

This timeline outlines the milestone dates and records related to Hopewell Borough's entry into the WIPA process to fast-track the sale of the water system. The Borough will relinquish local control of the publicly owned, not-for-profit water system and sell it to a for-profit corporation, American Water (AWK:US).

### **At a Glance**

- 1 PFOS violation (2022)
  - \$2.34M federal treatment grant approved
  - System deemed viable
  - 58% referendum approval
  - 12% proposed rate increase
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### **July 7, 2022**

#### **NJDEP Notice of Non-Compliance (PFOS – Well #4)**

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) issued a Notice of Non-Compliance for a 2nd Quarter 2022 Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) violation for PFOS at Well No. 4.

- PFOS level measured: **14 ppt (parts per trillion)**
  - NJDEP limit: **13 ppt**
  - PFOS levels have not exceeded the MCL since this measurement.
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### **April 4, 2024**

#### **Phoenix Audit Report Released**

The Phoenix Advisory Report was published, outlining the condition of the Borough water system and identifying future repair and capital needs.

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### **May 13, 2024**

#### **Council Enters WIPA Process**

Borough Council entered the WIPA process under the Water Infrastructure Protection Act (WIPA).

WIPA certification cited the 2022 PFOS violation as the emergent condition allowing the Borough to legally proceed without a referendum.

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**June 13, 2024**

### **NJDEP Determination Letter**

NJDEP issued a determination stating:

- The water system required PFOS treatment.
- The water system and ground water wells were otherwise viable and not considered failing.
- NJDEP recommended use of a **\$2.34 million PFOS remediation grant**.

[\[View NJDEP Letter\]](#)

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**August 2, 2024**

### **EPA Grant Approved**

NJDEP advised that the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved Hopewell's application for **\$2.34 million** in federal funding through the "Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities" grant program.

The funding was designated for PFAS and arsenic treatment systems at Wells No. 4 and 6.

Borough Council agreed to proceed with planning and design phases while exploring the sale of the utility. Periodic public updates were discussed.

No treatment systems were pursued by the Borough.

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**August 5, 2024**

### **Resident Petition Filed**

214 residents filed a petition protesting the decision to sell the public water system without a public referendum vote.

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**March 20, 2025**

## **Resolution Advancing Draft Contract**

Council passed a resolution advancing a draft contract with New Jersey American Water (NJAW) for sale of the water system.

According to public statements:

- No contract terms were negotiated by the Borough.
- Council members did not individually review the full contract prior to advancing it.
- Draft contract was passed before it was shared with the public.

[\[View Draft Contract\]](#)

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## **July 10, 2025**

- Council passed the referendum ballot question.
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## **October 5, 2025**

### **Public Community Meeting**

Concerned residents held a public meeting at First Calvary Baptist Church to review contract details and explore alternatives.

This was the first substantive public review of the NJAW contract.

[\[Hopewell residents ask why rush to sell our water system.\]](#)

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## **October 13, 2025**

Legal analysis of proposed contract published by a Hopewell resident:

[\[View Legal Analysis\]](#)

Hopewell Borough accepted a contract that benefits NJAW, and provides no guarantees for Hopewell rate payers.

- No guaranteed rate decrease.
- No clear plan for the \$7 million “capital improvements”.
- No specification of what will be repaired, or when.
- The Borough will have no oversight or recourse if those “improvements” don’t meet our standards.

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**October 29, 2025**

**Referendum Interpretive Statement Complaint – NJ Superior Court**

Hopewell resident filed a complaint about the lack of neutrality in the referendum interpretive statement. The court decided that the public should have submitted an alternative interpretative statement to the Council in July 2025.

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**October 2025**

American Water announced a deal to acquire Essential Utilities to prioritize building water treatment facilities to serve data centers with a \$26 million plant underway in Pennsylvania and more planned.

[why.org/articles/american-water-works-essential-utilities-merger-40-billion/](https://www.whyy.org/articles/american-water-works-essential-utilities-merger-40-billion/)

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**November 4, 2025**

**Referendum Results**

Sale approved by voters:

- 58% Yes
- 42% No

[\[View Official results\]](#)

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**January 2026**

NJAW filed a rate increase application with the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU) requesting a 12% increase (approx. \$120/year increase for the average customer).

<https://www.whyy.org/articles/american-water-works-essential-utilities-merger-40-billion/>

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**Present**

**Proposed Consent Ordinance 908**

[\[Link to ordinance\]](#)

Municipal consent can include conditions. NJ courts and the BPU have long recognized that municipal consent may impose reasonable, non-rate-related conditions especially conditions tied to:

- Public health and safety
  - Infrastructure in the right-of-way
  - Service reliability
  - Compliance with local standards
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### **Current Water Supply**

- 60%: Well #4
  - 40%: NJAW interconnection
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