

Minutes of April 10, 2026, Hingham Sewer Rate Increase Town Hall

Present at the meeting: Mayor Thomas Peterson, Roger Haas, Dave George, Jason Myers, Dan Horinek, and Sandi Peterson. Also present at the meeting were Susan Wells, Ray Lipp, Shelby Borlaug, Keevan Borlaug, and Lowell Strissel. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Peterson. Mayor Peterson explained that we are here to discuss the sewer rate increase to secure SRF loan to complete the wastewater project. He then opened the floor for questions. Lowell asked where the engineer was, to answer questions. Mayor Peterson explained that this meeting had nothing to do with the engineer, this meeting is so we can proceed with the sewer rate increase and then asked Lowell what his question was he would be happy to answer. Lowell questioned that the engineer had been here only once. Mayor Peterson stated he has been here several times and that the initial two town halls were for him to answer any questions, other than that Mayor Peterson has been talking with him both in person and on the phone. Lowell stated he felt it was way overboard for what we needed. Mayor Peterson reiterated from our previous council meeting that Lowell attended and asked the same question: Engineer is required to meet federal and state (DEQ) regulatory requirements for sizing, depth, and surface area. The question was asked were we only doing one lagoon and the answer was yes. The beginning project almost 5 years ago was to include both lagoons and sewer lines throughout the town. Since we had sewer lines cleaned and CCTV'ed, that is no longer a need. The scope of work was taken to one lagoon to lower the cost to the town, as we have exhausted all grant options. Our grant writer, Bear Paw Development, was informed by the DNRC/FEMA they would still like to help with the second lagoon funding. Lowell also questioned that the engineer stated the lagoon had to be sized for growth to 500 people. Mayor Peterson said that the growth comes from what is set by federal and state government. There were several back and forth on government dictating our needs for growth. Keevan then asked about the cost of the sewer lines being cleaned and wanted to know why we can't do it ourselves like Gildford does. Mayor Peterson explained that as a municipality we must show proof of maintenance to the sewer lines. Also, the initial cleaning and CCTV had to be completed for the PER to determine if the sewer lines needed replacing. It was also stated that this project began when it looked like it would be funded by ARPA money. Then the federal government decided that the larger amount was to go to broadband to larger cities. The question was then asked why we can't do it ourselves and once again Mayor Peterson stated that it must be completed with a contractor per regulations. Our contactor is Lakeside. A comment was made, maybe we should unincorporate and then this would fall on Hill County to take care of. Mayor Peterson then stated that yes that is an option, but we would still pay for it through our taxes. The next question, what will the increase be? The increase at this time will be an additional \$36.00 to sewer making monthly sewer rate \$71.00. Rate increase will start in May billing. Project for lagoon should begin in May/June.

Next meeting April 24, 2026, 7:00 at the Hingham Firehall

Meeting adjourned.

Mayor

Clerk