Pointe is eight months of the year. We had an aquifer which provided for our needs and the cost of having that water now is skyrocketing. In 30 years, our costs jumped from zero to this excessive amount.

My full time residence in Bethesda with over a 2k sq. ft. residence on 1/3 of an acre and measured water cost \$932.60 over the last year, or 19% more. And I get to live there full year.

If you further increase our water and wastewater rate at Assateague Pointe, you will drive down the value of our property further, the attractiveness of being there, and increase the likelihood of owners renting out their units to pay these bills thereby increasing water consumption and demand. It's not fair to us to penalize us. Please be fair to us and do not increase these rates for Assateague Pointe.

Joi Grieg
Owner, LOT 268
ASSATEAGUE WAY
ASSATEAGUE PT RESORT
aka 12011 Assateague Way
Berlin, MD 21811

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Joan Bellet Roache](#)
To: [wchearing](#)
Subject: Testimony for Budget Hearing
Date: Thursday, April 30, 2026 9:00:49 AM

Dear Commissioners:

My name is Joan Roache and I'm a resident of Worcester County. I'm here to express my support for the proposed budget for Worcester County Public Schools.

At its core, funding our public schools is not a discretionary choice—it's one of the most important responsibilities of county government. Strong schools protect property values, attract families, and contribute directly to the long-term economic health of our community.

One of the most important investments we can make is in the people who educate our children. Competitive salaries and support for teachers and staff are essential if we want to retain experienced educators and avoid disruptive turnover in our classrooms. Stability matters—for students and for outcomes.

At the same time, expectations from the state, including requirements tied to the Maryland State Department of Education and the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, continue to grow. These are not optional initiatives—they are mandates that require some local funding to implement effectively.

Without adequate funding, the consequences are real: larger class sizes, reduced programs, and deferred maintenance. Those kinds of cuts are difficult to reverse and can have lasting impacts on the quality of education in our county.

Supporting this budget is not just about students—it benefits the entire community. Strong schools help sustain property values, support local businesses, and make Worcester County a place where people want to live and invest.

In closing, I would urge you to view this as a long-term investment in the future of Worcester County. A strong school system is one of the best investments we can make—not just for today, but for years to come.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Joan Roache
13121 Fancourt Lane, Unit 150
Berlin, MD 21811
443-944-6495

From: [Deb List Pennington](#)
To: [wchearing](#)
Subject: Re: Water Adjustment Input
Date: Thursday, April 30, 2026 10:52:42 PM

I made a mistake in my calculations. The yearly in Worcester County would be: \$1524 MIN which is still more than double what I pay in Delaware

Debra Pennington

On Thu, Apr 30, 2026 at 7:33 PM Deb List Pennington <delipe777@gmail.com> wrote:

To: Worcester County Water Dept:

I am amazed and frustrated that you are considering yet another rate adjustment.

The water bills for this area are out of control. I am a part timer who has not been able to use their home in Worcester County as much as I would like due to family health issues. BUT, when I have done so within the past year I have only stayed a few days and have used as little water as possible. What does this mean?

It means that when I come down for a few days I do not take a shower, I use adult wipes to avoid using water. I do not water my lawn, plants, wash my car or powerwash my house. I usually bring food with me to heat up and use paper plates & cutlery to avoid having to wash dishes. I do make a gallon of iced tea while I am there and I filter that and of course flush my toilet. It is just me and I don't even flush every time!!!! However, my water bill is a little bit more than the minimum.

This however is also ridiculous as my primary residence is in Newark, Delaware where I use water regularly, (still not watering the lawn, or washing my car, etc), but consider I spend most of my time there as I am retired. I pay \$30 to \$35 per month with a \$150 sewer tax per year. The math: In Delaware: \$570 per year MAX / In Worcester County: \$4572/ year MIN.

I knew when we bought the home there it would be more expensive, but this much more for water? It is unconscionable to think that anyone can afford the prices even before the expected increase.

