

OK, Now it's Summer

Charles A Smith, PE, CESCL, WDM1

Water Distribution Manager

Hot enough for you! Hope everyone has had great holiday weekends and vacations. Did you try out your water service when you were here? Is everything working OK? Let me know if you need any assistance with your water service.

In this issue we will talk about the new water billing that will be starting this year, some water conservation tips and how to make a tool to make your life – along with my life – easier. It's a big issue with loads of stuff!

Have Fun!

Water Service Billing

Charles A Smith, PE, CESCL, WDM1

Water Distribution Manager

I really want to thank everyone that turned out for the Water Service Billing Presentation on 11 April 2015. We had a full house and many good questions. For those that were not able to attend the presentation, I will include the text in this section of the newsletter. If you have any questions on the water service billing, they can be directed to me

(HMCWater@herronisland.org), the HMC Office (office@herronisland.org) or Judy Grenke, the Water Committee Chairperson (judygreinke@yahoo.com).

Slide 1 – History

The State of Washington has mandated that every community needs to meter their water usage with individual user meters and to implement water conservation measures. Our new water distribution system was constructed and completed in 2012 and funded by a USDA loan that began in 2013.

We had individual meters installed at each assessable unit at the time of installation. A full year of monthly water meter readings has been collected for each water connection. Some of our members have

It's Hard When it's Supposed to be Easy

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Water Distribution Manager

Yes, your water service shut off valve. It's an enigma to some – ¼ turn for on, ¼ turn for off, how do I know it's on, how can I tell if it's off, a bigger wrench is *always* better.

First, let's go through some basics of operating the water service shut off valve.

- The valve is located on the street/road side of the water meter setter in the water meter box.
- When the holes are lined up, the valve is turned off.
- To fully open the valve, you just need to turn the valve ¼ (90 degrees) of a turn clockwise – so that the hole is pointed parallel to the road.
- To fully close the valve, you just need to turn the valve ¼ turn counter clockwise or so that the holes line up.
- Once the holes are lined up, it is your option to lock the valve in the off position.

Second, the valve should not be hard to turn. Yes, it may be stiff if it hasn't been operated very often, but you should not have to strain to operate the valve. If it does feel like something is wrong, do not hesitate to call me (206-707-4645) and we will resolve the problem. Better to call with I don't know rather than "there is water EVERYWHERE".

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multiple water connections. There are a total of 402 water service connections – 397 for Members and 5 for HMC.

Slide 2 - The Facts

HMC is a State of Washington Non-Profit Corporation. We cannot make a profit from our water revenues, but income from billings must be sufficient to sustain our water system operating and maintenance costs.

The annual water budget will determine water billing rates and may vary from year to year.

Water will continue to be billed quarterly based on your average usage and tiered at different levels to meet State of Washington conservation regulations.

A base fee will apply to all water connections to cover operating costs, including Reserves now and into the future.

Slide 3 – The Numbers

The Average Daily Gallons (ADG) used per month will be used to calculate usage because the number of days between meter readings can vary each month. An example of tiered water usage is as follows:

Base Fee: 0 to 150 ADG.....	\$18.00 per month
Tier 1: 151 to 400 ADG.....	\$0.07 per ADG per month
Tier 2: 401 to 800 ADG.....	\$0.14 per ADG per month
Tier 3: Over 801 ADG	\$0.21 per ADG per month

The Base Fee includes:

- Wages for Administration and the HMC Water Distribution Manager
- Repair and maintenance costs (including materials and labor)
- Contract manager including monthly water testing (by NW Water Systems)
- Billing and mailing costs
- Electrical costs
- Excise taxes
- Insurance
- State reporting requirements
- Reserves
- Reserve Study Document Requirements
- Legal Fees, and

- Auditor costs

Slide 4 – How We Developed the Usage Tiers

- The data collected over the last year revealed wide fluctuation levels of usage across the membership. (Full time members vs. part time members and summer time vs. winter time provided the total picture.)
- The Base Fee was established using all water membership connections and includes the first 150 gallons of consumption. The goal was to establish fair rates for a diverse population of water users.
- Three tier levels were created based on real usage data taking into consideration that higher water consumption should be billed at a higher rate to encourage conservation.

The State of Washington mandated conservation requirements dictate the need for these tiers.

Slide 5 – Water Charge Detail

Please refer to the sample water bill that was distributed after the presentation. The Water Charge Detail is divided into three sections.

The Water Charge Detail will include information such as:

- Your HMC Member Number
- The Water Service Connection/s and service address
- Your actual monthly water consumption
- The time period this water usage detail covers
- USDA Loan Fee of \$44.55 if applicable
- Charted usage history

The top portion shows the quarterly charge details including the meter reading dates, the meter readings, the amount of water consumed in gallons and the Average Daily Gallons (ADG).

