

LANESBOROUGH VILLAGE FIRE AND WATER DISTRICT
WATER COLLECTION POLICY

February 12, 2016

The purpose of this policy is to document the practices which shall be applied by the District Collector in collecting water bills. The policy may be modified or extended by a majority vote of the Board of Commissioners at any time. Rates and fees are established by the Board of Water Commissioners.

I. RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS

- A flat rate shall be billed to all customers.
- Bills shall be sent quarterly and will be due 8/1, 11/1, 2/1, and 5/1.
- If a customer has water service for any portion of the fiscal year, he/she shall be responsible for a full year of service; however, a new service shall be billed from the beginning the first quarter that they receive service (Even if they are only connected for part of that quarter).
- All customers, including seasonal customers, are entitled to one turn-off and turn-on at their request without charge.
- All habitable dwellings will be charged a minimum fee whether or not it is occupied.
- Properties that have dwellings that are removed or will be uninhabited for an extended period of time, will be issued a reduced rate to half of the current rate. These situations will be reviewed by case and must be at the request of the owner.

II. BUSINESSES

- Customers shall be billed quarterly for water use during the previous quarter.
- The flat rate or water consumption at the metered rate shall apply whichever is greater. The flat rate for a quarter is the annual residential rate divided by four.
- If a business has water service for a portion of the fiscal year it shall be billed for the entire year.
- A new service shall be billed beginning the first quarter that they receive service (Even if they are only connected for part of that quarter).
- Businesses which have multiple business tenants in a building shall be billed on a per tenant basis as follows:
 - The greater of the flat rate or the metered rate will be billed for each business.
 - The quarterly bill shall be based on the number of business which had water service in the previous quarter, but shall not be less than one if any business used water during the fiscal year.

III. APARTMENTS

- Apartments shall be billed on a per unit basis, based on the residential flat rate.
 - The following schedule shall be applied:

<u>Number of units</u>	<u>Flat rate multiplier</u>	<u>Billing schedule</u>
2	2.0	Quarterly
3	2.5	Quarterly
4	3.0	Quarterly
5	3.5	Quarterly

- The number of units billed is unaffected by whether the unit is occupied. In order to be charged for fewer units the building and/or plumbing must be physically modified to eliminate an apartment.

IV. MOTELS

- Water rates for motels are 0.3 times the residential rate per motel unit.
- All apartments, Separate year round housing, Stores, and Offices will be charged at the full rate for the year.
- Billing cycle is quarterly.
- If a motel unit used water during the fiscal year, it will be billed for all 4 quarters.

V. CONDOMINIUMS

- Water rates for condominiums are the same as residences. Each condominium unit is billed as a residence, unless the Condominium is a Business Condominium then it will be billed at the business rate or as otherwise contracted to be billed.

VI. SERVICES

- There are services provided that can be completed for a fee. These items include (but are not limited to): Pools, extra water turn on/off, shutoff for non-payment, hook-up for new service or reconnections, truck or backhoe with operators. These fees are controlled by the commissioners, and collected by the District Collector. All customers pay the same rate for these services. The District Collector shall maintain a current schedule of fees, which are established by the Commissioners. These fees are reviewed and adjusted as needed on a per year basis.

VII. DISCONNECT

- If a water service is disconnected at the request of the owner, if/when the water is reconnected, that owner will pay a reconnection fee of the current rate for new owners (currently \$2,800 for a ¾" service)

VIII. DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS

- All bills that remain outstanding on the day following the due date shall start accruing interest at a rate of 14% year as outlined by the Massachusetts General Laws.
- All bills that remain outstanding for more then 15 days after the due date shall be charged a demand fee of \$30.00.

- Returned checks, reconnect fees and other fees associated with delinquency will be imposed and collected by the District Collector.
- A lien will be imposed on the property for all accounts which are in arrears by more than \$500 at the end of the 4th quarter of the fiscal year (June). The lien will be reflected in the tax bill issued by the Town of Lanesborough in December. The Water Commissioners may also direct the collector to initiate the lien process on an account delinquent by less than \$500.
- Customers may arrange a payment schedule with the collector in order to reduce their arrears over a period of time within the following limits.
 - i. Payments must be made monthly and retired in a maximum of 6 months, and
 - ii. If the agreed upon payment schedule is not maintained, the agreement is ended and the customer is not eligible for another extended payment option.
- AT the discretion of the commissioners, water service may be terminated (SHUTOFF) until the arrears are paid in full or an acceptable arrangement is made with the collector in accordance with the above.

IX. ABATEMENTS

- If you believe that you are being over charged or have any type of discrepancy with your bill, you may apply for an abatement. Abatement requests will be considered only if;
- The abatement request is submitted before the last date of the billing period shown on the bill (Sept 30, Dec 31, March 31, and June 30 respectively) to apply for abatement on all or part of the bill.
- The account must be current (no outstanding balance).
- The Abatement request must be submitted on the form provided by the Clerk

X. INFORMATION ON BILL

- The bill issued by the collector shall include the following statements
- If this bill is not paid on time, fees, interest, and property liens will be imposed. A possible shut off could occur.
- Requests for abatements will be considered only if the account is fully paid and the request is submitted to the collector before the last date of the billing cycle
- See the District collection policy for more detail (On the District website, or from the collector)