

EAST LYME WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION
FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE
Special Meeting Minutes

Date and Time: February 6, 2026 at 10:30 a.m.
Present: Ben North, Joe Bragaw, Chairman Dan Cunningham, Dave Bond,
Roger Spencer, Michelle Williams, Kevin Gervais, Heather Larson
Location: East Lyme Town Hall, Conference Room 1,
108 Pennsylvania Avenue, Niantic, CT 06357

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FEB 13 2026 9:38
Dan Cunningham

1. Chairman Cunningham called meeting to order at 10:35 am.
2. Ben North opened by clarifying the need for a potential change to the existing rate structure because of irrigation. He noted that not everyone that irrigates is on sewer. However, those residential irrigation customers on sewer are dropping into higher tiers creating large/unexpected bills for the sewer portion of their bill. Without a submeter, they are charged sewer rates for all water consumed including irrigation. And, as a result Sewer gains revenue that essentially belongs to Water.

The first attempt at an irrigation rate was offered this year. Customers were required to cover the cost of the meter, radio, and installation. In doing so, they saw no immediate cost savings and no incentive to enroll.

As one potential solution, Ben North proposed creating a separate rate structure for residential and non-residential properties. The span between tiers would be changed and/or additional tiers added. Having a lower-level tier would help those using minimal water as well as those on a fixed income. To eliminate confusion on the bills, “meter maintenance fee” would be changed to “meter fee” and base amount (first 3,500 gallons) would be removed.

Another solution would be to implement a Mandatory Irrigation Program. A volume range would be set and customers that fell into that category would be required to install a deduct meter. The rates would be restructured based on the volume criteria. Regardless of solution, customers interested in irrigation meters would utilize Sensus Ally meters so that the Water & Sewer Department could automatically shut off the meters during times of draught, etc.

Michelle Williams felt that using block tiers would be less complicated than adopting the mandatory program. Dave Bond suggested making Irrigation Program voluntary and offer submeters to those that were interested. Committee liked the block concept more and wanted to see what 0-10,000 and 0-20,000 tiers would look like. Committee was also interested in a cost estimate to cover deduct meters for customers initially.

The concept of customers policing their own usage was briefly discussed. Ben North reported he recently tested a potential software system that would give customers current readings through the online portal.

As for generating revenue, quarterly billing and implementing a sewer flat fee or minimum charge were mentioned and tabled for later discussion.

3. Next committee meeting set for Friday, February 13, 2026, at 10:00 am.
4. Chairman Cunningham motioned meeting adjournment at 11:33 am.

Submitted by Heather Larson, Water and Sewer Utility Administrative Assistant