

City of Biddeford
Wastewater Management Commission
September 13, 2017 4:30 PM City Hall
Second Floor Conference Room

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Approval of Minutes**
- 4. Discussion/Approval**
 - 4.1. Recommendation: Sewer Fee Abatements Protocol and Procedures
[9-13-2017 WWMC recommended abatement policy.docx](#)
[9-113-2017 Notes-Summary from July WWMC meeting.docx](#)
- 5. Staff Updates**
- 6. Commission Roster Changes**
- 7. Other Business**
- 8. Unfinished Business**
- 9. Adjournment**

Wastewater Management Commission Recommendations for Abatements

The wastewater management commission recommends the following policy/procedure for sewer abatements.

For determining the amount any abatement eligible:

For small single-family residential units, defined as up to three units (on one account) one of which must be owner occupied, the following abatement policy is recommended:

The applicant for abatement shall be responsible for the sewer fee for the last 36 months and the amount owed would be determined as follows: The user would be responsible to pay the minimum sewer user fee or the amount calculated based on recent current usage calculated from actual meter readings for the past 12 months whichever is the larger amount.

For all other accounts, the amount owed shall be calculated based on the actual meter readings and usage for the past 12 months and/or the minimum fee whichever is greater. The wastewater management commission shall review and determine the amount that should have been billed and the amount of any abatement. The period for which any sewer user fee amount is considered can go back to the last actual reading for these accounts.

Recommended Procedure.

All applicants for abatement requests shall submit a request for abatement to the finance department for consideration. The finance department may request that wastewater department staff review the information submitted, to provide data on the expected flows and to recommend if the request is reasonable.

Generally, it is recommended that for abatements of \$1000 or less, the finance director may authorize the abatement after review of the data and staff recommendations.

If the amount of abatement is over \$1000, the wastewater management commission will, after review of the data submitted, make a recommendation to the finance director. For abatement amounts in excess of \$1000 but less than \$3000, the wastewater management commission may recommend abatement amounts and forwarded this to the finance director for review/approval. Abatements in excess of \$3000 shall, after wastewater department staff review of the information submitted, shall be forwarded through the finance director to the finance committee for review and action.

As a first step in this procedure, it is recommended to mail, by registered mail with a return receipt requested, or certificate of mailing, a notice to all users who currently have sewer bills calculated based

on estimated water amounts from the water company, to inform them of such and to indicate the new abatement policy. The users shall be notified that they are being billed based on estimated amounts and that they should provide actual meter readings to the water company so that their bills will be based on actual usage and not estimated usage. The water company will be requested to supply each quarter a list of all such estimated accounts. It is suggested that all such estimated accounts being given 120 days to provide actual data to the water company. If the estimated accounts choose not provide actual meter data, then they will no longer be eligible for grandfather status and will billed for the entire sewer fee for the entire period of estimation.

Summary Notes from Wastewater Management Commission meeting and workshop

From July 12 regular meeting: General discussion from July 12 meeting go back three years for abatements

From July 26 work shop meeting:

General discussion: Commission wanted a listing of all estimated accounts from Maine Water Company. Cheryl to ask to get them to send that information. Commission wanted to send out notices to the estimated accounts indicating that they are estimated accounts and they should send the readings in or potentially get large sewer bills when new meters are finally installed and/or read. Cheryl indicated that PUC regulations allow billings to go back a minimum of 12 months to bill unbilled amounts.

There was a general feeling among commission members that billing should go back a minimum of 24 to 36 months. All users must pay at least the minimum billing amount for the time period of abatement request.

For residential uses all must pay minimum charge and go back 24 to 36 months, commission felt that residential accounts should be considered up to three Residential units (on one account) one of the units being owner occupied.

For commercial accounts, review the request for abatement on a case-by-case basis. Commission felt that they could go back to day one. On the commercial accounts, the Commission would review all requests and make a recommendation.

General procedure for all requests would be for staff to review the data provided in the request and then forward it on with a recommendation. The finance director would review and authorize abatements up to \$1000, the finance director can approve the abatement request after staff provide satisfactory evidence that the request has merit

For accounts over \$1000 the commission will review and make recommendations, based on staff review, on the abatement and then forward that on to the finance director/ finance committee with a recommendation.