

Demetrios Vidalis

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**From:** David Hollister  
**Sent:** Monday, May 20, 2024 9:09 PM  
**To:** Water  
**Cc:** JT Scott  
**Subject:** RATE HEARING

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Hello,

My name is David Hollister, I'm a resident in Ward 2 of Somerville. I'm writing in regards to the FY25 proposal for a 10% increase in water and 5% increase in sewer charges.

I am unable to attend the public hearing on May 29th, but would like to express my concerns about the rapid growth rate in water and sewer charges over the last several years, with minimal explanation for what is driving the need for these increases year after year. The proposed FY25 Residential Tier 1 combined charges of \$19.94 reflect a **~47% increase over FY21 rates.**

I know there is extensive work being done throughout the city to improve the water and sewer system, but is there a multi-year plan in place that indicates when these increases will normalize to a more typical 2-3% inflationary rate?

I know this is a complicated issue and appreciate any information you can provide. As I'm sure you know all too well, the cost of living in Somerville is extremely high, so anything we can do to mitigate cost increases goes a long way in improving the livelihood of each and every resident.

Thanks,  
David

Demetrios Vidalis

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 22, 2024 8:01 PM  
**To:** Water  
**Subject:** RATE HEARING. Comment

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Dear Sir/Madam:

I am writing in regard to the proposed water rate hike. It is unbelievable that after the recent increased bills we received after changing the meters, this should not even be on the table. My bill increased but not to what some of residents have endured. If people had meters that did not function, it was on the City to rectify the issue. Once again, this is why rent cannot remain affordable in this City.

Jennifer Mahoney Blaikie  
Lifelong resident and 30 year homeowner

Demetrios Vidalis

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**From:** Diane Molino-Fox  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 29, 2024 7:40 AM  
**To:** Water  
**Subject:** RATE HEARING

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Hello

I've lived in Somerville for over 65 years and would like to know why there is a proposed increase? How do we stop it and what is the purpose of it?

It seems rather harsh as you're going to force people out of this beautiful city that have lived here for a long time.

Please make available notes after meeting and what the conclusion is?

Thank you for your time.  
Diane MolinoFox

To the Water and Sewer Department, and members of the City Council who will be voting on this item:

I am writing today in strong opposition of the proposed water and sewer volumetric charge increases of 10% and 5% respectively, for FY25.

First, I'd like to tell you a bit about myself. Like the majority of residents in Somerville, I rent an apartment here, and have been a resident for over 6 years. I live with my fiancé and we both have very livable salaries. Neither my partner nor I carry student loan or medical debt. We have no children- just a spoiled cat. Our landlords are caring individuals who value us as tenants and set the rent fairly, not for pure profit. Overall, my situation is very stable, something I am grateful for- and a privilege that I know many do not have. I consider my situation to be best case scenario for a renter in Somerville.

MAY 23 AM 10:21

And yet, I still see a near future where Somerville can no longer be called my home. I gave up years ago even hoping to be able to buy a condo with the threat of HOA fees; finding a single family home with a mortgage I could even consider affording is nearly impossible. For someplace recently noted as the best US city to raise a family, the housing costs do make me wonder who we are actually accepting into this community, and who we are excluding.

So, I was content to rent. But even in this, there are major challenges and I have noted significant discontent in our community. People are laughed at when they ask about housing opportunities in Somerville and state budgets below \$3,000/month. Many posts on the Somerville, MA Community Facebook page mentioned astronomical increases when their leases came up for renewal this year. My own landlords apologized for having to raise our rent for the first time due to the significant insurance costs for our building. And, time and again, I have heard about issues with new water meters in Somerville and the debilitating bills that came with functioning meters.

City Council is well aware of these issues and I will not rehash them here, as many residents already eloquently and passionately expressed their concerns in the May 15<sup>th</sup> public hearing about the process of these new meters being implemented and how associated bills to catch up to actual costs were handled. I also thank many of the City Council members for speaking up to emphasize the concerns of citizens and to identify a potential solution.

What I am asking for is to have City Council vote against the proposed water and sewer increases. As someone who on paper should easily be able to stay a part of this community and is struggling to see how that would be possible, which includes concerns like these increases, I can only imagine what is happening for the more vulnerable members of our community, who I also so

dearly wish to remain in Somerville if they so desire. While the water and sewer costs are not the only factor creating challenges for our community, they are an important one to keeping our community strong, welcoming, and resilient as inflation continues to run rampant across the country. Thank you for hearing my concerns.

Sincerely,

Sarah Hoke

[Redacted]

Somerville, MA 02144