



# City of Cambridge

21.

## IN CITY COUNCIL

November 7, 1994

COUNCILLOR DUEHAY  
 COUNCILLOR BORN  
 COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN  
 COUNCILLOR TRIANTAFILLOU  
 COUNCILLOR WALSH

WHEREAS: The November, 1994 publication of the Massachusetts Municipal Association, The Beacon, carries a report on the overhaul of the water and sewer meter-reading and billing system in Revere; and

WHEREAS: Two years ago Revere estimated that 30 percent of the water being used within city limits was not being paid for due to mechanical meters and an antiquated meter-reading and billing system;; and

WHEREAS: Some meters were under-recording, some hadn't been read in years, and some customers had no meters at all; and

WHEREAS: Many customers were repeatedly paying estimated bills because a meter reader could not gain access to the meter; and

WHEREAS: Rather than tracking down each faulty meter for replacement or repair, the city undertook a \$1.2 million project, now 98 percent complete, to replace every one of the 10,000-plus meters citywide and to install a new computer billing system; and

WHEREAS: One goal of the change was to make water and sewer bills fair and equitable; and

WHEREAS: One immediate result was a 6 percent reduction in water and sewer rates for the current fiscal year, now that all customers are being billed accurately; and

WHEREAS: The new meters can be read with an electronic device from outside, eliminating the need for daytime access to each customer's basement and for estimated bills; and

WHEREAS: The reading devices download the information to the computer automatically, eliminating the need for data entry; and

WHEREAS: The new meters are calibrated in gallons - as opposed to the former 100 cubic feet - so customers can better understand their water use; and

WHEREAS: The new system will soon allow for monthly billing, just as with any other utility, thus improving cash flow for the city and smaller payments for the consumer; and

WHEREAS: Another result of the system overhaul is that customers no longer have to pay automatic sewer charges on water that never enters the sewer system - water used for washing cars or watering lawns, for example - because for \$56, customers may now purchase from the city a meter for their outdoor faucets; now therefore be it

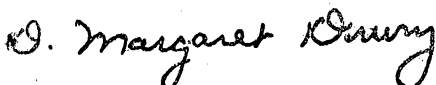
RESOLVED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to direct the Water Department to review this project and similar innovations in other communities and to report to the City Council within two months as to whether improvements in the meter-reading and billing system can be made in Cambridge.

In City Council November 7, 1994

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:- 

D. Margaret Drury  
City Clerk



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- WHEREAS: Many customers were repeatedly paying estimated bills because a meter reader could not gain access to the meter; and
- WHEREAS: Rather than tracking down each faulty meter for replacement or repair, the city undertook a \$1.2 million project, now 98 percent complete, to replace every one of the 10,000-plus meters citywide and to install a new computer billing system; and
- WHEREAS: One goal of the change was to make water and sewer bills fair and equitable; and
- WHEREAS: One immediate result was a 6 percent reduction in water and sewer rates for the current fiscal year, now that all customers are being billed accurately; and
- WHEREAS: The new meters can be read with an electronic device from outside, eliminating the need for daytime access to each customer's basement and for estimated bills; and
- WHEREAS: The reading devices download the information to the computer automatically, eliminating the need for data entry; and
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- WHEREAS: The new system will soon allow for monthly billing, just as with any other utility, thus improving cash flow for the city and smaller payments for the consumer; and

**WHEREAS:** Another result of the system overhaul is that customers no longer have to pay automatic sewer charges on water that never enters the sewer system - water used for washing cars or watering lawns, for example - because for \$56, customers may now purchase from the city's meter for their outdoor faucets; now therefore be it

**RESOLVED:** That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to direct the Water Department to review this project and similar innovations in other communities and to report to the City Council within two months as to whether improvements in the meter-reading and billing system can be made in Cambridge.

Born, Sullivan, Triantafellow  
Walsh

CM-388

Consent Order #21

Councillor Duehay re: Report of an overhaul  
of the water and sewer meter-reading  
and billing systems in Revere.

In City Council November 7, 1994

Order adopted