The middle portion shows the rate per month, the total charges per month and the total charge for the quarter of the year being billed.

The lower portion shows the Average Daily Gallons (ADG) for the current and previous 16 months. This portion also

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includes a chart so that you can have a visual representation of your water usage over time.

Slide 6 – Quarterly Water Bill

Your quarterly water bill could also contain other charges as applicable. These charges could be:

- Past Due charges
- Connection/Installation fees
- Late fees, and/or
- Shut off/Service Termination fees

The total amount due will be shown on your Billing Statement.

Slide 7 – Reminder

Water bills carry the same obligations as regular or special assessments. Water payment delinquencies are handled the same way as other delinquencies and late fees and can result in denial of ferry access in accordance with the established delinquency policy as defined in HMC governing documents.

Questions from the Presentation

Charles A Smith, PE, CESCL, WDM1, Judy Greinke, Carolyn Snyder

Water Distribution Manager

Several Members asked questions after the presentation. I have included the questions and responses here.

Question: What drives the Base Fee?

Response: The base fee is determined by the amount of revenue needed to support the operation and maintenance of the water distribution system. The Water Department plans and submits a budget for review by the HMC Board and Membership based on historical costs and estimates for future expenses. This budget process is done every year and adjustments will be made as necessary to the base fee to cover those costs.

Question: The Base Fee is not State of Washington mandated. How was the Average Daily Gallons per Month determined?

Response: The Water Committee looked into the usage of several local communities to see how similar they are to Herron Island. The Water Committee also looked at national

averages for water usage published by government agencies. The common number that seemed to be included in each of these publications is 50 gallons per person per month on average. The Water Committee determined based on asking various households that it is likely that there will be three people in residence most of the time. This gave the Water Committee the starting point of 150 gallons per day per household per month on average. With the collection of more water meter readings, as part of the next budget cycle, the Water Committee will review the actual member usage to see if the Average Daily Gallons (ADG) for the Base Fee will need to be adjusted.

We are approaching the establishment of the Base Fee as a starting point at this time.

Question: Is the billing cycle going to be the same as it is now?

Response: It is my understanding that the water billing cycle will continue to be quarterly. This means that you will be billed as follows:

The first bill will come to you in November 2015 – this bill includes base fees for October, November and December and water usage for October 2015 only. The reason for this is that we read water meters around the 15th of each month. Water bills are sent out November 1st and the only usage that can be included in the November 2015 bill is for the Average Daily Gallons of water used starting on October 1st. Members voted to start billing water usage beginning in the new fiscal year which starts October 1st. The next bills will include 3 months of water usage plus 3 months of base fees and they will come to you in February, May, and August. Starting in 2016 the November bill will reflect water usage for August, September and October although the rate may change each October with the budget.

Question: What is the cost of maintenance?

Response: The yearly costs associated with maintaining the water system are published with the annual budget in the Water Department detail.

Question: Does everyone have a water meter?

Response: All assessable units have water meters. There are no anonymous or unaccounted for readings.

Question: Am I normal?

Response: You'll never know just how much restraint it takes to answer this question. On your water billing detail, you will see your Average Daily Gallons (ADG) listed for each month. The national average for water usage is 50 gallons per person per day averaged over a month.

It's My First Time

Charles A Smith, PE, CESCL, WDM1

Water Distribution Manager

If you have not been out to your property for a while, here is a check list that will help make sure your water service is running properly.

1. Turn off any left open valves such as sinks or spigots.
2. Open the meter box and check to see if the dial is moving. The dial should not be moving. If the dial is moving, you may have a leak on your property.
3. Turn the ON/OFF valve slowly 1/4 of a turn clockwise (away from the roadway). Remember - the valve is fully open when turned 1/4 of a turn. DO NOT wrench on the valve if it seems stuck. Call me and I will help. It is likely that the dial will move to fill water into the water line. It should only take 30 seconds to 1 minute for the dial to slow and stop. If the dial does not stop - it is likely that there is a valve open or there could be a leak.
4. Open an exterior spigot and let the water run for 1 to 2 minutes. If there is any color, the water should run clear in moments. If it does not run clear after 4 minutes, turn everything off and notify me so that we can check to see what the issue is and what to fix.
5. Turn off the exterior spigot.
6. SLOWLY turn on appliances and fixtures such as toilets, refrigerators with water service and such.
7. Once everything has been turned on for normal operation and no water is running - go check the meter. The dial should not be moving. If it is, there could be a leak in one of the fixtures and you'll need to check them.