I was told when I purchased my home in that area of Worcester County that the water was higher because of the population being smaller. Should I remind you of all the building that has been done within the last few years? I can't imagine how much money you are now bringing in and why you need to do a rate adjustment. It sounds like you are trying to push people out of the area but to be honest, newer folks coming in won't want to stay either. Specifically because of the water rates!

I think that you need to consider how this operation is run, something is wrong. We can't continue to have increases in water! I am considering selling my home not because I have not been able to use it as much as I would like, but because of the expense of water.

Worcester County needs to clean up their act – but I would suggest you not use water to do it!

Debra Pennington Phone: 302-256-7125

12 Dune Grass Drive

Berlin, MD 21811

4/26/26

Worcester County
Attn: Grievance Committee
Re: Account 10009135-001

To Whom It May Concern -

I AM AGAIN sending documented, written notice disputing my sewer bill. It is evident no one addressed my previous attached letter. PLEASE BE ADVISED you ARE UNFAIRLY treating residents who have wells, AS YOU ARE UNABLE to charge for water usage. It is in poor taste and unprofessional to RAISE OUR SEWER bills more than double AS IT IS EVIDENT your current committee is INCAPABLE of budgeting.

I AM ONE person who works a full time job and goes back to New York at least twice a month. It is grossly incompetent to RAISE my quarterly bill from \$60.00 to \$146.88* and originally up to \$286.26 to meet your needs/budget. Again, with all due respect I AM asking my bill to be reviewed and amended to a reasonable rate of no greater than \$85.00 a quarter, or I will be inquiring into a forensic accounting of all practices, as well as speak to attorneys with respect to a civil action lawsuit. PLEASE AGAIN review my account, issue appropriate credits and *respond in writing*, not a phone call. Thanking you in advance for your prompt action.
I AM WORCESTER 10423 NORWICH RT. OCM
21842

2/28/26

Worcester County
Attn: Grievance Committee

Re: Account # 1000 2135-001

To whom it May Concern -

This letter is being sent disputing my quarterly sewer bill which has been \$60.00 for years. I know nothing stays the same, but to raise my quarterly bill from \$60.00 up to \$286.26, which I called and disputed still increased to \$146.88 per quarter, is still more than double my previous bills. PLEASE NOTE: I have well water, and needed to replace my well in 2024, as records will show.

PLEASE BE ADVISED I AM ONE PERSON IN THIS HOME, YOU MORE THAN DOUBLED MY BILL TO FLUSH A TOILET???. WITH ALL DUE RESPECT THIS IS INSANE, YOU ATTEMPTING TO TAKE ME OVER THE COALS FOR MONEY. I AM ASKING MY BILL AGAIN BE REVIEWED. FOR SEWER ONLY, DECREASE MY QUARTERLY RATE TO A REASONABLE FEE, AND APPLY THE APPROPRIATE CREDITS TO MY ACCOUNT. I WILL EXPECT WRITTEN RESPONSE OF YOUR AMENDMENTS. THANK YOU.

Pamela Cocozello 10423 Norwich Rd OC MD
21842



WORCESTER COUNTY
 co.worcester.md.us
 Water & Wastewater Services Collection
 P.O. Box 349
 Snow Hill, MD 21863-0349
 410-632-0686 Option 4

Account No. 10007135-001 **Service Address** 10423 NORWICH RD-West Ocean City

Service Period 7/1/2025 - 9/30/2025 **Meter Readings**

Previous Balance 60.00
Penalties 0.00
Adjustments 0.00
Payments Received (60.00)
Balance at Billing 0.00
Current Billing

12/2
 (2) Edu's - \$13038 per/sewer
 + per bathroom
 12/2
 Quinn #14688 new ball
 billed in correctly!

Charge Code	Amount
Water and/or Sewer	278.76
EDU	0.00
MD DRF FEE	7.50

- Bay Area "stuff"
 " Grievance Committee

If paying online, use WWW.CO.WORCESTER.MD.US Other websites may delay payment. If payment is not received on the due date it may result in additional fees and risk of disconnect.

