

Why the District is considering a new outside watering adjustment policy based on a sub-meter requirement.

The primary purpose of the outside watering adjustment program is to not charge customers for water that does not enter the public sewer system. Under the existing program, the adjustment is calculated two ways.

The most common is the customer must call us each billing quarter to note there will be outside water use. We list the name and address, and when it comes time to bill for the sewer we compare that quarter's water consumption to the previous three quarters. If the "use is high relative to...the three previous billing periods." We may reduce to the previous high, but will not adjust to more than ½ of the current billing period usage. And will not adjust below the minimum 800 cubic feet. This is a very subjective, judgement based, and imprecise method. There is no set definition or quantity for high relative to the previous three billing periods. And we have no way to determine if all or any of the usage above the previous high usage is in fact outside water usage.

The second method is the sub-meter program. Under the current program anyone can purchase and install a sub-meter that records only the water going outside the building. We inspect the installation and record the meter serial number and initial reading. The customer then calls in the reading each billing period. We deduct that reading from their water consumption reading (from the water district) and bill the difference. As with the other method, we will not deduct below the minimum charge of 800 cubic feet.

As you can see there is a big difference in these two methods. One is precise and quick. Taking very little staff time to implement. The second is very time consuming with large record keeping requirements, with the need to continually go back to the list to make sure each customer listed has had the usage reviewed. Even then there is no guarantee of an adjustment, as it is a subjective and judgmental decision, with no set limit or quantity defined as overage from the previous three quarter high. Then we found ourselves granting adjustments for customers who did not call prior to the billing, again very time consuming and ineffective use of resources and staff time. Effective 2016, we no longer consider adjustments if a customer does not call in per the program requirement.

The goal of the new watering adjustment proposal (which can be found on our website (www.brinswicksewer.org) for your review (please send comments to the general manager at lblanchette@brunswicksewer.org) - is to use the same new wireless water meters the water district is now converting to, that will send the usage directly to us. Our customers will no longer have to call in a meter reading or call to be placed on the watering list. And, more importantly, each customer using the sub-meter will be credited one-for-one (down to the 800-cubic foot minimum) for the water they use that does not enter the public sewer system. This process will save countless staff hours and recordkeeping requirements. With the second goal of making staff more effective and efficient and reduce the administrative cost of operating the District.

End.