

## **METERS ARE HERE!**

by Sandra Dam, Interim Superintendent

A letter was sent with all of the bills for the first quarter informing those connected that the new meters have arrived!

For **Residential** customers, you may come in to fill out a meter application or access it on line and print it out and bring it in with a check for \$250.00 – this is \$25.00 less than the regulations stated due to a cost savings realized by the sewer department.

For **Non – Residential** Customers: Please note the time frame of one year in the regulations: All customers receiving sewer service from the Charlton Water and Sewer Commission for non-residential use must install a meter to be utilized for sewer usage billing within one year from the availability of meters. A meter application and sizing by the commission is required.

Please remember that a plumbing permit is required and installation will have to be done by a licensed plumber and then inspected by the Town's plumbing inspector.

To date approximately 26 meters have been purchased and 11 have completed the installation process. Pro-rated bills were calculated and abatements processed ranging from \$17 - \$70 for those 11 customers.

I have been receiving a lot of questions regarding the rate. The rate study is also available on line at the Town Of Charlton's website – [www.townofcharlton.net](http://www.townofcharlton.net). Click on government, then the Water and Sewer Commission and scroll down to find both the application and the rate study.

A brief explanation of the rate is as follows: The capacity charge shall be \$93.75 per equivalent dwelling unit plus a volume charge of \$0.0046 per gallon of water used. There is a \$20.00 per read charge if your existing meter is not compatible with our radio read system. The new rate also includes surcharge rates for wastewater discharged from the two MTA service areas.

Excerpt from the rate study:

*...The current system of user charges is based on the committed treatment capacity allocated to each sewer user. This capacity is based on the Title V capacity requirements defined by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection ("DEP") as 110 gallons per day per bedroom or bedroom equivalent. Given the fact that very few of the sewer users have metered sewer flow or metered water consumption, the current system of user charges provides a reasonable basis for allocating operating costs.*

*The new system of user charges is based on a combination of the committed capacity and actual metered water consumption. Under the new system of user charges operating costs have been divided between costs that vary with actual consumption (i.e., sewer flow) called "variable costs" and costs which do not vary with actual consumption called "fixed costs". The new system of charges consists of a "capacity charge" to recover the fixed costs and a volume rate to recover the variable costs.*

If you have any questions about your bill or meters please call the office at 508-248-4953.

Also, spring is here! That means that there is melting snow and rain which to some homeowners means sump pumps for wet basements. Please note that the sewer regulations have the following prohibited connections:

(h) Prohibited Connections

No person shall connect roof downspouts, exterior foundation drains, sump pumps, areaway drains, or other sources of surface runoff or groundwater to a building sewer which discharges to a sanitary sewer. Any business, commercial, or industrial establishment, residence or building found to have any of the above-mentioned connections, shall immediately eliminate said connection, regardless of when the connection was made, or will be subject to fines.

Roof downspouts and sump pumps and other sources of runoff or groundwater discharging to the sewer create inflow problems and are therefore prohibited. Please make sure that you do not connect any of the above to the sewer! We will be conducting periodic testing and if you are found to have any of these prohibited connections you will be subject to fines.

The commission is not interested in collecting fines but in educating the consumers. The high flow caused by these connections creates a burden on the plant. Basically, the sewer users end up paying to treat "clean" water. There is no need for that!

If you need any further explanation please don't hesitate to call. We would rather work with you to affect change rather than levy fines to correct a problem.