



## Neighborhood Water and Sewer Rates are About to Skyrocket

### Water and Sewer Rates: A Primer

Water and sewer rates rise on July 1. How much do you pay? How much will you be paying a few years from now? Probably considerably more. Based on the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission's (SFPUC) "average bill," here is guidance about how much rates have risen, and how much they are expected to rise in upcoming years. We also discuss what you can do about your bills.

While water and sewer bills are separate they usually are based on how much water you use. It is assumed that 90% of water ends up as wastewater in the sewer. If your situation is different — perhaps you have a yard requiring plenty of watering — then you can apply for a different, lesser percentage.

You are billed based on "units" of water used during a two-month period. Also for water a charge for your meter and connection is added; regardless of how much you use, you are charged the same amount for the meter and opportunity to draw public water.

A unit of water is 100 cubic feet of water: 748 gallons. Each time you cross the unit threshold, your meter ticks another unit just like a taxi meter. At the end of two months' time, your ticks are tallied, and your bill is based on that number.

Rates are tiered, which means that at low levels of use the rate is less. Once you've used more than three units, you pay at a higher rate. This is to encourage you to use less water.

(If you say "not fair, I've got a big family, you are not the first to say so; but the policy is to encourage lower usage, and that's how it's done.)

The "average user" per SFPUC uses a modest amount of water but does pay for half of his or her water at the higher rate.

Today the average single-family home water user pays \$35.20 per month for water. That includes the charge for the meter and connection, this year usually \$7.90. For wastewater (sewer) the average user pays \$46.63. (There is no separate charge for being connected to the sewer.) The water and sewer total is \$81.83. You may compare your bill. The foregoing is for one month; bills are sent every other month and are for two months. If your two-month bill is \$163.66, you are average. (The "average" water user uses nearly 150 gallons per day. If the average family size is 2.2, 68 gallons per person per day, which is actually above the city average of 50; two-thirds of residents live in apartments and typically use less than single-family residents.)

**How have bills risen?** Water bills have more than doubled over the past six years. Sewer bills have risen less: about 80%.

**How will bills rise?** Water bills will rise 6.5% beginning in July, and then will rise 12% the next July. Three years beyond that bills will be up 59% beyond today's bills.

Sewer bills will rise less over the next five years but then will accelerate. In five years bills will be 36% higher than those of today. Then bills rise for a number of years at 11% per year.

Clearly water and sewer bills are rising and have been rising faster than inflation — much faster. Why? The main reason is the capital

programs that are improving the systems so that they are less vulnerable to earthquakes and more modern and perhaps easier to maintain. Some would say that another interwoven reason is that the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, the city department that supplies water and sewer service, has blossomed into a force much more grand than was the case a dozen years ago. Now it runs a larger, growing business, with many more employees, providing "community benefits," solar credits, conservation incentives, etc., all from a fancy new headquarters building chocked full of art and other expensive wonders.

If you are an average water user living in a single-family home, over the next five years you will pay \$6500 for water and sewer service. This assumes the rates that are projected by SFPUC this year.

#### So what can you do to limit water and sewer bills?

Use less water. To use less:

- Fix leaks.
- Install low flow toilets, if you have not already, and
- Low flow shower heads and faucet aerators.
- Appliances come in low water versions.
- You may be able to partly water your plants and garden with rainwater. You can plant drought-resistant landscaping. You can use drip irrigation to effectively minimize water use.
- If you are low income you can explore low-income assistance programs to lower your bills. Finally, as noted above, you can apply to lower the percentage of water that is counted as going into the sewer system.

There is no ratepayer advocacy group in San Francisco. Theoretically the SFPUC commissioners are guardians of the ratepayer, but one commissioner represents environmentalists, who are almost always in favor of more spending and higher rates; others have other interests, such as union interest, which may not align with rate concerns. Mostly, though, the city employees of the SFPUC make the key decisions; the SFPUC itself is mostly a rubber stamp, although it can and sometimes does set policy for the employees to follow. The mayor and supervisors appoint commissioners; they are not beholden to voters.

In an era when tax increases are hard to come by, raising rates is attractive. It is easy to hide pay-offs (benefits) to this and that community and interest group, and easy for the rate collectors to take over functions that were once performed by other city departments that are now pressed for funds.

The rate projections published by SFPUC upon which the above is based, may turn out to be low. Inflation may ignite, interest rates may climb, and construction projects estimated to cost \$6.9 billion (the Sewer System Improvement Program, SSIP) may incur overruns. The Water System Improvement Program (WSIP) is now 25 months late and modestly over-budget. Bureaucrats may wear rose-colored glasses knowingly or not. There are no guarantees. But like death and taxes rate increases are certain.

...Steve Lawrence

Submitted by George Wooding (MTHA)

# Executive Committee Report

## March 27

Chair George Wooding called the meeting to order at 5:50 pm. Present were Judy Berkowitz, Wooding, Rose Hillson, Penelope Clark, Dick Millet and Evelyn Wilson, Jeanne Quock, Charles Head. There was a quorum (100% attendance!).

