



BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS

Cotuit Fire District  
Water Department

4300 FALMOUTH ROAD, P. O. BOX 451  
COTUIT, MASS. 02635

## Cotuit Water Department Irrigation Regulation

Adopted August 25, 2021; Amended September 22, 2021

The primary purpose of the Cotuit Water Department is to provide sufficient high-quality drinking water and dependable water flow for firefighting. All of Cotuit's water is pumped from five wells in three relatively small wellfields. It is of utmost importance that the Water Commissioners, in their oversight responsibility for the Department, maximize conservation of the public water supply, to protect affected streams, ponds and wetlands near the wellfields, and to enable the Department to discharge their duties in an efficient manner. Department staff tend the pumps and wellhead equipment on a daily basis. They have recognized equipment stress and rapid drops in water tank levels resulting from extreme pumping demand on summer mornings. This peak pumping is associated with in-ground lawn irrigation systems in 500 or more of the Department's 2500 accounts.

During the summer months water demand reaches its peak and approaches the capacity of the system. An estimated half (50%) of the water consumption during the summer is used for lawn irrigation. Groundwater modeling conducted by the United States Geological Survey (USGS), as refined in 2021 by our consultant Sole Source Consulting,<sup>1</sup> shows that peak summer pumping rates are exacerbating drought conditions in Little River and its associated wetlands by diverting groundwater flow from the stream to the wells. Peak summer pumping reduces the flow rate in the Little River by as much as 32% in the area of Sampsons Mill Road. Reduced stream flow in

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<sup>1</sup> Hydrogeologic Technical Report Groundwater Modeling Project of Groundwater Surface Water Interaction of the Little River and the Cotuit Wellfield, Sole Source Consulting LLC, Centerville MA, April 19, 2021

Little River causes significant impacts to the aquatic habitat, water quality in Cotuit Bay, and the commercial oyster beds and other shellfish resources.

The purpose of this Regulation is to address the stress that lawn irrigation systems place on the aquifer resource in our village, our surface water bodies, and on the operational success of the Department.

### Enabling Authority

In accordance with Article IX, Section 2 of the By-Laws of the Cotuit Fire District, the Cotuit Water Commissioners hereby adopt this Regulation.

Article IX states, “The Water Commissioners shall have the care, custody, management, and control of all the property, real and personal, relating to the Water Department; shall have authority to determine and establish from time to time a schedule of water rates; and make rules and regulations for the introduction and use of water. The Water Superintendent and Water Department Employees may enter upon the premises of any water taker to examine apparatus to ascertain the use to which the water is applied or to find or stop any waste.”

### Irrigation Regulation

- I. As of August 30, 2021, the Cotuit Water Department shall not allow any new automatic, in-ground irrigation systems to be connected to the water supply system except as provided in Section II of this Regulation.
- II. The Board of Water Commissioners will consider applications to use public water for in-ground irrigation systems at the sole expense of the property owner. This exemption requires that said property owner install a new separate water meter for their irrigation system, at their expense, and will have to pay for that water at the highest rate established by the district. An example is shown in Appendix A. Justification for this exemption must be based on concerns for environmental or geographic constraints such as impacts to wetlands, aquatic ecosystems or groundwater protection. Any exempted system

must schedule an annual system inspection with the Cotuit Water Department to ensure that conservation elements are in good working order and that the original goals for conservation are being achieved.

- III. Existing customers that currently use public water for irrigation are hereby informed that the Board of Water Commissioners have raised the rates associated with excess water use. Irrigation users are encouraged to install on-site private wells as an alternative source of water for landscaping and to remove their irrigation systems from the public water supply. Additionally, existing in-ground irrigation systems that are not switching to private wells for their irrigation, shall maintain and monitor state of the science water conservation equipment as parts of their systems. These shall include functional timers, smart controllers, and moisture sensors. Irrigation systems shall be subject to inspections consistent with the inspection goals outlined above in Section II of this regulation.
  
- IV. The Board of Water Commissioners reserves the right to institute reductions, restrictions or bans on all outside use in accordance with the District Bylaws and associated State Laws.

#### Fines & Enforcement

This Regulation also establishes a schedule of fines for customers who violate any of these provisions:

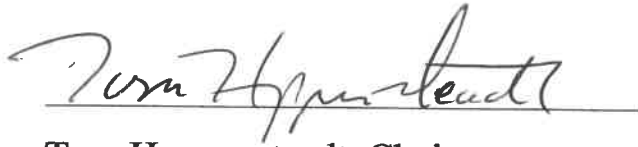
- A. Unpermitted installation of an in-ground irrigation system after the effective date of this regulation (August 25, 2021) or the beginning of the moratorium period (May 20, 2020).
  - 1. Suspend use and disconnect the system from the public water supply within thirty (30) days of notice from the Department.
  - 2. Provide evidence of disconnection to the public water supply or removal of the system to the Department.
  - 3. Owner may install a private onsite irrigation well at their own expense and provide documentation of the new connection to the Department.

4. Failure to comply with the removal within the specified compliance period may result in shut-off of the water service.

B. Outdoor water by permitted systems not in compliance with any Board-ordered reduction periods.

1. A warning for the first offense.
2. A \$250 fine for the second offense.
3. A \$500 fine for the third or subsequent offense.
4. Repeat offenders risk possible shut-off of the water service.

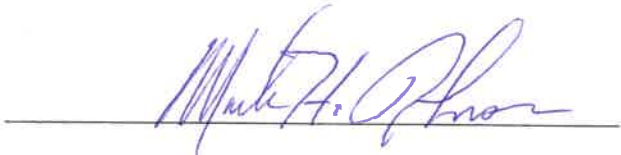
Please contact us at the Cotuit Water Department for further assistance: (508) 428-2687.



Tom Hoppensteadt, Chairman

9/22/21

Date



Mark Robinson, Commissioner

9-22-21

Date

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Scott Horsley, Commissioner

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Date

Appendix A: Proposed Rate Schedule\* Usage is for a 6-month period.

Up to 10,000 gallons = Min Use \$40.00

10,001 – 20,000 gallons = \$4.00/1,000 gallons = \$40.00

20,001 – 40,000 gallons = \$5.50/1,000 gallons = \$110.00

40,001 – 60,000 gallons = \$7.15/1,000 gallons = \$143.00

60,001 – 100,000 gallons = \$15.00/1,000 gallons = \$600.00

100,001 – 200,000 gallons = \$20.00/1,000 gallons = \$2,000.00

200,000+ gallons = \$30.00/1,000 gallons

Example: 200,000 gallons of usage in a 6-month billing period would be calculated as follows.

$+40.00+40.00+110.00+143.00+600.00+2,000.00 = \$2,933.00$  each additional 1,000 gallons would cost \$30 each.

\*The rates noted above are only an example using the proposed pricing and are subject to change in accordance with The Cotuit Fire District Bylaws, Article IX, Section 2 as quoted above in the Enabling Authority.