

Dennis Water District

Board of Water Commissioners

Paul F. Prue, *Chairman*
Peter L. McDowell, *Vice Chair*
Robert M. Perry

Main-Line News

www.denniswater.org

Appointed by Water Commissioners

David Larkowski, Superintendent
Sheryl A. McMahon, Clerk & Treasurer
James Ritchie, Asst. Superintendent

Volume 31, No. 1

February 2024

WATER RATES

As the Board of Water Commissioners consider and deliberate on a proposed FY 2025 operating budget, capital expenditures and improvements to the system, they are taking special note that the projected increases in the operating budget cannot be supported with the current water rate structure.

Last fall, the Board authorized the procurement of financial planning software provided by Waterworth. The financial modeling is specifically designed for budget forecasting, capital and debt planning and the development of a supporting water rate structure. Also scheduled to be reviewed and updated are the District's service fees. It is highly likely that the current three-tiered water rate structure will be updated to include at least one, if not more additional tiers.

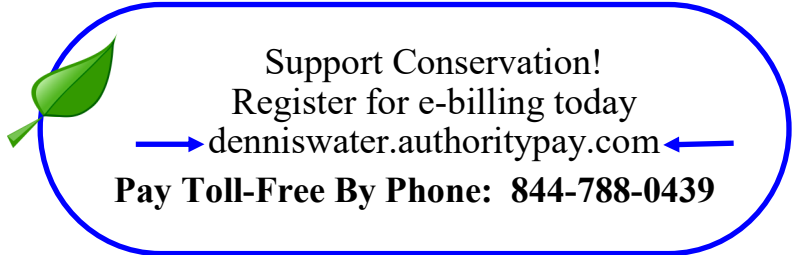
The supervising and permitting agency for public water suppliers in Massachusetts is the Department of Environmental Protection. Through this permitting process, DEP is strongly urging water utilities to increase their water rates for high-end users as a means of encouraging conservation and hopefully curtailing water used for lawn irrigation.

The new water rates will not be determined before this newsletter is published. Please check in on the District's website for announcements on water rates. It is anticipated that the new rates will be effective with the water bills to be issued in August 2024.

IRON & MANGANESE FILTER PLANT "Greensand" Replacement Project

As mentioned in the article above, the District continues to invest in the system's infrastructure with new technologies and effective maintenance of existing systems. In 2009, the District completed two iron and manganese removal treatment plants at a cost of just under \$8 million. Upgrades were completed in 2014 by adding additional filter vessels and tying in two additional wells. There are a total of 14 filter vessels that are 11' in diameter by 12' tall. The filter media that traps and removes iron and manganese is a combination of gravel, anthracite - which is a selected coal that is processed for use in water filtration and "Greensand PlusTM" - a black filter media designed for removing soluble iron and manganese. This filter media is sampled and tested annually to

"GreenSand" continued on reverse ...



Support Conservation!
Register for e-billing today
→ denniswater.authoritypay.com ←
Pay Toll-Free By Phone: 844-788-0439

The most frequent complaint received from customers who receive a Past Due Notice is that "they never got the bill." We do not doubt that this is true. However, the District has a professional printer prepare and mail the water bills via the US Post Office using pre-sorted first class mail. Unfortunately, we cannot attest to what the USPS does with the mail once it is handed over.

To be certain you receive your water bill timely, simply register your account through our Customer Portal. It's Easy. Type "denniswater.authoritypay.com" in your browser's URL box at the top of the page and you will be brought to this screen.



Dennis Water District Pay your bill

Guests

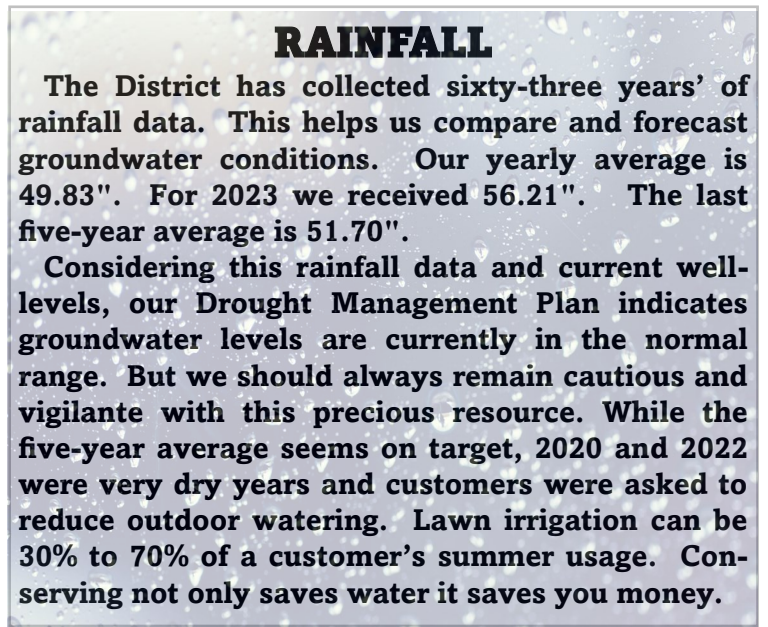
Checkout with Quick Pay 

Log In

You will be taken to an external payment system.