### Officers' Reports

**President Judy Berkowitz:** CSFN attendees at the meeting with Supervisor Yee were pleased with how it went. Yee was responsive and discussed a variety of issues including CEQA. Yee will focus on pedestrian safety and helping small businesses in his first term. • There will be a meeting with Mark Farrell in April. Meetings will also be scheduled with Supervisors London Breed (D-5) and with newly-appointed Supervisor Katy Tang (D-4). • Berkowitz and Cathy Lentz (PMaC) both attended the BoS Rules Committee to speak on behalf of Hillson's reappointment to the Urban Forestry Council (UFC). • Newly-elected president of the San Francisco Police Officers Association (SFPOA), Martin Halloran will address the CSFN's April meeting. • Mari Eliza, the founder of ENUF and a member of EMIA, may work with the CSFN's Transportation Committee. We will see when the committees are re-constituted after the May CSFN election • Melinda LaValle, Cathy Lentz, and Ellen Kernaghan have begun the work of the CSFN Nominating Committee. • The April 24<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee will be rescheduled from April 24<sup>th</sup> to another date. • Berkowitz announced that AT&T has begun to come into the neighborhoods to install Big Boxes on our sidewalks. She learned this through CitidexSF, the official noticing component of San Francisco city government. • If your association has not registered on CitidexSF you will not receive any Notice of these Big Boxes before they are installed in *your* neighborhoods' sidewalk. • Berkowitz thanked Dick Millet for his ongoing update of CSFN delegates' and officers' information roster.

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President George Wooding** discussed the ongoing negotiations with CPMC/Sutter Health. The CPMC facility has been reduced from 555 beds to 304 beds and the rebuilt St. Lukes will increase from 88 beds to 120 beds. The deal is not finalized. Dr. Derek Kerr, a whistleblower who reported the \$350,000 that was taken from the Laguna Honda gift fund and then had been fired won a city settlement of \$750,000 and the missing gift fund money was returned. • Wooding also compared Jane Kim's alternate CEQA legislation to that of Scott Wiener. From a good government and open gov't access perspective, Kim's CEQA legislation is far superior to Wiener's.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Rose Hillson** has been reappointed to the Urban Forestry Council for a second term. Congratulations! • Hillson explained that the Planning Department was preparing to introduce new seismic retrofitting laws. • The San Francisco Planning Department will have a public hearing on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the San Francisco Ground Water Supply Project on April 18<sup>th</sup> and April 27<sup>th</sup>. A letter of resolution will be developed and sent. Jeanne Quock seconded this motion.

**Recording Secretary Penelope Clark** The minutes are prepared and submitted for the April newsletter. • District 2 Supervisor Mark Farrell is working with RHIA and others to transfer the Hyde Street Reservoir (Hyde & Bay) to the Recreation & Park Department (RPD). The SFPUC wants to sell the property and use the money to fund the demolition of the empty reservoir. Russian Hill Neighbors and the other groups active in this enterprise must come up with approximately \$25M to purchase the reservoir and turn it into a park.

**Treasurer Dick Millet:** One more CSFN membership payment received; still updating CFSN roster. Almost finished with the update. Held up in waiting for folks to submit the Membership Renewal Form. • Will let everyone know details of Babette Drefke's memorial celebration.

**April Program.** Wooding will contact SFPUC rate expert Steve Lawrence to present the April 16<sup>th</sup> Program. Yin Lan Zhang, the coordinator in blended water systems, will also speak. They will join PUC SSIP Director Karen Kubic and PUC spokesperson Tyrone Jue.

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm  
...George Wooding (MTHA) Chair

# Land Use & Housing Committee Report

## April 8

The Regular Meeting of the CSFN Land Use & Housing Committee was convened by Hiroshi Fukuda on Monday, April 8, 2013 at 6:15 P.M. in the Community Room of the Northern Police Station.

The Committee considered the following items

- Proposed CEQA amendments:** BOS Land Use and Economic Development Committee heard from approximately 72 individuals, 23 in favor of Weiner's amendments, 49 against. The outcome of today's hearing will be a fresh review of new CEQA legislation from Supervisor Kim and the renegotiation of five points of Supervisor Wiener's version:
  - Board Hearings of CEQA appeals should continue v. subcommittee hearings only
  - The "Fair Argument" standard must be applied to each appeal
  - Website notices of CEQA decisions should be published, but should also be circulated
  - Documentation deadline for appeals should be maintained at the current standard
  - Both "First Approval" and "Last Approval" triggers for CEQA-based appeals need to be reevaluated. (report by Roland Salvato)
- AT&T's Big Boxes** are moving into your neighborhood *fast and now!* Company plans to upgrade its broadband by bringing AT&T U-verse to our neighborhoods. This requires the placement of huge new street-level cabinets within 300 feet of existing telecommunications cabinets. (See November 2008, p.5 & April 2011, p.2 of *CSFN Neighborhood Views*.) AT&T is currently working on their March 2014 plans which may include sites within or near our neighborhoods. More info about AT&T's Big Box Cabinet project at [www.att.com/ipnetwork4sf](http://www.att.com/ipnetwork4sf).
- CPMC update:** There is new "term sheet" developer agreement for CPMC.

