



West Newbury Water Dept.
381 Main Street
West Newbury, MA 01985
(978) 363-1100 Ext.127

April, 2024 Water Department Updates

Change in Water Rates

While water bill rates have remained unchanged since 2019, increased expenses, primarily due to an increase in debt service for necessary water distribution system upgrades and an increase in the cost of purchasing water, will result in increases in water rates. Changes in Water Rates DO NOT take effect for this current bill. A more detailed description of the rate setting process and rationale for the new rates can be found at the Town's website (on the Water Department page, "*FY2025 Water Rates 3-21-24 Public Hearing Presentation*" PowerPoint).

For customers using less than 35,000 gallons per bill (approximately 75% of all customers), the increase will be less than \$70/bill. The "average customer" bill (a household that uses 30,000 gallons/year) will see a \$35.00 increase per bill.

Base Charge to remain at \$70.00

The Base Charge on your future water bill will remain unchanged at \$70.00/bill. All customers receive a base charge regardless if they use water or not. There is a separate charge for water consumption. The Base Charge is used for costs associated with the daily operation of the water department, including meter reading, billing, meter service and administrative expenses. We currently send out water bills twice a year, spring and fall.

Base Rate and Conservation Rate will increase

The Base Rate will increase \$2.00 from \$14.43/1000 gallons to \$16.43/1000 gallons and the Conservation Rate will increase from \$17.48/1000 gallons to \$27.48/1000 gallons in the future. The Base Rate usage is 0-35,000 gallons in a six-month billing period and the Conservation Rate usage is more than 35,000 gallons used in a six-month billing period.

The Conservation Rate reflects a higher charge for water (i.e., a higher consumption rate) to encourage water conservation by customers. Most water used over the Conservation Rate threshold of 35,000 gallons is used for seasonal watering. In the upcoming weeks, the Water Department will be providing information about conserving water and ways to reduce water bills, especially for high volume users. These communications will be through a future mailing and/or the Town's website.

Water Production, Water Treatment and Water Distribution System Updates

Water Production and Treatment/Monitoring

The Water Department operates a tubular wellfield and a bedrock well that provides approximately two thirds of the Town's water needs. This water and water purchased from Newburyport is monitored and treated as necessary to meet MA DEP drinking water standards. In recent years, a new chemical treatment building and the bedrock well were added improvements to the system. Water production and treatment continue to be maintained to ensure safe and reliable water to our customers.

Pipestave Water Tank and the New Brake Hill Water Tank

These tanks provide water storage and maintain water pressure which is necessary for reliable water use by customers and for firefighting throughout the Town for all residents, businesses, schools and other establishments. Scheduled and necessary maintenance for both tanks was performed in 2023 and both are operating effectively.

Water Main Replacement to Church and Prospect Street

Beginning this spring, work to replace water mains on Church and Prospect Street will begin. This \$2.1 million dollar project, partially funded by federal ARPA funds allocated to the project by the Select Board, will replace pipes from the original 1936 system. The original 1936 water distribution system was paid for by federal WPA funds and matching funds by the Town of West Newbury residents. The Church and Prospect project is expected to be completed by spring, 2025. Updates will be provided directly to affected residents and through the Town website www.wnewbury.org.