Not registered?
Get started today. All you need is your account number and CID from your bill. [Create a new account?](#)

From here you can register your account by clicking on [Create a new account](#). Once your account is registered, you can pay your bill on-line, receive your bill electronically and sign up for *Autopay*.



RAINFALL

The District has collected sixty-three years' of rainfall data. This helps us compare and forecast groundwater conditions. Our yearly average is 49.83". For 2023 we received 56.21". The last five-year average is 51.70".

Considering this rainfall data and current well-levels, our Drought Management Plan indicates groundwater levels are currently in the normal range. But we should always remain cautious and vigilante with this precious resource. While the five-year average seems on target, 2020 and 2022 were very dry years and customers were asked to reduce outdoor watering. Lawn irrigation can be 30% to 70% of a customer's summer usage. Conserving not only saves water it saves you money.

“Greensand” - Continued from front...

monitor its condition as part of plant maintenance. During its 14+ years of operation, a staggering 9.5 billion gallons of water have been filtered by the media and it is coming to the end of its useful life. In the years following the plants’ construction, the District began setting aside \$50,000 to \$75,000 per year in a fund for the future



A look at the filter vessels in one of the treatment plants.

replacement of the filter media. As the scope of work and product specifications are being developed for putting this project out to bid, preliminary estimates are coming in at \$2.1 million. With about \$550,000 ready to apply, it leaves \$1.6 million to be paid with borrowed funds.

The Board is planning on having the bids evaluated and ready to award the project to a contractor by the Annual

District Meeting on April 23, 2024. The project will have to be done in phases over several months because the plants have to stay on-line during the change over.

CUSTOMER CORNER

A few reminders for our valued customers.

- ◆ Meters are billed twice a year for all water passing through the meter, whether lost or used.
January - June usage is billed in August
July - December usage is billed in February
- ◆ We strongly urge customers to **MONITOR** their water usage on a regular basis. We recommend monthly. We cannot tell you where the water went once it goes through the meter.
- ◆ Property owners are financially responsible for all repairs to their water service. This includes from where the service connects on the water main (even if it is across the street) up to the water meter.
- ◆ Property owners are responsible for ensuring that the water meter does not freeze. The District provides a service for the seasonal removal and reinstallation of the water meter.
- ◆ We welcome your questions. Please feel free to contact us at customerservice@denniswater.org.
- ◆ Know where the main water shut-off valve is in your home. Most often it is just before the water meter which is usually in the basement or crawl.

Looking Forward in 2024

*April 23, Tuesday, 6:00 PM
Annual District Meeting*

*May 14, Tuesday, 7AM to 8PM
Annual Town and District Election*

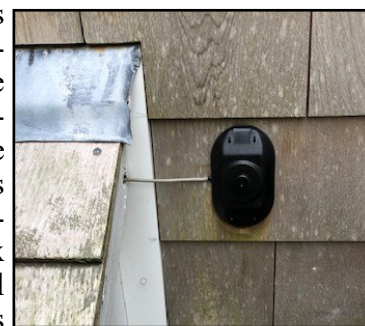
*June 1, Saturday, 9AM to 1PM
Household Hazardous Waste Collection
at Tony Kent Ice Arena
Sponsored by Dennis Water District*

For additional information on these events, please visit the District’s website at: www.denniswater.org

HOW DOES THE DISTRICT READ WATER METERS?

Electronic Devices -

To efficiently read meters without having to gain access to your property, the meter is wired to an electronic reading device on the outside of the building. It is not possible to obtain a reading from this electronic box or pad without special equipment. Meter readers have to physically touch the outside box or pad in order to obtain the reading.



Most buildings have a scan pad or box on the outside. It can only be read electronically.

Reading Cycles - It takes the District approximately five to six weeks to read all meters, and it is done twice a year for bills issued in February and August. The vast majority of water meters are located in basements. For some properties, the meter may be located in a pit between the building and street.

Home Safety Cameras - More and more property owners, particularly second home owners, are installing cameras on their property. Please be aware that the District will be on your property to read the meter at least two times per year. If the box or scan pad on the outside does not provide a reading, employees may return to make a repair.

MONITOR YOUR WATER USAGE REGULARLY!

Customers are often surprised by large water bills. The District only reads and bills twice a year. *It can’t be stressed enough; monitor your water usage by taking regular meter readings.* Reading the water meter, at least monthly, will let you know how much water is being used and help give you an early warning sign that perhaps more water is actually being used than you expect.

It is particularly helpful to take meter readings regularly if you have lawn irrigation. These systems can have leaks and they tend to go undetected until there is a very high bill. Much like the electric company can’t tell what the electricity was used for, the District can’t tell you where the water went.