



# *Town of Belmont*

## **Department of Public Works**

*Cemetery • Highway • Parks & Facilities • Water*

### **Water Billing Dispute Policy**

ADOPTED: January 29, 1998

REVISED: December 15, 2003

1. Every water billing dispute shall be addressed as follows:
2. The Water Division will make an effort to resolve billing disputes informally.
3. If a dispute cannot be resolved informally, the billing dispute shall be submitted in writing by the property owner to the Water Division detailing the specifics of the dispute and the reasons why the property owner feels that the bill is in error.
4. Within 5 business days of receipt of the dispute the Water Division will acknowledge the receipt in writing and inform the property owner of the Water Division's intent to review the circumstances surrounding the complaint.

The internal standards for this review shall be:

A. Estimated water meter reads

1. Estimated reads are subject to correction only after an actual read is obtained by a town meter reader. Verbal, written or card reads from property owners are not acceptable.
2. The Water Division shall notify property owners of accounts that have over two years of estimated bills. The property owner will be informed of opportunities available to avoid future estimated bills.

B. Actual water meter reads

1. If water meter readings are determined to be in error the invoice in question will be adjusted appropriately.

C. Customer consumption

1. Estimated bills are subject to consumption correction and proration of rates for a maximum period of one year of billings prior to the most recent bill.
2. Consumption accurately registered by the water meter due to water use, waste or leak(s) is the property owner's responsibility.

5. Within 10 business days of receipt of the complaint the Water Division will investigate the complaint and forward a written report to the Director of Public Works with a recommendation for a resolution of the complaint. Within 20 business days of the receipt of the complaint the Director of Public Works will respond in writing to the property owner with his/her decision regarding the complaint.
6. If after a response from the Director of Public Works the property owner remains dissatisfied, he/she may appeal the decision in writing to the Water Advisory Board. This

written appeal shall contain specific reasons and appropriate documentation as to why the property owner requests an appeal. The property owner may appear before the Water Advisory Board in person to discuss their appeal. The Water Advisory Board shall consider the appeal and reply in writing within 40 business days from the receipt of the appeal.

7. Response time limits may be adjusted by agreement of both parties dictated by circumstances to adequately address disputes.
8. The Water Advisory Board, at their sole discretion, may adjust the cost basis of water but to no less than the average consumption, including customer charge, for that property in the corresponding quarter for the last two years. If information for the last two years is unavailable, the Water Advisory Board may use any information it deem suitable to make a determination.
9. Customer requests to test water meters.
  - A. All meters tested for accuracy will be based on the appropriate American Water Works Association standard.
  - B. METERS LESS THAN SEVEN (7) YEARS OLD
    1. Meters less than seven (7) years old will not be tested unless the customer pays a test fee of Fifty Dollars (\$50.00), refundable only if the meter over registers consumption.
  - C. METERS GREATER THAN (7) YEARS OLD
    1. Meters greater than seven (7) years old will not be tested unless the customer pays a test fee of Twenty-Five Dollars (\$25.00), refundable only if the meter over registers consumption