

Dear Water & Sewer Customer,

By the end of 2018, each of the approximately 4,000 water meters in Fishkill will either be replaced or outfitted with new transmitting equipment. These changes will greatly increase metering accuracy and feature automated meter reading (AMR) abilities, eliminating the need to manually read each meter every quarter - saving the Town and our customers more than \$20,000 per year.

An Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) will be installed that allows meter readings to be radio transmitted from the residence directly to Town Hall. Once, the new system is installed and operational, there will be no need for a meter reader to come to the home to read meters. The new system consists of a meter and radio transmitter. Meters greater than 10 years old will be replaced with new meters. Meters less than 10 years old will be retrofitted with radio transmitters. The meter installations are expected to start approximately May 15, 2018 and be completed by November 2018.

VEPO Metering will be performing the meter replacements and retrofits. VEPO will be communicating with Town residents by mailing notification letters starting in May 2018 to schedule appointments for the meter replacement / retrofitting. For those residents that haven't made an appointment, starting approximately June 15, 2018, VEPO will use door hangers as a notification reminder to residents to schedule appointments. To better assist residents in making appointments, starting May 15, 2018 residents can use the below link to provide VEPO with preferred contact information (address, email, home phone and/or cell phone).

**<https://appointments.vepometering.com/updateinfo>**

In order to assist with a smooth transition for your quarterly water bill, VEPO technicians will provide the Town with a final reading of your inside meter prior to replacement or retrofitting. All VEPO technicians will be in uniform with a photo ID with identifiable vehicle signs. Customer accounts will be adjusted, if necessary, based on this meter reading. Underestimated accounts will receive a charge for water previously used that was not billed, or a credit will be applied to overestimated accounts.

*The meter modernization project is mandatory for all residents connected to Town water. Residents must make every effort to schedule an appointment with VEPO Metering and allow them access to perform the upgrade. Pursuant to Town Code Section 146-03, water meters must be accessible with adequate space for the installers to work. Please be advised that due to the importance of the water meter project to the Town and its residents, the Town has implemented a surcharge of three (3) times the estimated water usage for residents that do not schedule an appointment or do not allow the installers access to perform the work. The estimated water usage will be based on the last 4 quarters of usage. The surcharge will be included each quarter until the meter is replaced.*

*Please understand that if you do not schedule an appointment within 60 days of the first VEPO notification the surcharge will be implemented immediately. If you must cancel an appointment, you must re-schedule and have the meter replacement completed within two (2) weeks or be subject to the surcharge.*

The Town appreciates your support and cooperation with this very important project. This project will provide the Town and you with a significantly improved metering system that will greatly increase meter

accuracy, monitor leaks, reduce the need for estimated billing and provide a savings to the Town and you.

We look forward to working with you to complete this improvement project and Thank You for your support.

Below are frequently asked questions (FAQ's) associated with the Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) system.

## **FAQ's**

### **How does Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) work?**

A small box, called a SmartPoint, is installed on the exterior of your home. It is connected to your new water meter and transmits a radio signal to a data collector which relays the information to the Town's Utility Billing Office. The system will provide hourly readings, but you will still be billed quarterly.

### **What exactly will be installed at my property?**

If your meter is more than ten years old, two existing components will be replaced with new equipment. Your current water meter will be replaced with a new water meter to more accurately record water use and assist in identifying leaks. Your existing water meter is connected to a component located on the exterior of your building. That component will be replaced with a SmartPoint, which collects meter usage data and remotely transmits the information to data collectors. The SmartPoint and water meter work as a unit to detect intermittent leaks, continuous leaks, reverse flow situations and zero usage situations. If your meter is less than ten years old, only the SmartPoint will be installed.

### **What if there is a leak at the meter or any other problem after the meter is replaced?**

During the upgrade, the meter technicians will affix a meter tag to the water meter inside the home. That meter tag will have a contact number which is accessible 24/7 for emergencies. In addition, the installer will explain procedures for problems prior to leaving your residence.

### **Can I cover up my meter after the install?**

No. Fishkill Town Code requires that water meters must be accessible with adequate space for the Town's agents to work.

Section 146-3 of the Town Code states: "All meters shall be set at the expense of the property owner whose property is receiving water service in such position as to be readily accessible for reading and repair and shall be fully protected from frost and other damage at the expense of the property owner."

### **Is there any special care or maintenance that I need to do to my new meter?**

No, your meter does not require any maintenance by the homeowner. As before, the Town will take care of all maintenance; however, you should be careful not to damage the meter or allow it to freeze.

### **Will I pay more for water as a result of the change?**

Your water rate will not change at the time the new meter is installed. Any future water or sewer increases/decreases will be the result of changes to the actual cost to deliver the water.

**Does this mean my bill will be increasing?**

In some cases, your bill may increase if your current meter is underreporting usage or has been underestimated. Presently, the majority of residents are paying for the water they are actually using, while due to outdated technology, a few residents are only paying for a portion of the water. This condition is not fair to all customers. The new system will ensure fairness and equality for all the residents and businesses from this point forward.

**Will the appearance of my quarterly bill change?**

The appearance of the quarterly bill will change. The new bill appearance is not known at this time since the billing system (MUNIS) will also be updated.

**What will be the timeframe for future bills?**

Bills will continue to be generated quarterly; however, the first bill after installation may reflect a slightly longer or shorter reading period. This one-time occurrence is necessary to provide near real-time billing and to implement the automated meter reading technology.

**How much will the system cost me?**

This system does not increase the cost of water service to you. Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) is designed to help control costs by increasing meter reading accuracy and efficiency.

This meter upgrade project is being funded primarily through available funds in the respective water districts. For those districts that do not have sufficient funds available, short term financing will be necessary and therefore will require a special assessment to residents in that district. For those districts that do not have all funds available, we estimate a total assessment of \$20-75 for typical single family residences.

**How accurate is the system?**

Meter readings obtained over radio frequency transmissions are 100% accurate.

**How often will you read my meter?**

The radio frequency can provide hourly readings each day. However, you will still be billed on a quarterly basis.

**Does Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) have any other benefits for me?**

Yes! Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) will allow us to detect possible leaks in your plumbing faster and notify you of problems before they become serious...and costly. Accuracy will improve. In addition to speed and reliability, we won't have to enter your home, except for periodic maintenance or replacement of system components, when needed. Quarterly reads at your residence will not be required.

**Will I be able to read my own meter?**

Yes, the new meters will have a display on the meter so meters can be read manually.

**How is this project being funded?**

This meter upgrade project is being funded primarily through available funds in the respective water districts. For those districts that do not have sufficient funds available, short term financing will be necessary and therefore will require a special assessment to residents in that district. For those districts that do not have all funds available, we estimate a total assessment of \$20-75 for typical single family residences.

**What happens if I don't make an appointment or allow access to my home?**

Residents must make every effort to schedule an appointment with VEPO Metering and allow them access to perform the upgrade. Pursuant to Town Code Section 146-3, water meters must be accessible with adequate space for the installers to work. Please be advised that due to the importance of the water meter project to the Town and its residents, the Town has implemented a surcharge of three (3) times the estimated water usage for residents that do not schedule an appointment or do not allow the installers access to perform the work. The estimated water usage will be based on the last 4 quarters of usage. The surcharge will be included each quarter until the meter is replaced.

If you do not schedule an appointment within 60 days of the first VEPO notification the surcharge will be implemented immediately. If you must cancel an appointment, you must re-schedule and have the meter replacement completed within two (2) weeks or be subjected to the surcharge.