Tool of the Trade

Charles A Smith, PE, CESCL, WDM1

Water Distribution Manager

One of the questions that I get asked – a lot – is if there is a tool that can be used to turn the ON/OFF valve on the water meter that can be just “left in the box”?

Yes. Yes there is. It's known as a valve key. However, several of you have been showing me the various homemade gadgets, doohickeys, whatchamacallits, and thingamabobs that you've crafted to turn that little knob. I applaud your ingenuity. I too have an example of a little something that can be crafted simply, works well and can be left in the water meter box. I call mine “that thing”, and here is how you make one.

I started with a broken piece of shelving brace that would

normally be mounted to a wall to hold shelving brackets. The piece needs to be about a ½” wide to accommodate the valve top.



Next, I shortened the piece of aluminum rail to about 5 inches making sure I kept some “meat” on either end.



Then I used a file to round off the corners and make sure that there were no sharp edges. After that, I covered each end with a bit of duct tape.



This works really well. It's small enough to not hit the sides of the meter box but long enough to give you some torque to turn the valve. And because it's made from aluminum, it's not likely to corrode or rust.

Ooh, Pretty...

Charles A Smith, PE, CESCL, WDM1
Water Distribution Manager

Yes indeed, we now have brightly colored fire hydrants on the Island!



The color of the caps of the hydrants has to do with firemen being able to quickly identify the amount of water flow that they are able to get from each hydrant. The color coding provided by the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) is as follows:

BLUE	1500 Gallons per Minute or More	Excellent
GREEN	1000-1499 Gallons per Minute	Good
ORANGE	500-999 Gallons per Minute	Adequate
RED	Below 500 Gallons per Minute	Inadequate
BLACK	Out of Service	

Most of the fire hydrants on the Island are BLUE, some are GREEN and only one is ORANGE.

Take a moment and identify your nearest hydrant. In case of an emergency, it's a good idea to know where your safety equipment is located so even if you aren't able to participate, you can inform others quickly.

Got Wood?

Charles A Smith, PE, CESCL, WDM1
Water Distribution Manager

Are there left-overs from your renovation project? Did you end up with extras from doing the remodeling?



I'm always on the lookout for lumber and other materials that I can use to complete the small projects for the Water Department. If you have things that you think I can use, please let me know at HMCWater@herronisland.org and we can schedule a time and place for me to come by and see what you've got.

Want to Contribute

Charles A Smith, PE, CESCL, WDM1
Water Distribution Manager

Do you have water conservation tips? Do you know something about water that you'd like other people to know?

This is a great place to contribute. Just send me an email at HMCWater@herronisland.org with your tips, tricks and helpful anecdotes and I'll find a way to include them in this newsletter.



To Make a Report

Information to Have At Hand

If you want to report something, have this information ready to go:

Your Name: _____

Contact Number: _____

On Island Address: _____

And a brief description of the problem or issue. This will go a long way in getting a speedy response. Report forms are available in the HMC Office or the website.

An Emergency

Don't panic and don't wait. If there is an emergency on a lot - turn the water service off at the meter and call Charles Smith, WDM or Sean Burns at NWS.

If there is an emergency with the water main or meter – call Charles (206) 707-4645 or Sean (360) 917-4649 and let them know what is happening.

A Non-Emergency Repair or Service

Send me an email (HMCWater@herronisland.org) with the above information on who, where and what and I'll get there as quickly as I can. You can also fill out the Water Service Request Form and drop it off at the HMC Office. The office will notify the Water Distribution Manager when there is a request in the office.



CONTACT INFORMATION

HMC Water Department

Charles Smith (WDM): (206) 707-4645

HMCWater@herronisland.org

Northwest Water Systems

Sean Burns: (360) 917-4649

sean@nwwatersystems.com

Toll Free: 1 (888) 881-0958

HMC Office (253) 884-9350

Claudia Ellsworth, Island Manager

hmcmanager@herronisland.org

Carolyn Snyder, Office Manager

Office@herronisland.org

Call Before You Dig

As people are getting ready to build new homes, trailer platforms and other such items. If this means that you'll need to establish a new water connection – please let me know.

Examples would be if you want to install a new yard hydrant so that you have a place to wash off your boat or equipment. Or maybe you're getting that green thumb going and need a new spigot for a garden.

If you're going to be digging within 2 feet of the meter box, please let me know. Oh, hey, you're still going to be the one digging, but I can be helpful in letting you know where things are and how things were connected to existing services during the water system replacement project.

Utility Notification Center

811 or 1-800-424-5555

www.callbeforeyoudig.org

HMC Water Department

Charles Smith (WDM): (206) 707-4645

HMCWater@herronisland.org



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**