

**Minutes of the
Town of Belmont
APPROVED BY WATER & SEWER RATES PUBLIC FORUM
SELECT BOARD
of the
SELECT BOARD
May 10, 2023**

June 5, 2023

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: June 13, 2023
TIME: 8:39 AM

To view the recording of the meeting, please click [HERE](#).

Call to Order: Mr. Paolillo called the meeting to order at 6:03pm.

Select Board Members	Present	Staff Members	
Mark Paolillo, Chair	Yes	Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator	Yes
Roy Epstein Vice Chair	Yes	Jennifer Hewitt, Assistant Town Administrator & Finance Manager	Yes
Elizabeth Dionne, Member	Yes	Jay Marcotte, DPW Director	Yes
Others Present			
Dave Fox, Raftelis	Remote		

Public Input Session to discuss Water and Sewer Rates

Mr. Paolillo explained that the purpose of the forum was to discuss raising the water & sewer rates as they have not increased in several years.

Mr. Fox reviewed the goals of the rate study (which is available on the Town website by clicking [HERE](#)). Mr. Fox then provided an overview of the Water Fund portion of the Rate Study including historical information and future projections, operations costs, financial considerations, update plan, and capital improvements plan.

Mr. Fox explained that the fund is operating with a deficit and it will continue to do so unless there is a rate adjustment.

The recommended rate increase is 4% per year over the next 5 years, although this plan will need to be reviewed later in the 5-year plan and the increase voted on yearly. The proposed increase will allow the Water & Sewer fund to stay at or slightly above the costs after FY2024 and allow the Retained Earnings to remain positive starting in FY2024.

Mr. Fox provided an overview of the Sewer Fund portion of the study, including operations costs, capital improvements, etc. He pointed out that the financial situation is similar to the Water Fund with deficits projected starting FY2023 and Retained Earnings going negative in FY2025.

The recommended rate increase is 8% in FY2024, 8% in FY2025, and then 3% thereafter to keep up with inflation. This would produce sufficient revenue after FY2023 to cover costs and rebuild Retained Earnings.

Mr. Fox reviewed the FY2024 Rate Design Overview and recommendations, explaining what impacts the costs that different customers pay. He then showed the yearly dollar impact of the changes for various customer types. Finally, he shared the expected next steps in the process.

Mr. Paolillo reviewed the cost impacts to the different types of customers.

Ralph Jones: Expressed concern about the projection to spend \$1M for Capital Improvements in sewer each year over the next 5 years. He then discussed some issues that need attention and asked if \$1M per year is enough to take care of these needs. Mr. Marcotte said no, and explained how the funds would be divided between sewer and storm water. Mr. Jones then went on to explain the problems with getting loan money from the State and suggested that the problems need to be planned for. There was a discussion of this issue and how to find funding for it.

Roger Colton, Resident: Pointed out that the inclining block rate structure works for single family homes, but it breaks down when you have multi-family homes that are on a single account, which is the typical arrangement. This means that those living in multi-family homes are paying more than those in single family homes. This is over \$230 per year that people pay simply because they live in a multi-family home. Mr. Colton asked that this issue be considered, especially since these residents tend to have the least annual income.

There was a discussion of this issue and what can be done by Town Meeting, or if it will need to wait another cycle.

Ali Boromund, Concord Ave: Said that he thinks Belmont does not really have a block rate as indicated by Mr. Colton and explained how he came to this conclusion. He also discussed which neighboring communities have this type of rate.

Judith Feinleib, Town Meeting Member: Said this looks to be a relatively small increase, but this should be considered with other increases in Town. She also said that she does not understand the comments on single family homes and suggested that this be better explained. Mr. Marcotte suggested that Ms. Feinleib contact the Water Department to get an irrigation meter so she will not be charged for sewer.

Mr. Paolillo said that the Board would consider all comments offered and thanked the participants for their time.

Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting of the Belmont Select Board Committee, and the motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:59pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Susan Peghiny
Recording Secretary