



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**WATER & SEWER DEPARTMENT**  
**MAYOR KATJANA BALLANTYNE**

*KELLIE A. HEBERT, MPA*  
*DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION*

**DATE:** June 12, 2025  
**TO:** Members of the City Council  
**CC:** Mayor Katjana Ballantyne  
**From:** Kellie A. Hebert, Director of Finance and Administration  
**RE:** Public Hearing & Public Comments: FY2026 Water & Sewer Enterprise Rates

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Honorable Members of the City Council,

A public hearing was held regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Water and Sewer Rates on Wednesday, May 28, 2025 at 6:00 PM at the Tufts Administration Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room, 167 Holland Street, Somerville.

There were three (3) participants who attended the hearing, one (1) public comment was received during the hearing. Two (2) written comments, both in opposition, were received by the Water and Sewer Department prior to the hearing. One was unsigned, and the other was submitted by Daniel Sheiner. Both comments are attached below.

One resident offered comments during the hybrid meeting. Steve Huff (Ward 5) participated remotely and asked about the proposed stormwater enterprise fund. He asked about the merits and intent of the program, and whether it will encourage large property owners to reduce impervious surfaces. Rich Raiche, Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management, responded and stated that the City's goals are to promote fairness in billing, to incentivize stormwater management and to encourage proactive practices- especially for properties that are generating the most runoff. Huff asked if residents will be able to lower their fees if they incorporate changes to reduce stormwater impact. Director Raiche responded that residents will be allowed to earn credits to reduce their bills if they make improvements that will reduce stormwater impact. Huff expressed his strong support for the plan, thanked the team, and stated that this was something he hoped could be discussed at the meeting.

Listeners were informed that public comments would be accepted until June 11<sup>th</sup> at: [Water@somervillema.gov](mailto:Water@somervillema.gov). A link to the recording is included here: <https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/-Oa50oJY1Y600EJdgsQfwANhrPMQL8SJSb5VEyGAVG2RRKOIq0Zt6MU4hHJwFZ52.cp4Om4IWPZCzpesm?startTime=1748469877000> (Passcode: km13.tP9)

The public notice/advertisements and written comments are attached for your reference. Thank you.



17 FRANEY ROAD • SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS 02145  
(617) 625-6600 EXT. 5850 • FAX: (617) 591-7991  
[www.somervillema.gov](http://www.somervillema.gov)





Outlook

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## **RATE HEARING**

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**From:** Daniel Sheiner [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 24, 2025 10:53 PM  
**To:** Water <water@somervillema.gov>  
**Subject:** RATE HEARING

Good evening,

I am the owner of [REDACTED] in the Prospect Hill neighborhood. We already pay some of the highest water rates in the country, despite abundant water resources. I strongly oppose these rate increases.

Prior to any rate increases of this magnitude, we need an audit to determine if the water department has been making competent, fiscally responsible decisions.

thank you,

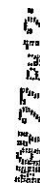
Daniel Sheiner

May 27, 2025

City of Somerville

Water and Sewer Department

17 Franey Road  
Somerville, MA, 02145



RE: Rate Hearing - 512812025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express concern regarding the proposed rates for the City of Somerville's 2026 water and sewer billing structure, which include the following:

- An 18% increase in water volumetric charges
- A 12% increase in sewer volumetric charges
- A change from the current tri-annual billing cycle (every four months) to a quarterly billing cycle (every three months) for residential accounts

These proposed increases are not only excessive but also potentially distressing for many residents — particularly low-income households and senior citizens living on fixed incomes. In the current economic environment where the cost of living continues to rise, additional steep increases in essential utilities are simply unsustainable. Past annual rate hikes have already placed considerable financial pressure on homeowners, and yet these new proposed adjustments represent some of the largest to date.

It must be emphasized that household incomes are not increasing at rates anywhere near 12%—18% per year. Expecting residents to absorb such costs — while receiving the same essential services — is unreasonable. Further, shifting to a quarterly billing cycle will exacerbate the hardship by increasing the frequency with which families are forced to manage significant utility payments. For those already struggling, this change could lead to missed payments, compounding financial stress.

