

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

DW 20-112

ABENAKI WATER COMPANY, INC.

Request for Change in Rates

ORDER OF NOTICE

On October 30, 2020, Abenaki Water Company, Inc. (Abenaki or the Company) refiled its request for an increase in rates for its Belmont sewer system and four of its water systems (Belmont, Bow, Tioga-Gilford Village, and Tioga-Belmont). Abenaki requested Commission approval of an individual rate increase for its Belmont sewer system and consolidated rates among the four water systems. Alternatively, the Company requested individual rate increases for the four water systems in the event the Commission did not approve a consolidated rate. Abenaki also sought temporary rates for all five systems.

On November 19, 2020, the Company filed amended proposed consolidated, temporary, and permanent rate tariffs to replace previously proposed tariffs. The requested effective date for all proposed tariffs submitted was December 1, 2020. On November 30, the Commission issued Order No. 26,427, which suspended Abenaki's proposed tariffs for 18 months.

The petitions and subsequent docket filings, other than any information for which confidential treatment is requested of or granted by the Commission, are posted at <https://www.puc.nh.gov/Regulatory/Docketbk/2020/20-112.html>.

The following table represents Abenaki's requested monthly temporary and permanent rate increase for each customer class of its Belmont sewer system. The proposed rates shown are compared to the current monthly rate the Company charges. The consumption charge is calculated per 100 cubic feet (ccf).

BELMONT SEWER SYSTEM

Customer Class	Current Base Charge	Proposed Temporary Base Charge	Proposed Permanent Base Charge	Current Consumption Charge	Proposed Temporary Consumption Charge	Proposed Permanent Consumption Charge
Commercial A	\$411.96	\$451.24	\$453.07	\$12.5135	\$23.52	\$23.83
Commercial B	\$137.49	\$150.60	\$151.21	\$3.8586	\$8.68	\$8.67
Multi-Family/Unit	\$29.71	\$32.54	\$32.68	\$5.8120	\$5.63	\$5.69
Single Family	\$29.71	\$32.54	\$32.68	\$5.8120	\$5.63	\$5.69

The Company also proposed consolidated rates for its four water systems that would make the rates uniform among the companies. The following table represents the Company's request for consolidated rates for each customer. The proposed consolidated rate shown is compared to the current rate Abenaki charges. The consumption charge is calculated per ccf consumed.¹

CONSOLIDATED RATE FOR WATER SYSTEMS

	Current Base Charge	Proposed Consolidated Base Charge	Current Consumption Charge	Proposed Consolidated Consumption Charge
Belmont				
Commercial A	\$436.00	\$600.00	\$15.5612	\$16.15
Commercial B	\$145.66	\$200.00	\$7.2009	\$16.15
Multi-Family/Unit	\$28.00	\$45.00	\$7.2009	\$16.15
Single Family	\$28.00	\$45.00	\$7.2009	\$16.15
Bow				
Single Family	\$16.50	\$45.00	\$13.3487	\$16.15
Tioga-Gilford Village				
Rates-Monthly	\$11.99	\$45.00	\$4.0893	\$16.15
Tioga-Belmont				
Rates-Monthly	\$20.00	\$45.00	\$11.7698	\$16.15

¹ Tioga-Gilford Village and Tioga-Belmont's current tariff calculates the consumption charge per gallon (\$0.005467 and \$0.015735 respectively). For ease of comparison, the consumption charges have all been converted to per ccf consumed. One ccf is equivalent to 748 gallons of water. See <http://aquarionwater.com/conservation> (providing user-friendly conversion calculator).

In the event the Commission approves the consolidation of rates, Abenaki requested a number of modifications to the water systems' miscellaneous utility service fees. Those changes include, but are not limited to: a late charge equivalent to one-and-a-half percent per month of the unpaid amount due; a disconnection fee of \$60.00 or the costs to the Company for the round trip taken, whichever is greater; a returned check fee of the actual costs incurred by the Company, or \$35.00, whichever is greater; a collection of costs from the customer in the event a customer violates the tariff; a service pipe tapping fee of \$500.00, plus materials; a meter testing fee of \$100.00; a \$250.00 penalty for violation of water restrictions; a cross-connection device testing fee of \$150.00, no less than semi-annually; a reconnection fee of \$120.00; a transfer of customer account fee of \$20.00; a service suspension charge; the requirement of a contribution in aid of construction (CIAC) for main pipe extensions; and a calculation of the required tax cost of CIAC which the contributor of CIAC must pay.

If the Commission does not approve consolidated rates for its four water systems, Abenaki proposed individual temporary and permanent rate increases for each water system. The following table represents Abenaki's requested monthly temporary and permanent rate increase for each customer class of its four water systems. The proposed rates shown are compared to the current monthly rate the Company charges.² The Company is requesting temporary rates whether or not the Commission approves the request for consolidated rates.

² The consumption charges for Belmont and Bow are calculated per ccf consumed. The consumption charges for Tioga-Gilford Village and Tioga-Belmont are calculated per gallon consumed.

