



MEDIA RELEASE

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MR# 20190029

DATE: 8 May 2019

RE: Amherst town council sets water utility operating budget, sewer rates

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – Sewer rates and the Amherst Water Utility's operating budget were set by Amherst town council when it met on April 29.

The utility's operating budget for the 2019-20 fiscal year was pegged at \$2,246,938. In conjunction with the setting of the budget, council released the water rates for the same period. These rates were approved by the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board in 2017.

The quarterly rates are:

Base Charges

- Unmetered (assuming 272 cubic meters per year) \$83.16
- Metered
 - 5/8" meter \$31.11
 - 3/4" \$45.35
 - 1" \$73.83
 - 1.5" \$145.03
 - 2" \$230.47
 - 3" \$458.32
 - 4" \$714.65



- 6" \$1,426.67
- 8 \$2,565.90
- Consumption rate (per cubic meter) \$0.765

Council also set the sewer rates for the 2019-20 fiscal year. There has been no change in the sewer rates in the last five years and none is anticipated for this fiscal year.

The amount charged for these rates covers the anticipated expenditures for the year, including capital out of revenue of \$15,000.

Homeowners shall be billed for sewer services using one of the following methods, effective April 1, 2019:

Metered customers

Those owners whose water service is meters shall pay a usage charge of:

- Residential: \$0.99 per cubic metre of metered water consumption as determined by the Amherst Water Utility
- Commercial/Industrial/Institutional: \$0.49 per cubic metre of metered water consumption as determined by the Amherst Water Utility
- Base Charges (Those owners whose water service is metered shall pay a base charge. The quarterly base charge is:

- 5/8" \$18
- 3/4" \$27
- 1" \$43.75
- 1.5" \$86
- 2" \$136.25
- 3" \$271.25
- 4" \$500

Non-metered customers

- For non-metered customers in metered mobile home parks, the park owner shall pay \$178.53 per dwelling unit per annum.



Council also approved a \$72 wastewater treatment uniform charge on each unmetered mobile home located in a land-leased community within town boundaries. This charge is unchanged from the previous fiscal year.

The charge covers a portion of the debenture principal and interest payments for the wastewater treatment facility. The uniform charges are due on Sept. 30, 2019, with interest charged after Oct. 1, 2019 at the rate of one per cent per month, 12 per cent per annum.

Substance use policy

An updated Substance use Policy was approved by council during the session. Its development began with the legalization of cannabis and medical cannabis.

The updated policy addresses medical and non-medical use of substances that have the potential to impair an employee at the workplace. It also addresses the actions that will be taken should an employee need assistance with a substance abuse problem.

The policy gives direction to employees, who have the duty to report if they have reasonable grounds to suspect an impairment problem that affects the workplace.

In passing the policy, council noted this type is common in most workplaces today and it clearly identifies the expectation of the employer to ensure a safe workplace for employees and the general public.

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