Current Charges 286.26
Balance Due 286.26
Penalty Date 12/26/2025

After Penalty Date 299.85

Legal Description

IMPSLOTS 20 21 BLK 10 SEC A W SIDE
 NORWICH RD PL CAPE ISLE OF WIGHT

Please retain this portion for your records



WORCESTER COUNTY
 co.worcester.md.us
 Water & Wastewater Services Collection
 P.O. Box 349
 Snow Hill, MD 21863-0349
 410-632-0686 Option 4

Account No. 10007135-001
Service Address 10423 NORWICH RD-West Ocean City

Service Period 10/1/2025 - 12/31/2025
Meter Readings

Previous Balance 286.26
Penalties 0.00
Adjustments (139.38)
Payments Received (146.88)
Balance at Billing 0.00
Current Billing

pd 12/2/25 ch #1654

Charge Code	Amount
Water and/or Sewer	139.38
EDU	0.00
MD BRF FEE	7.50

If paying online, use WWW.CO.WORCESTER.MD.US Other websites may delay payment. If payment is not received on the due date it may result in additional fees and risk of disconnect.

*pd under protest
 1/22/26 ch #239
 O.C.*

Current Charges 146.88
Balance Due 146.88

Penalty Date 2/5/2026

After Penalty Date 156.29

Legal Description

IMPSLOTS 20 21 BLK 10 SEC A W SIDE
 NORWICH RD PL CAPE ISLE OF WIGHT

Please retain this portion for your records



WORCESTER COUNTY
 co.worcester.md.us
 Water & Wastewater Services Collection
 P.O. Box 349
 Snow Hill, MD 21863-0349
 410-832-0686 Option 4

Account No. 10007135-001
Service Address 10423 NORWICH RD-West Ocean City

Service Period 1/1/2026 - 3/31/2026
Meter Readings

Previous Balance 146.88
Penalties 0.00
Adjustments 0.00
Payments Received (146.88)
Balance at Billing 0.00
Current Billing

*Quinn Dietrich
 hearing on MAY 5th
 Snow Hill 6pm*

Charge Code	Amount
Water and/or Sewer	139.38
EDU	0.00
MD BRF FEE	7.50

If paying online, use
 WWW.CO.WORCESTER.MD.US Other
 websites may delay payment. If payment is
 not received on the due date it may result in
 additional fees and risk of disconnect.

*Commissioners 5/5
 Pd 4/26/24
 debt 256 ac prot
 & protest*

Current Charges 146.88
Balance Due 146.88
Penalty Date 5/4/2026

Please retain this portion fr

Circle K United 1-800-218-0088 www.circlekusa.com

65-290/521 256

PAMELA J. COCOZELLO
 10423 NORWICH RD.
 OCEAN CITY, MD 21842-9784

APR 26 2026

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Worcester County \$ 146.88

One hundred forty six dollars and 88/100

THE FARMERS BANK OF WILLARDS
 WWW.FBWBANK.COM
 Acct 10007135-001
 Under protest

Today's A Little Better, I'm A Little
 Less Bitter. Not Feeling Quite As Bitter
 It's A Little Bit Of Better Everyday.

⑆052102901⑆ 680644 100296

Account No. 10007135-001
Penalty Date 5/4/2026
Amount Due 146.88
After Penalty Date 156.29

Service Address
 10423 NORWICH RD
 West Ocean City

Mailing Address

Please return this portion with your payme

PAID UNDER PROTEST

PAMELA COCOZELLO
 10423 NORWICH ROAD
 OCEAN CITY, MD 21842

00010007135001000014688

From: [Mgmbiz llc](#)
To: [wchearing](#)
Subject: Formal Protest of Proposed Sewer Rate Increase
Date: Monday, May 4, 2026 9:43:44 AM

MGMBIZ LLC
12744 Ocean Gateway West Ocean City Md 21842

Account number 10014425-001

Date: 5/3/2026

To: City Clerk and City Council of Worcester county

Dear City Clerk and Council Members,

I am writing to formally protest the proposed sewer rate increases to be discussed at the hearing on May 5th 2026 As a property owner at 12744 Ocean Gateway West Ocean City Md I oppose this increase because the rate hike is too high and there is insufficient justification My quarterly sewer bill was \$532.50 and increased to \$2203.20 quarterly

I request that this proposal be rejected or modified to be less burdensome on citizens.

