

MARBLEHEAD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION



THE FLOW N' GO

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MARBLEHEAD'S TAP WATER—A BARGAIN AT ANY PRICE

The Water and Sewer Commission held a public hearing on June 5, 2018 to set water and sewer rates for Fiscal Year 2019, which began July 1. Notice of the hearing was published in the May 24 and May 31 issues of the *Marblehead Reporter*.

The rate for water usage up to 3,000 cubic feet per quarter increased by five cents, from \$4.80 to \$4.85 per hundred cubic feet. Usage over 3,000 cubic feet per quarter went from \$6.35 to \$6.50, and increase of 15 cents.

(The rate for higher water usage is to encourage conservation. During this past fiscal year, 72 percent of the Town's water usage was billed at the lower rate while 28 percent was billed at the higher rate.)

On the sewer side, the rate for 3,000 cubic feet or less was set at \$9.35 per hundred cubic feet and use over 3,000 cubic feet is \$9.40 per hundred cubic feet. This is an increase of 35 cents and ten cents per hundred cubic feet, respectively.

To put this into perspective, consider the following:

- There are approximately 748 gallons of water in 100 cubic feet, which costs \$4.85 for the 748 gallons.
- This translates to about \$0.0065 cents per gallon of water, or a little more than 1/2 cent.
- If you were to buy just one 16-ounce bottled water each day for a year at a cost of \$1.00 each, you would spend \$365.00.
- To fill your 16-ounce reusable bottle with tap water would cost *less than one quarter of a penny* (including sewer charges). That means your cost ... are you

ready for this? ... would be less than 84 cents for the *entire year!* A savings of around \$364.16 a year.

If recent reports in the media are correct, the bottled water you are buying probably came from a tap just like your kitchen sink. Tests have shown that tap water is just as safe, or even better, than bottled water.

Then if you consider what many of these plastic bottles are made of—resins from methane, xylene, ethylene, ethyleneglycor, and other chemicals— one needs to ask themselves what is the long-term affect of these substances on our bodies.

A researcher at the State University of New York tested water bottles in nine countries, including the United States, and found “widespread contamination.” In a report released this past March, 93 percent of bottled water tested (including major name brands) contained tiny plastic particles that numbered from “zero to more than 10,000 likely plastic particles in a single bottle.”

The extent of the risk to human health posed by this particle contamination is unclear. According to the researcher, “There are connections to increases in certain kinds of cancer to lower sperm count to increases in conditions like ADHA and autism.”

Add to this the resources that it takes to manufacture the bottles (like energy and water), the fuel to transport the bottles to your local store, and the number of bottles that end up in landfills where they will sit for hundreds of years and it seems like a no-brainer.

If this doesn't make a case for drinking tap water instead of bottled water, then nothing will. And, Marblehead's water is among the best!

TIP OF THE QUARTER

Did you know ...

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that a single gas-powered lawn mower emits 11 times more pollution than a new car?

Eight hundred million gallons of gas are used to power lawn mowers annually, producing significant amounts of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.

Find out how to make Marblehead more carbon-neutral at this fall's Sustainability Fair. (See back page for details.)

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‘SUSTAINABILITY’ - A WORD WE WILL BE HEARING MORE OFTEN IN THE FUTURE

“When the well is dry, we learn the worth of water.”

Benjamin Franklin

Loosely translated, what Ben Franklin was saying is that we won’t miss something until it is gone.

If mankind continues to use the earth’s valuable resources without regard to their ‘sustainability’ - water, for example - what does that mean for future generations when the world’s water well does run dry?

Water Sustainability is defined (in layman terms) as *the continual supply of clean water for human uses and for other living things*. It refers to the sufficient availability of water into the foreseeable future and beyond.

It is estimated that humans already use about 54 percent of the available fresh water. With the earth’s population growing by one billion people every 13 to 14 years, will there be enough fresh

water for the 9– to 10-billion people projected by 2050?

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the average American family uses more than 300 gallons of water at home each day. Even more water is used by industry to generate electricity, manufacture products, and transport people and goods.

have offered dozens of water-saving tips.

Large-scale efforts to recycle and reclaim water are being researched and implemented by state and federal governments and countries world-wide. In December, 2017, the City of Modesto, California began selling highly-treated wastewater to farmers to use in irrigating their crops.

Water isn’t the only resource we need to sustain

Sustainable Marblehead, a local organization formed to promote sustainable living, will hold a Sustainability Fair Saturday, October 6, 2018 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at the Charter School, 17 Lime Street. The event will be a fun-filled and family-friendly day of exhibits, demonstrations, speakers, and entertainment focusing on easily-implemented and systemic actions that we can all take to preserve our resources.

For more information on Sustainable Marblehead, visit their website at www.sustainablemarblehead.org. Questions about the fair can be directed to jb@storiesalive.com.

The city-state of Singapore is producing 30 percent of their water supply by transforming wastewater to a drinkable product that is better than their tap water and, back here in the States, there are nation-wide competitions to see which home brewer can produce the best beer using recycled wastewater.

Innovations like these, and conservation by everyone, will hopefully keep earth’s water well from ever running dry.

(Information for this article was taken from a lecture delivered by Jerald Schnoor, Ph.D. and other sources.)

What can we do? On a smaller scale (but no less important), we can increase our water conservation efforts by using less water in and around our homes. Past *Flow n’ Go’s*, available on our website,

Kids’ Corner

WHAT IS ‘SUSTAINABILITY’?

In October, your parents may bring you to a ‘Sustainability Fair’. This fair won’t have a Ferris Wheel, Merry-Go-Round or cotton candy.

But it will have people who will show you about organic gardening, bees and butterflies, bike safety and a whole lot more about saving our resources. And, you may even be able to take a ride in an electric car. (That is much more fun than a Ferris wheel—and closer to the ground.)

Before you go to the Sustainability Fair, you should know what ‘sustainability’ means. Simply put, sustainability is keeping our resources (like water, clean air, and the environment) available and safe for your own children and grandchildren that you may have many, many years from now.

Marblehead’s water department, of course, is concerned with not wasting our valuable water resources. About half of the water we use is wasted. You can reduce the amount of water used in your house by turning off the water when you

brush your teeth and by taking shorter showers.

There are a lot of other things you can do to ‘sustain’ our valuable resources. A few of these—like unplugging your video game when you are not using it—are shown in the boxes above.

Remember the “Three R’s”: **R**educe (use less resources like water and fuel); **R**euse (use reusable water bottles and pass your toys and clothes on to others); and **R**ecycle (don’t throw cans, bottles and paper in the trash—recycle them).

You can learn more about the Three R’s and other ways of saving our resources for future generations at the Sustainability Fair in October. We will see you there.

