



Park Township Board of Trustees
52 152nd Ave.
Holland, MI 49424

Dear Park Township Water Customer,

As of July 1st, 2020, Park Township has entered into a water utility agreement with Holland Board of Public Works (HBPW) to manage billing, service and maintenance for water customers in about half of the township. While we communicated this transition late in the Spring, it has come to our attention that there remains some confusion around the timing of this transition and an increase in water rates, which are not related events.

About the Rate Increases

In October, 2019, the Park Township Board of Trustees approved a water rates increase in alignment with the findings from a Water Asset Management Study. The study revealed that the old rates would not be able to fund infrastructure repair and replacement costs in the long term. Affected customers had not seen a rate change in nearly a decade, and this increase was a critical correction bringing rates into alignment with others in the region. The increase, which for most customers was about 50%, went into effect for bills received in April, 2020.

About the HBPW Utility Agreement

Also during this period, Park Township was evaluating a water utility agreement with HBPW. Park Township does not have a dedicated water utility department or staff, and the township pursued the agreement with HBPW to control costs, mitigate risk and create a simpler customer service experience. The Park Township Board of Trustees signed off on the agreement in March.



Higher than Usual Water Bills

For most customers, water usage is substantially higher in the summer, and this was the first summer that affected customers experienced the higher cost. Park Township customers do not yet have remotely-readable meters, which require a manual read, previously conducted quarterly. However, HBPW bills for water usage monthly and needs to estimate usage based on last year's usage data for these bills.

In September, and for the next several months, we are continuing to physically carry out quarterly meter readings to ensure that usage is reconciled and billing is 100% accurate over each quarter. Starting later this year, and continuing through July of 2021, HBPW will be upgrading meters, making monthly reads possible and also converting measurement units from gallons to cubic feet.

What's Next

The timing of this first summer at the new rates along with the switch to HBPW as the billing entity has been a source of confusion for some customers. We sincerely apologize for any confusion or unwelcome surprise in your water bill.

It is likely that bills received in late October will still feel comparatively high. However, in the coming fall and winter months, most customers will see their water bills decrease significantly as usage for lawn irrigation, recreation and consumption decrease.

Enclosed with this letter is a timeline of important dates and milestones of these transitions and an FAQs document to help answer questions.

For more information on how to read your new bill, please visit:

<https://hollandbpw.com/en/customer-service/welcome-aboard-park-township>

Sincerely,

The Park Township Board of Trustees



Water Utility Timeline & Milestones

Oct, 2019	After reviewing a Water Asset Management Study and in alignment with a renewed capital management plan, the Park Township Board of Trustees approved rate increases for affected township customers.
Oct, 2019	Park Township issued a letter to affected customers explaining the change and shared the information publicly.
Mar, 2020	Park Township, HBPW and the City of Holland approved a Water Utility Agreement for HBPW to manage billing, service and maintenance for affected township customers.
April, 2020	Park Township issued a letter to all affected customers explaining the transition to HBPW and shared the information publicly.
June, 2020	HBPW sent out new customer packets with information about rates, billing and payment options, and direct bank payment setup.
July 1, 2020	HBPW officially began responsibility for water utility maintenance and service.
July, 2020	Customers received final bills from Park Township for water usage in the second quarter (April through June, 2020).
August 15-30, 2020	Customers received first monthly water bills from HBPW, prorated to 45 days (July 1 - Aug 15).
Jan 2021 - July 2021	One neighborhood at a time, HBPW will reach out to schedule your home for new meter installation and install an upgraded water meter.