Sincerely,

MGMBIZ LLC

From: [Meral Yilmaz](#)
To: [wchearing](#)
Subject: Protest of Proposed Sewer Rate for Empty Lot
Date: Monday, May 4, 2026 10:20:11 AM

Meral Yilmaz
608 Ocean Parkway
Ocean Pines Md 21811
Account number 10017351-001
Date: 5/3/2026
To: City Clerk and City Council of Worcester county

Dear City Clerk and Council Members,

I am writing to formally protest the proposed sewer rate for empty lot to be discussed at the hearing on May 5th 2026 As a property owner at Old Ocean City Rd Lot 1BL C

As the owner of record, I am protesting the assessment of a standard residential sewer rate on this parcel, which is an empty, vacant lot. The empty lot produces zero sewage. The lot does not utilize the sewer system, causing no load or maintenance costs to the infrastructure. Assessing a sewer fee based on access or potential future use is unreasonable when no service is provided. I request that this parcel be reclassified to reflect its vacant status that the sewer assessment be removed entirely.

I demand this written protest be counted in the official record for the May 5th 2026 public hearing

Sincerely,

Meral Yilmaz
Rifat Boluk

From: [Marcia Cupschalk](#)
To: [wchearing](#)
Subject: Proposed Water and Wastewater Rate Adjustment
Date: Monday, May 4, 2026 11:42:10 PM

To Water and Wastewater Division Finances Management

I hope this email about the proposed increase is not an exercise in futility. After gathering information, it appears that the decision has been made and discussions are a courtesy.

I am a resident of Bay Vista Estates 1 since July 2000; I plan to be here for the rest of my life. When I first arrived, the rates were more than the condo I had in Ocean City at the Bay Princess on 81 Street. When I called the water department to inquire about the rates a few years later I was told there were unimproved areas and the costs were maintenance of the water pipes. At that time, regardless of the cost around 180's to 200 range was manageable.

Years later; the base rate increased to around 250.00 each quarter. What was used by the home owners added on to that amount. It was stressful to meet the demands of our normal living expenses. Then the base rate increased to \$381.00. I called about this increase because now it became a hardship. I was told that there was a Bond that covered repair or replacement of a water facility and the interest increased on the Bond. The Bond would not be paid off until many years ahead...I would not be alive at that time. I said, I am very conservative with the water and I live alone; why would the bills be in the \$400.00 plus range? I was told by one of your employees "maybe you should use less water."

I can understand your overhead; I have had businesses on a much smaller scale. However, large or small the principles are the same to cover all the required expenses. Maybe the individual who told me about the Bond interest rates was confused; usually they have a fixed interest rate. Maybe a Series 1 Bond was used that can be variable.

The areas that have been designated for this increase besides Mystic Harbour that includes Bay Vista 1 and 2, Glen Riddle, The Landings and Ocean Pines, plus a few more are footing

the increase that is not equitable across the Counties. I am aware Ocean Pines area had a excess water leaking in a creek or something on that order and it was a costly thing to repair. Again, are there not contingency funds to offset the expense? Why is it that Snow Hill rates are so low? I notice some areas even get the first 2,000 gallons for free, why?

Many people who occupy these areas mentioned above are retired and many live solely on Social Security. Many people in these areas have medical expenses that far outweigh what they have to live on. Additionally, we are living in a economic crisis that is not going to improve for a long time. Every small business that I deal with in the general area are hurting because business is down. People are not shopping, not frequenting because it gets to be a choice over what I want to over I can afford.

There has to be more creative thinking on this situation that we are all going to be negatively effected with increased rates up to 396.00 for 2027. Everyone is concerned and everyone is worried.

The management really needs to realize how devastating this is for the people who live here.

Choose to revise the billing strategy to be more equitable.

Thank you,
Marcia Cupschalk