

## Aquarion rate hike hearing July 16

By Carol Britton Meyer

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HINGHAM - Aquarion Water Company has filed an application with the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities requesting an approximate \$3.1 million, or an overall 24.8 percent, increase in water service revenues.

Customers in Hingham, Hull, North Cohasset, and Norwell will have an opportunity to comment on the proposed rate increase at a public hearing in July.

The Hingham selectmen voted recently to intervene in the case – that is, “to get involved and present legal arguments as to why the rate hike is not justified,” said Selectman Laura Burns.

It has been seven years since the Company last increased its water rates, stated Aquarion Sr. Vice President of Operations Larry Bingaman in a letter the company is sending to all of its customers. “When the proposed rates are expected to go into effect, investments totaling \$21.4 million will have been made for water utility infrastructure improvements since 2001 in such areas as increased water supply and replacement of aging and undersized pipes, as well as other needed water system enhancements.”

The MA DPU will hold a public hearing for Aquarion customers in all four towns on Wed., July 16, at 7 p.m. in the Hull High School auditorium at 180 Main St. Directions to Hull High School are included with the letter.

Aquarion’s request for a rate increase will be thoroughly reviewed by the MA DPU. No change in water rates can be made within the Department’s approval.

Bingaman is hopeful that the process will be completed and the new rates effective before the end of this year.

If the proposed rates are approved by the MA DPU, the average residential water bill for customers in all four towns, using an average of 175 gallons daily, would increase from \$1.67 to \$2.03 per day.

“We recognize there is never a good time to raise water rates, and no one is happy when prices do increase. We held off as long as possible,” Bingaman said. “But to put things in perspective, a 20-ounce bottle of water at a local convenience store costs between \$1.19 and \$1.29.”

Customers are invited to provide comments at the hearing or in writing via email to the MA DPU by 5 p.m. Fri., July 18, addressed to [dpu.efiling@state.ma.us](mailto:dpu.efiling@state.ma.us) and the hearing officer, [carol.pieper@state.ma.us](mailto:carol.pieper@state.ma.us). Written comments may be sent to: Carol Pieper, Hearing Officer, Dept. of Public

Utilities, One South Station, Boston, MA 02110. (Telephone number: (617) 305-3500.) Refer to Docket D.P.U. 08-27 in all correspondence. For further information about the hearing or approval process, contact Pieper.

Information pertaining to the subject docket is posted on the MA DPU’s website:  
<http://db.state.ma.us/dpu/qorders/frmDocketFind.asp>.

More information about the rate application is posted on Aquarion’s website,  
<http://www.aquarion.com/massachusetts.html>.

Customers may also contact the Aquarion Customer Service Center at 1-800-732-9678 with questions or for assistance with water service needs.

<http://www.wickedlocal.com/hingham/news/x379966241/Aquarion-rate-hike-hearing-July-16>