



Administrative Memo

Date: December 28, 2021

To: Dawn Collins, Town Clerk

From: Julia Stambaugh, Deputy Town Clerk

Subject: Improved Water Billing

In October 2020, the Town began the search for a new water billing service. Our old software interface was archaic, not intuitive, and had several bugs. In that system, much of the meter reading prep and import, and the billing process, was in-house, rather tedious, and regularly has issues that demand hours of staff attention. That system did not provide any of the conveniences customers demand today, such as account access, emailed bills, and historical data & graphs on their bills.

Our new water billing service with American Conservation & Billing Solutions is primarily a data management system for utilities. It is a modern, web-based system and offers complete customer service while also providing a portal for town staff. The system interfaces directly with the meter read system, and any issues are managed by the provider. The creation of bills is done by the provider according to our specifications. The bills can be emailed and/or printed and postal mailed by the provider. The bills are modern, easy to read, provide rate detail and historical information. Their payment options are similar to other utility services. However, the autopay charges are about half of what was charges under the previous service. The provider can handle all resident calls and can “escalate” to town staff based on our requirements.

This new service had major benefits to the staff and the residents. There was a huge improvement in the accuracy and accessibility of the data, the level of information and service to the residents, autopay savings, and staff time savings.

Along with these advancements has come a new look at the water billing data. We are able to track the water use and payment history on all accounts. With these new reports, we are able to see accounts with no usage or other with too much usage. We are now running aging reports, which help identify delinquent accounts. To that end, Tish is able to, on a monthly basis, reach out to these customers to encourage them to bring their accounts up to current. Starting with the February 2021 aging report there was a total of \$25,541.29 in outstanding billings, with \$10,256.06 at 60 to over 120 days. As of November, there was a total of \$13,145.29 in outstanding billings, with \$3,723.19 at 60 to 120 days.

These reports are also giving us the ability to capture lost revenues. We discovered accounts which were only paying base rate, and not being charged for water usage. We found properties with a water tap, but were not paying their base rate, per ordinance. The reports also revealed broken meters, that were going undetected, allowing water use to flow unmetered.