INDIVIDUAL RATE INCREASE FOR WATER SYSTEMS

	Current Base Charge	Proposed Temporary Base Charge	Proposed Permanent Base Charge	Current Consumption Charge	Proposed Temporary Consumption Charge	Proposed Permanent Consumption Charge
Belmont						
Commercial A	\$436.00	\$431.00	\$436.00	\$15.5612	\$15.36	\$15.63
Commercial B	\$145.66	\$144.00	\$146.00	\$7.2009	\$7.11	\$7.19
Multi-Family/Unit	\$28.00	\$28.00	\$28.00	\$7.2009	\$6.75	\$6.96
Single Family	\$28.00	\$28.00	\$28.00	\$7.2009	\$6.75	\$6.96
Bow						
Single Family	\$16.50	\$31.51	\$37.09	\$13.3487	\$24.49	\$30.07
Tioga-Gilford Village						
Rates-Monthly	\$11.99	\$28.97	\$31.93	\$0.005467	\$0.013922	\$0.015343
Tioga-Belmont						
Rates-Monthly	\$20.00	\$67.71	\$85.47	\$0.015735	\$0.076286	\$0.090431

Last, Abenaki requested “the ability to file notice with [the Commission], and its customers, of increases imposed by the City” of Laconia for treatment of the Company’s Belmont sewer system’s wastewater at Laconia’s sewer treatment system. Abenaki Water Company, Inc., Rate Case Filing, October 30, 2020, at 7. The Company requested an automatic adjustment of customer rates based on Laconia’s increased rates, after notice to customers, in order to avoid further regulatory proceedings which increases costs faced by customers.

The filing raises, *inter alia*, issues related to whether the proposed temporary and permanent rates proposed for the Belmont sewer system, are just, reasonable, and lawful, as required by RSA 374:2, RSA 378:5, RSA 378:7, RSA 378:27, and RSA 378:28; whether the proposed temporary rates for its four water systems are in the public interest, and will result in

reasonable temporary rates, as required by RSA 378:27; whether consolidation of rates for its four water systems will result in permanent rates that are just, reasonable, and lawful, as required by RSA 374:2, RSA 378:5, RSA 378:7, and RSA 378:28; whether the consolidation of rates will cause unreasonable cross-subsidization of one or more systems at the expense of the other systems; whether, in the alternative, the proposed individual permanent rates for its four water systems are just, reasonable, and lawful, as required by RSA 374:2, RSA 378:5, RSA 378:7, RSA 378:28; whether all of the proposed increases will yield a just and reasonable rate of return on capital investment in plant and equipment, less accrued depreciation; whether those investments were prudent and are used and useful in Abenaki's provision of service to its customers, as required by RSA 378:27 and RSA 378:28; whether the proposed tariff provisions imposing various fees and responsibilities on its customers, in the event consolidated rates are approved, are just and reasonable, as required by RSA 374:2, RSA 378:5, and RSA 378:7; and whether an automatic increase in rates, after notice to customers, based on an adjustment in the sewage treatment charge imposed by the City of Laconia, is just, reasonable, and lawful, as required by RSA 374:2, RSA 378:5, and RSA 378:7.

Each party has the right to have an attorney represent the party at the party's own expense.

Based upon the foregoing, it is hereby

ORDERED, that, consistent with Governor Christopher T. Sununu's Emergency Order #12, the Commission will hold a web-enabled remote prehearing conference, pursuant to N.H. Admin. R., Puc 203.15, on February 1, 2021, at 10:00 a.m., at which each party will provide a preliminary statement of its position with regard to the petition and any of the issues set forth in Puc 201.15. The public may join the hearing by accessing

<https://www.puc.nh.gov/Regulatory/Calendar-Remote.html>. **If you have any difficulty obtaining access to this remote event, please notify the Commission by calling (603) 271-2431 as soon as possible.** Parties will be provided with additional instructions prior to the hearing; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that immediately following the prehearing conference, Abenaki, Staff of the Commission, the Office of the Consumer Advocate, and any intervenors hold a web-enabled remote Technical Session to review the petition, discuss a procedural schedule, and allow Abenaki to provide any amendments or updates to its filing; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that, pursuant to N.H. Admin. R., Puc 203.12, Abenaki shall notify all persons desiring to be heard at this hearing by publishing a copy of this Order on its company website no later than December 24, 2021, such publication to be documented by affidavit filed with the Commission on or before January 8, 2021. The Commission will also publish the order on its website <https://www.puc.nh.gov/Regulatory/ordersofnotice.htm>; and it is

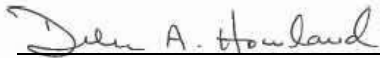
FURTHER ORDERED, that Abenaki shall document by affidavit filed no later than January 8, 2021, that Abenaki complied with the notice requirement and time limitation set forth in N.H. Admin. R., Puc 1203.02(c) and (d); and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that, consistent with N.H. Admin. R., Puc 203.17 and Puc 203.02, any party seeking to intervene in the proceeding shall submit to the Commission a Petition to Intervene with electronic copies sent to Abenaki and to the Office of the Consumer Advocate on or before January 29, 2021, such Petition stating the facts demonstrating how its rights, duties, privileges, immunities or other substantial interests may be affected by the proceeding, consistent with Puc 203.17. Pursuant to the secretarial letter issued on March 17, 2020, (see <https://www.puc.nh.gov/Regulatory/Secretarial%20Letters/20200317-SecLtr-Temp->

[Changes-in-Filing-Requirements.pdf](#)), any party seeking to intervene may elect to submit this filing in electronic form; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that any party objecting to a Petition to Intervene make said objection on or before February 1, 2021.

By order of the Public Utilities Commission of New Hampshire this twenty-second day of December, 2020.



Debra A. Howland
Executive Director

Individuals needing assistance or auxiliary communication aids due to sensory impairment or other disability should contact the Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator, NHPUC, 21 S. Fruit St., Suite 10, Concord, New Hampshire 03301-2429; 603-271-2431; TDD Access: Relay N.H. 1-800-735-2964. Notification of the need for assistance should be made one week prior to the scheduled event.

Service List - Docket Related

Docket#: 20-112

Printed: 12/22/2020

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