



OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF
Water & Sewer Commissioners

3249 COUNTY STREET
SOMERSET, MASSACHUSETTS 02726
508-679-2731

June 1, 2022

NEW WATER AND SEWER RATE STRUCTURE – FISCAL YEAR 2023

Dear Valued Customer,

At the May 16, 2022 Town Meeting, the new rate structure proposed by the Somerset Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners was approved. Please note that the rate structure change originated with a request from the Board of Selectmen to base the billing more on usage and less on flat water and sewer fees. The new rate structure will be equitable for all customers, ensuring that billing reflects the amount of water used and discharged. The present rate structure imposes higher flat water and sewer base fees on all customers, regardless of usage, which places an unfair burden on low water users and those on a fixed income. The following is a comparison of the existing rate structure to the new rate structure:

	FY'22	FY'23
Water Usage Rate (<i>per 1,000 gallons, up to 100,000 gallons</i>)	\$5.70	\$5.95
Water Usage Rate (<i>per 1,000 gallons, 101,000 gallons and higher</i>)	\$6.20	\$5.95
Sewer Usage Rate (<i>per 1,000 gallons</i>)	\$0.00	\$6.30
Annual Water Base Fee	\$144.00	\$100.00
Annual Sewer Base Fee	\$356.00	\$100.00
Infrastructure Fee	31.5%	31.5%

Under the new rate structure, low water use customers (15,000 gallons per year or less) will see a *reduction* of \$265.30 in their annual bill for water and sewer service. Customers who use between 15,000 gallons, up to approximately 45,000 gallons per year, will see annual bill *reductions* commensurate with usage. **Our average customer, using 52,000 gallons per year, will see a modest increase of \$53.39 per year.** High water use customers will see annual bill increases subject to water usage.

The Board understands that some customers use large volumes of water for outdoor purposes; for example, irrigation and pool filling. Water for these purposes does not enter the sewer system, so sewer use charges would not be applicable. Accordingly, the Board suggests the installation of an additional irrigation water meter for customers who want to avoid the sewer use charge for outdoor water usage. These customers will receive two bills per quarter: one for the primary water meter reading for which water, sewer and infrastructure charges would be applied; and one for the irrigation water meter reading for which only water and infrastructure charges would be applied. The additional meter must be purchased from and installed by the Somerset Water Department; all other work will be the responsibility of the customer. The probable cost to the customer for the meter, plumbing work, backflow survey, Town permits, etc. would be approximately \$1,500.00.

The new rate structure will go into effect on July 1, 2022 which will be reflected on the October 2022 bills for the billing period of July 1 through September 30, 2022. Customers who would like to install the irrigation meter should begin the process now in order to have them in place prior to July 1. Please contact the Somerset Water Department with any questions.

Sincerely,

Paul A. Sylvia, P.E.
Paul A. Sylvia, P.E., Superintendent