



Down the Drain

An Informational Newsletter from the
Hull Sewer Department
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What is impacting my sewer bill?

After the plant failure in 2013, it cost \$6.9 million to make the necessary repairs to the building and all of its controls.

The money to pay for these repairs was approved by Town Meeting. The future effect on the sewer rate was presented as part of the discussion preceding all votes at Town Meeting.

The impact to the sewer rate from this event was an increase of \$1.71 per unit. Please note that the Town is currently in litigation with the insurance company to recover the \$6.9M needed to restore the plant and any proceeds received from this effort will be utilized to mitigate the sewer rate.

In addition to the cost of the failure, operating costs increased resulting in an additional \$1.26 per unit.

Should I expect another sewer rate increase anytime soon?

Unfortunately yes, future rate increases will occur because we're still dealing with a nearly 40-year old treatment plant and a 100+ year old Collection System. It will need an investment on some level to sustain our operations.

We do our best to control rates and be sensitive to everyone's financial concerns but we also have to place the highest degree of importance on our operations. No one ever wants to raise rates but it is necessary to keep the wastewater system operating properly. Please watch for future mailings and postings on the Town website for updates.

Is there any oversight of the wastewater treatment process?

Yes, starting with daily oversight from the Town of Hull staff that relays information during bi-weekly meetings at Town Hall, to monthly meetings of the Permanent Sewer Commission to discuss ongoing and future plans.

We have a professional Operations & Maintenance company serve as our plant operators and multiple engineering firms that help us strive to be better and keep us up to date on all regulations. State and Federal inspectors visit the plant semi-annually to ensure that there are no violations of our permit. (There are very strict guidelines on the state and federal level when it comes to wastewater).

Current Status of the Treatment Plant and the Collection System

The Plant - The wastewater treatment plant was built in 1978. Like anything else that is nearing 40-years old, the plant is experiencing its share of problems. There was a significant operational upgrade in 2004 and although structurally sound for the most part, there are many elements at the plant that will need attention soon to continue to provide reliable service to our residents.

The Collection System – The piping network in the street that carries the sewage is called the Collection System. Common practice when the system was built, in some cases 100 years ago, was to discharge the flows directly into the ocean. In 1978 when the treatment plant was built, all of the pipes in the street were re-directed to the plant so there is no more raw discharge into the ocean.

The Town of Hull has 43½ miles of sewer pipe ranging in size from 1½ inches up to 36-inches in diameter buried throughout the town to carry household and business waste for treatment. The main pipe that runs through town is a 36-inch pipe called the Interceptor; this is one of the most critical assets we have. There has been extensive work to done to it over the years and it will continue to be our focus. Several areas of town have had pipes replaced and others have been lined to increase its integrity.

Conclusion – We are committed to providing effective and efficient wastewater solutions for our residents. An important thing to remember is that we have no “down time” at the plant; it operates 24-hours a day, 365 days a year and is staffed every day of the year.

Given the systems age and its importance to the community and surrounding environment, we maintain a very high level of vigilance to changing conditions and react quickly to them. A strong preventative maintenance program and scheduled upgrades will keep the system operating properly.

Who is responsible if I encounter a sewer blockage or back-up?

The Town owns all the pipes in the street and up to each property line; it is the responsibility of the homeowner to maintain the piping from their foundation out to the street line.

If you ever experience a blockage in your sewer line, you can call the Sewer Department office at (781) 925-1207. We will come investigate your situation and tell you whether the problem is in the street or if you should contact a plumber because it appears to be an interior plumbing issue.

There is a list of contractors licensed through our office to conduct sewer repairs, if you have a problem that is determined to be your responsibility, please call us and we will provide a copy of this list to you. If you call after-hours, there are instructions on the answering machine explaining how to contact our on-call technician.

Will a running toilet or dripping sink affect my sewer bill?

Since sewer bills are based on actual water consumption as recorded by Aquarion Water, a leak anywhere in your water service will indeed affect your sewer bill. An easy way to detect a water leak is to go to your meter and look at the face of it, there should be a little red dial on it that spins as water goes through the meter. If all the household water is shut off and the dial is spinning, you have a leak.



The dial on this meter is triangular, but shapes may vary→