



## ***Town of Hardwick Public Water and Sewer System– Frequently Asked Questions – Fall 2020***

### ***Town of Hardwick –Contact Information:***

***Ken LaCasse – Public Water System Operator & Wastewater System Operator - 472-5939***

***Edward Richard - Public Water System Operator & Wastewater System Operator – 472-5939***

***Hardwick Town Clerk’s Office – Billing/Account Questions - 472-5971***

***Hardwick Town Manager’s Office – Other Administrative Questions - 472-6120***

Please note rates for water and sewer service are approved by the Hardwick Select Board on an annual basis following a careful review of budget information and operational needs for the systems. The fees collected from customers are used to cover all operations costs, including, but not limited to daily staffing, regular testing, ongoing improvements, emergency repairs, and setting aside funds for longer term capital improvements. The objective is to run a balanced budget year to year and keep the fees reasonable for the service being received. The Hardwick Water and Wastewater systems are operated to meet very stringent standards as defined by the Safe Drinking Water Act and Clean Water Act and associated Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation rules.

### **How do I pay my bill?**

Payments can be made by check or money order to the Town of Hardwick, P.O. Box 1220, Hardwick, VT 05843. Cash or checks can be accepted in the Town Clerk’s office at 20 Church Street during regular business hours Monday to Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. After hours payments can be left in the drop box to the right of the front doors of the Town Office Building. The Town does not recommend leaving cash payments in the drop box. We do not currently accept credit/debit card or online payments but these payment options are being investigated for the future.

### **If I have a question about water or sewer service who do I contact?**

Questions about your water and sewer service can be directed to Ken LaCasse (contact info listed above). If you have questions on billing, you can contact the Town Clerk’s office (contact info listed above).

### **If I experience a loss of public water service or a sewer blockage at my home or business, who do I contact to report the problem and what if I see a water leak or problem with the sewer system network in the Village?**

Issues with your water and sewer service during regular business hours can be directed to Ken LaCasse. For after hour service emergencies, contact the Hardwick Police Department Dispatch number at 472-5475. The dispatcher will need your name and contact information, the problem being experienced, and the exact address/location of the problem. Details will be relayed by the dispatcher to the system operator on duty and the operator will follow up accordingly. Only contact the dispatch number if you have an emergency with your public water and or public wastewater service.

### **For any water or sewer repairs that may have to occur, how are these costs covered?**

For water service repairs, if it is determined the problem is on the customer side of the curb stop (outside valve between the water main and the interior plumbing of your location) you will be responsible to pay repair fees. For sewer repairs, the customer responsibility is at an outside location where the sewer service flows to the Town’s wastewater collection system. This is generally noted at the location on the edge of the right-of-way for a given wastewater connection. Arranging for repairs on the customer side of the service is the sole responsibility of the customer.

**What if I see a water leak and problem with the sewer system network in the village area?**

Contact the Town if you observe a water leak and or problem with the sewer collection system network by calling 472-5939. For after hour service emergencies contact the Hardwick Police Department Dispatch number at 472-5475 and report the details.

**How did the Town arrive at a base of 10,000 gallons per quarter for a household account?**

The Town established 10,000 gallons / per quarter (3-month period) in 2018 and will continue to use this volume as the base per quarter. On average this base volume will be enough to cover water use needs for a single-family residence for a quarter.

**I understand my sewer bill is based on the water bill for a given quarter (3-month period); can I get a reduction on the sewer portion of my bill if I am washing a car, watering a lawn, or filling a pool?  
What if I have a leak on my side of the water meter?**

A discount cannot be given on the sewer portion of the bill for these types of usage. Fees for water usage caused by leaks that are determined to be on the customer's side of the water meter are the responsibility of the owner to pay in full.

**My bill seems higher than usual for the quarter and how can I check to ensure no leaks are taking place inside my home or business?**

If you suspect a leak, check for dripping faucets, a leaking toilet, and ensure no leaks on the water lines inside your home or business. Even a small leak can add up to a significant amount of water over time. To check that toilets are not leaking, look for water entering the bowl (assuming not flushing it). You can add a few drops of food coloring to the back tank and if that dye color appears in the bowl it would indicate the tank valve or flapper valve of the toilet is leaking and needs repair/replacement.

**If my water line freezes, who is responsible to thaw it and pay for required repairs?**

For freeze-up situations, the Town is responsible for the water service up to the outside curb stop. The curb stop is a turn on/shut off valve typically near the edge of a given property and often near the edge of the road right-of-way. The water department will investigate the situation and if it is determined the problem is on the customer's side of the valve, the customer would need to take action to repair the problem. The costs associated with a thawing procedure on the customer side of the curb stop would be the responsibility of the customer. If it is determined the problem is with the service network the system would be responsible for repair costs. Please note that thawing of water lines should be conducted by plumbers/contractors approved for this type of work. The Town recommends a steaming procedure and does not approve of welding techniques for thawing frozen lines.

**How can I get updates from the town if there is a water or sewer service emergency?**

The Town currently provides updates on public water and sewer service on the Town website, via Front Porch Forum, public posting of information in the community, and if needed will post updates on Hardwick Community TV. An information collection form is now being developed and will give customer's the capability to provide contact information such as phone number, cell number, and email addresses. This info will be used in the future to directly alert those who have provided contact info with pertinent and timely updates such as when an emergency operations situation occurs. As the notification system is developed and ongoing updates will continue to be posted on the town website, at public notice locations such as the post office, on Front Porch Forum, and in some instances, on Hardwick Community TV.

*Please see the Town website for ongoing updates on water and sewer operations updates as well as other town business at <https://hardwickvt.org>*