Should the city proceed with these changes, I urge officials to eliminate late payment fees for residents. This is a necessary measure to protect those who are most vulnerable to economic stresses, especially in a city that prides itself on equity and community inclusiveness.

I respectfully ask that this feedback be formally entered into the record for the upcoming Rate Hearing on May 28, 2025. In summary:

- The proposed water and sewer rate increases are disproportionately high.
- The move to quarterly billing will place an even greater burden on residents.
- If adopted, the new billing structure must include the elimination of late fees for residential customers.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these critical concerns.

I trust that the City of Somerville will work to balance its operational needs with fairness and compassion for the people who call this community home.



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
WATER & SEWER DEPARTMENT  
KATJANA BALLANTYNE  
MAYOR**

**WATER AND SEWER ENTERPRISE FUNDS  
FISCAL YEAR 2026 RATE PROPOSAL**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

There will be a Public Hearing, regarding the Fiscal Year 2026 Water and Sewer rates, on **Wednesday, May 28th, 2025, at 6:00PM**, on the proposed changes:

1. An 18% increase in revenues from water volumetric charges;
2. A 12% increase in revenues from sewer volumetric charges;
3. Changes to existing base charges for both water and sewer;
4. Changes to the tiered rate structure for Residential accounts; and,
5. Changes to existing bill schedules and billing frequency:
  - a. Change from existing bi-monthly bills (every other month) to quarterly billing cycle (every three months) for Commercial accounts; and,
  - b. Change from existing tri-annual bills (every four months) to quarterly billing cycle (every three months) for Residential accounts.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting may be held by remote participation. You have three ways to be heard at this meeting:

1. In person at the Tufts Administration ("TAB") Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room at **167 Holland Street, Somerville, MA 02144.**

2. Virtually through the Zoom platform.

Enter this link into your internet browser any time before the meeting:

Webinar ID: 843 7166 2008

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84371662008?pwd=b5ouHgN6TM9AEI0M0FCZCLIJmgczos.1>

Passcode:773369

3. If you are unable to attend but wish to be heard, you may email your comments to [water@somervillema.gov](mailto:water@somervillema.gov) with RATE HEARING as the subject title or send them by US mail to the Water and Sewer Department, 17 Franey Road, Somerville, MA, 02145. Your comments must arrive **no later than 12 Noon on the day of the Hearing** to be sure they are conveyed to the Department of Water and Sewer.

**THE PUBLIC IS INVITED TO ATTEND AND BE HEARD.**

*Persons with disabilities who need ADA accommodations to access this program, please contact 311 (617-666-3311) in advance.*

*The City of Somerville can provide you with an interpreter in your language for free.*

*To request an interpreter, please contact us at [somervillema.gov/ContactSomerville](http://somervillema.gov/ContactSomerville) or call 311 (617-666-3311) at least 7 days in advance of this event.*



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CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
WATER & SEWER DEPARTMENT  
KATJANA BALLANTYNE  
MAYOR

**SOMERVILLE WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENT  
FISCAL YEAR 2026 RATE PROPOSAL**

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

There will be a Public Hearing regarding the Fiscal Year 2026 Water and Sewer rates on **Wednesday, May 28th, 2025, at 6:00PM** to present on the proposed rate changes for Fiscal Year 2026.

Pursuant to the Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting may be held by remote participation. You will have three ways to be heard at this meeting:

1. In person at the Tufts Administration Building (TAB). Conference Room, 167 Holland Street, Somerville, MA 02144.
2. Virtually through the Zoom platform (Link to be published by 5/20/25)
3. If you are unable to attend but wish to be heard, you may email your comments to [water@somervillema.gov](mailto:water@somervillema.gov) with RATE HEARING as the subject title or send them by US mail to the Water and Sewer Department, 17 Franey Road, Somerville, MA, 02145. Your comments must arrive **no later than 12 Noon on the day of the Hearing** to be sure they are conveyed to the Department of Water and Sewer.

**THE PUBLIC IS INVITED TO ATTEND AND BE HEARD.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, EMAIL [WATER@SOMERVILLEMA.GOV](mailto:WATER@SOMERVILLEMA.GOV)



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