



Town of Bethlehem DPW Water & Sewer Closing Adjustment Information

When selling a property that has municipal water or sewer from the Town of Bethlehem, it is important to know the steps needed to get the meter reading and the closing figure calculation.

Not all properties have both Town water and sewer. Some properties are connected to Town sewer but still use a private well for water. Closings for sewer only properties must be called in to the town also.

****In the event that there is no realtor involved in the property sale, the seller's attorney should follow the steps below that are listed as the realtor's responsibilities.**

Properties with Town Water

- 1) The seller's realtor gets the inside meter reading after the seller has moved out, but no more than 24hrs prior to the closing time.
 - *This reading must be from the **inside water meter only**, usually found in the basement near the main house water shut-off valve. The water meters are about the size of a small coffee can and read left to right. The meter will either be brass with a clear Lucite top or a greyish plastic with a small tab on the top to open and get the digital reading.
 - *The remote readers on the outside of the houses are not connected to the meters in the basements. **Do not take a reading from the outside remote reader.**
 - *If the home is 150+ feet from the road, there is a possibility that the water meter is in a meter pit at the property line. Check with the seller to find out if they have a meter pit. All meter pits are owned by the property owner and they should have the tools needed to open the pit so the realtor can get the meter reading. If the owner cannot give the realtor access needed to obtain the meter reading, the realtor can contact the town water department for help opening the pit. There will be a service call charge for the Town to send a meter technician out to help get the water meter reading for the closing. This service call charge will be added to the closing adjustment figure. The service call charge rate is listed on the Town website and approved annually by the Town Board.
- 2) The realtor calls the Water Dept. with the meter reading and the new owner's names as they will appear on the deed after the seller has moved out of the home. No more than 24 hours in advance of closing date and time.
- 3) The water department takes the information and then completes the transfer process to get the final calculation for cost of water/sewer used by the seller. This only takes 10-30 minutes depending on how busy the office is that day.
- 4) The water department will call or email the realtor with the closing figure whichever is the realtor's preference. This dollar amount is a "Credit to the Buyer" in the closing paperwork. The town does not send out a final bill to the seller. Everything is transferred to the new owner and the new owner will see that closing figure amount as a balance forward on their first bill, but they will have already been paid for the seller's usage at the closing. The new owner will have to pay for both, the previous owner's usage and their current usage on their first bill.
- 5) The realtor then gives the closing figure to the attorney's offices for their closing paperwork, to make sure that the new owner is compensated properly for the seller's usage.

- 6) In the event that the closing does not go through, it is the responsibility of the seller's realtor to contact the Town water department to let them know. If we are not notified, the old owner will not get any more water bills because the property will no longer be in their name. This could result in late penalties on their account and possibly additional charges added to their property taxes. It is imperative that we are notified if the closing falls through.
- 7) Due to the fact that the water/sewer bills are a lien against the property, if a closing is not called in prior to the closing date, the water department must wait until a copy of the deed change is received from Albany County or a copy of the closing documents are received from one of the parties involved in the transaction.

Please Note: Even if the property is vacant, the Town will not accept meter readings more than 24 hours in advance of the closing date & time. This protects all parties involved in the closing transaction from any possible leaks or other issues that could occur and effect the meter reading or closing adjustment figure.

The Town of Bethlehem Water/Sewer Billing Dept. can be reached at (518) 439-4955.

Properties with Town Sewer Only

- 1) The realtor calls the Sewer Dept. with the new owner's names as they will appear on the deed after the seller has moved out of the home. No more than 24 hours in advance of closing date and time.
- 2) The Sewer department takes the information and then completes the transfer process to get the final calculation for cost of sewer used by the seller. This only takes 10-20 minutes.
- 3) The water department calls or emails the realtor with the closing figure. This dollar amount is a "Credit to the Buyer" in the closing paperwork. The town does not send out a final bill to the seller. Everything is transferred to the new owner and the new owner will see that closing figure amount as a balance forward on their first bill, but they will have already been paid for the seller's usage at the closing. The new owner will have to pay for both, the previous owner's usage and their current usage on their first bill.
- 4) The realtor then gives the closing figure to the attorney's office for their closing paperwork, to make sure that the new owner is compensated properly for the seller's usage.
- 5) In the event that the closing does not go through, it is the responsibility of the seller's realtor to contact the Town Sewer department to let them know. If we are not notified, the old owner will not receive any more sewer bills because the property will no longer be in their name. This could result in late penalties on their account and possibly additional charges added to their property taxes. It is imperative that we are notified if the closing falls through.
- 6) Due to the fact that the sewer bills are a lien against the property, if a closing is not called in prior to the closing date, the sewer department must wait until a copy of the deed change is received from Albany County or a copy of the closing documents are received from one of the parties involved in the transaction.