

TO: City Council  
From: Wastewater Advisory Committee  
Date: Mar. 30, 2005

RE: Church Billing

As you are aware the Wastewater Advisory Committee has been reviewing wastewater billing in relationship to churches. This request came through several of the area churches.

The Wastewater Advisory Committee understands the churches' position. A bill that is based approximately three-quarters on fixed cost at 100% potential use seems to cause high bills for buildings that are perhaps used sparingly and almost never at full capacity. The committee also understands that on a citywide basis the list of non-profits is approximately ten times the number of churches.

From time to time the Advisory Committee as well as Wastewater Staff hear concerns from all groups of users in relationship to the cost of sewer bills. The same explanation is given. The underlying problem is that we are supporting 100% costs for a plant utilized at 55% due to the loss of industry. Any change in the formula would result in shifting of costs to other users. Returning to a user-based formula would cause resident homeowners' bills to rise exponentially.

The Wastewater Advisory Committee has reviewed the process for changing the Maine State Plumbing Code on which we base one part of our bills and this is one possible avenue that the churches or any other interested party may want to explore. This process includes the churches submitting information to the state which the state will consider and make a determination whether to change, or not, the daily volume in gallons per day on which we base bills.

The committee discussed the idea of actual Churches being given a break while spreading the costs among the rest of the users.

Unless it is the will of the Council, the Wastewater Advisory Committee is reluctant to re-visit the formula that established Equalvalent Users Basis (fixed & variable cost / equability to all users) which took the Council, the Wastewater Advisory Committee and outside consultants approximately two years to determine.

Sincerely,

Charles Batchelder, Wastewater Advisory Chair  
Cc: Rev. Wood, First Baptist  
Selectmen Farmingdale and Randolph

