

TOWN OF WATERTOWN

WATERTOWN WATER & SEWER AUTHORITY

COMMUNITY UPDATE

Working Toward Fair Resolution of Two Sewer Matters

We know residents have questions about recent discussions involving sewer-related issues. The Town Council and the Watertown Water & Sewer Authority (WSA) have been working with legal counsel on two sewer-related matters, one involving the City of Waterbury and the other involving the Watertown Fire District. While we are committed to conducting the public's business as openly as possible, Connecticut law allows for confidential executive sessions when legal strategy is being discussed. At this stage, protecting the Town's analysis and negotiating position is important to ensure the best outcome for Watertown residents and ratepayers. The Council and the WSA are approaching these matters carefully, with the community's long-term interests in mind, and we will share more information as soon as we can without compromising those efforts. While we cannot share every detail at this time, we'd like to provide a plain-language overview of the issues, the steps being taken, and what we're hoping to accomplish for the community.

\$1.3 million

sought from the City of Waterbury for sewer overbilling

\$8.5 million

sought from the Watertown Fire District for sewage fees

1. City of Waterbury - Sewer Billing and Reimbursement

Here's the issue: After a prior agreement between the two towns expired, Watertown's sewer bill should have been calculated using the water-consumption method set forth in Waterbury's own ordinances. Instead, Waterbury kept billing us based on sewer meter readings, a different method that is not permitted by their own rules, overcharging Watertown by roughly \$1.3 million since October 2025.

We're asking Waterbury for a full accounting of sewer charges going back to July 1, 2018, corrected bills, implementation of the right methodology going forward, and reimbursement of whatever we've overpaid.

2. Watertown Fire District - Sewage Collection and Treatment Charges

The second matter goes back to a 1976 agreement that governs how the Fire District pays for sewage collection and treatment. While Watertown was in its earlier dispute with Waterbury, the Town billed the Fire District at the lower rate the Town was paying at the time. After that dispute was resolved, the Town paid Waterbury the additional amount owed based on a higher, as ordered by the court. We are now asking the Fire District to cover its fair share of that gap: \$8,536,436.71, for the period from July 2018 through July 2025.

One Watertown Community

WSA ratepayers and Fire District residents are all part of one Watertown. This isn't about pitting one group of neighbors against another. The goal is simple: to make sure costs are shared fairly and that no group of ratepayers is asked to pay more than their fair share.

Why the Town Is Moving Forward

This is about starting a conversation, not starting a conflict. By formally raising these issues, the Town and WSA are creating an opportunity to work with Waterbury and the Fire District to better understand the facts, resolve differences where possible, and seek outcomes that support the long-term interests of the community. Wherever we land needs to work for WSA ratepayers, Fire District ratepayers, Town taxpayers, and the community as a whole.

Keeping Residents Informed

We know these issues matter to our community, and we are committed to keeping residents informed along the way. While some details must remain confidential, we will share updates whenever we can. We'll post updates on the Town's website, in a quarterly printed newsletter, with copies available at Town Hall, the local libraries, Watertown Housing Authority locations, and the Water & Sewer Authority office.

Our aim is simple: to do what's best for Watertown, keep residents informed, and work toward a fair outcome for everyone who calls Watertown home.

Questions? Contact the Town Manager's Office at 860-945-5255 or Townmanager@watertownct.org or visit Watertownct.org

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why is the Town discussing these matters now?

The Town Council and the Watertown Water & Sewer Authority (WSA) are addressing two sewer-related matters, one involving the City of Waterbury and the other involving the Watertown Fire District. The goal is to ensure that sewer-related costs are allocated fairly and in accordance with existing agreements and applicable rules.

Q. Why were these discussions held in executive session?

Connecticut law allows public agencies to meet in executive session when discussing legal strategy related to pending claims or potential litigation. While some discussions must remain confidential for now, the Town is committed to sharing information whenever it can do so without harming its position.

Q. Is the Town filing a lawsuit?

Not at this time. The Town's first step is to initiate discussions with the City of Waterbury and the Fire District. The goal is to resolve these matters through negotiation and good-faith discussions if possible.

Q. Does this mean one group of residents is being pitted against their neighbors?

No. This is not about one neighborhood, district, or group of residents versus another. The Town's objective is to ensure costs are allocated fairly so that no group of ratepayers ends up paying more than its fair share. All residents are part of one Watertown community.

Q. Will sewer rates or taxes increase because of these matters?

No decisions regarding rates or taxes are part of these discussions. The current focus is on determining whether past costs were properly billed and allocated under existing agreements and rules.

Q. How long will this process take?

The Town is just beginning to engage Waterbury and the Fire District on these issues. While there is no specific timeline, the hope is to work collaboratively with Waterbury and the Fire District to better understand the facts, resolve disagreements where possible, and reach a fair outcome.

Q. How will residents be kept informed?

The Town plans to share updates whenever it can do so without compromising ongoing negotiations. Updates will be posted on the Town's website and included in the Town's quarterly newsletter.

Q. What is the Town hoping to accomplish?

The Town's goal is straightforward: to ensure costs are allocated fairly, protect residents and ratepayers, and reach an outcome that serves the best interests of the entire Watertown community.

Understanding Your Water and Sewer Bill

Q. How do I determine what I am paying for?

The Town is developing an online calculator that will allow each ratepayer to see how their bill is allocated among variable and fixed water and sewer costs, existing debt, and debt associated with the *Waterbury v. Watertown* litigation.

Q. How can residents share questions, concerns, or feedback?

We welcome hearing from residents. Questions, concerns, and comments can be directed to the Town Manager's Office at 860-945-5255 or TownManager@watertownct.org. Residents are also encouraged to attend Town Council and WSA meetings and follow updates as these matters progress.