

EAST LYME WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION
FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE
Special Meeting Minutes

Date and Time: February 13, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.

Present: Ben North, Joe Bragaw, Chairman Dan Cunningham, Dave Bond,
Michelle Williams, Kevin Gervais, Heather Larson

Absent: Roger Spencer

Location: East Lyme Town Hall, Conference Room 1,
108 Pennsylvania Avenue, Niantic, CT 06357

RECEIVED TOWN RECORDS
EAST LYME, CT
2026 FEB 19 PM 3:46

1. Chairman Cunningham called meeting to order at 10:05 am.
2. Ben North opened the meeting by reflecting on his email to the Subcommittee members dated 02/10/2026. He reviewed the water rates for two potential new lower tiers, 10k usage and 20k usage. It was collectively determined that the 10k tier in usage covered a significant portion of the residential rate payers (22%) while minimizing the adverse effect of a reduction in total revenues. He discussed scenarios showing benefit for customers switching to the deduct irrigation system, implementation of a customer portal, and factors affecting budget such as increased cost of health insurance, need to replace several vacant field positions, and necessity of another water maintainer position.

Pertaining to the discussion as to whether the commission would pay for the cost to install irrigation meters and radios, Ben North stated that for a standard meter and radio was approximately \$600. Cost for the Sensus Ally and additional radio was approximately \$900 just for the equipment. He estimated this would cost the commission \$700,000 if the commission decided to cover the cost. Dave Bond suggested offering a payment plan since the cost would be property owners' responsibility. Ultimately it seemed that the cost should be borne by the customer, as they would stand to benefit by moving to the deduct system. Ben North shared a cost comparison that showed a return on investment for customers on sewer who wished to install the deduct system of 2-4 years based on parts and installation. Michelle Williams asked how leak alerts work and wondered if 1-10 policy should be adjusted. Ben North explained that continuous consumption is currently monitored weekly with admin reaching out to anyone on the report and following up with a mailer. He also mentioned that irrigation is excluded from the 1-10 policy. Dave Bond suggested a seasonal automatic shut off to irrigation systems by the department. Ben North noted that this is not an adequate way to winterize an irrigation system and would create an improper expectation for the homeowner. Ben preferred to have vendors winterize systems and shut off instead so it is done properly without the liability.

Joe Bragaw commented that the customer portal would be a great resource for property owners to self-check usage and he was hoping to work that into the budget. Since the rate structure would affect the budget and potentially add revenue, it was decided by the Subcommittee that the public would need to be informed of these changes by the March Commission meeting so that it could be voted on at the April Commission meeting. Michelle Williams asked for the use of pictures or graphs to make it easier for the public to understand. Chairman Cunningham felt the sooner this was rolled out, the better. Ben North agreed to add it to February's agenda to update the Water & Sewer Commission.

In the interest of time, changing sewer flat fee was tabled to be revisited closer to the next rate change because it would need to be an ordinance change with the Board of Selectman and not just the Water and Sewer Commission. Discussion about budget also tabled for time being until next meeting. Quarterly billing put on hold for now due to the financial and administrative stresses already on the department.

3. Next committee meeting set for Friday, February 20, 2026, at 10:00 am.
4. Chairman Cunningham motioned meeting adjournment at 11:00 am.

Submitted by Heather Larson, Water and Sewer Utility Administrative Assistant