### Revised CPMC Project

	Previous	New
<b>Cathedral Hill Hospital:</b>		
Beds	555	274*
Floors	15	12
Height (ft)	265	226
Size (sq. ft)	1.2 million	989,000
Parking (campus)	1227	990
<b>St Luke's Hospital:</b>		
Beds	80	120
Floors	5	7
Height (ft)	99	142
Size (sq. ft)	155,000	235,000
Parking (spaces)	450	450

\*Option to add 30 additional beds at Cathedral Hill if St Luke's reaches 75% bed utilization

- The San Francisco Committee to Underground Utilities (SFCUU)** [spearheaded by Russian Hill Neighbors (RHN)] draft resolution to be intro'd under New Business at April GA meeting: **Resolved** that the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods supports the undergrounding of all remaining overhead utility lines within the city limits of San Francisco and that the CSFN urges the Board of Supervisors to immediately follow the recommendations of the 2007 Utility Undergrounding Task Force, most importantly to develop a city-wide, fully funded undergrounding program.
- 1601 Larkin:** City Attorney moved for Federal Judge to dismiss.

The next Regular meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, May 13, 2013 at 5:00 p.m. in the Community Room of the Northern Police Station located at Turk and Fillmore.

Adjourned: 7:45 PM

...Hiroshi Fukuda (RCA) Chair

# CSFN Draft Minutes: General Assembly Meeting March 19, 2013

1. **Call to Order.** President Judith Berkowitz brought the March 19 meeting to order at 7:02PM at Northern Police Station.
    - a. *Quorum declared.* 24 delegates and alternates represented 21 CSFN member organizations. 7 guests signed in.
    - b. *Agenda approved.*
    - c. *Introductions.* Delegates and guests introduced themselves. Hosts Melinda LaValle (CHNA) and Nick Jarrett (DHIC) described their organizations' objectives, history, and current issues. Attendees enjoyed the refreshments provided by the two groups.
  2. **Minutes.** The February 15 General Assembly draft minutes as printed on page 3 of the March newsletter were approved as corrected with the note that EDIA made the motion on 8 Washington.
  3. **Officers' Reports.**
    - a. *President Berkowitz* (EMIA) reported that there would be a SaveMuni Press Conference on March 26 at the Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center regarding the removal of the tunnel boring machine (TBM) at the Pagoda Theatre site. • The meeting with Supervisor Yee went well largely due to our planning the evening prior • Attended and spoke at George Wooding's Ethics Cmte hearing • Jane Morrison is the contact person for those interested in opposing the planned Warriors Arena on the Bay. • Supervisor Jane Kim has just introduced Community Alternate Amendments for local CEQA legislation. These will be presented to the Historic Preservation Committee and the Board of Supervisors Land Use Committee for public comment. • President Berkowitz reminded Delegates that the Planning Department is using the CitidexSF list for neighborhood group project notification. • CEQAWorks.org is a source of information for those concerned about changes proposed to both state and city CEQA. • She noted that long time Potrero Booster member Babette Drefke had died recently; Dick Millet has info.
    - b. *1st VP Wooding* (MTHA) reported a West of Twin Peaks Council meeting on Monday at 8:30PM at the Miraloma Club House on O'Shaughnessy Blvd. would feature a CEQA discussion with Supervisor Wiener and Eric Brooks (leader of oppo to the Wiener amendments). • He also reported on his Ethics Commission hearing on Rec & Parks Dept. and Commonwealth Club "now you see them now you don't" emails, with predictable results. He will write a report of the hearing for the newsletter.  
Recommended to the GA by the ExComm (see March *Neighborhood Views* p.5 for full text of reso):  
**Resolved, that the CSFN continues to oppose the ordinance as proposed since the consensus points listed above have not been incorporated into the proposed legislation; and be it further**  
**Resolved, CSFN most strongly urges that both the Planning Commissioners, the Historic Preservation Commissioners together with the members of the Board of Supervisors not support Supervisor Wiener's proposed ordinance amending SF CEQA legislation.**  
The resolution, along with the funding of a ballot argument was approved unanimously:  
**16 ayes, 3 abstentions.**
  - c. *2nd VP Hillson* (JPIA) will attend the Historic Preservation Commission meeting on CEQA. • She will also go before the BoS Rules Cmte regarding her appointment to the Urban Forestry Council on Thursday March 21 at 1:30 in City Hall room 263. • A motion to support her reappointment to the Council was made and approved by CSFN delegates with a voice vote.
  - d. *Recording Secretary Clark* (RHIA) reported that the draft minutes of the previous General Assembly were on page 3 of the newsletter.
  - e. *Corresponding Secretary/Treasurer Millet* (PBNA) noted that he had paid a visit to Babette Drefke shortly before her death. • As CSFN treasurer he reminded delegates that those whose organizations had not yet paid their dues could not vote on any issues at this and any subsequent meetings. • **Your association must pay its ANNUAL CSFN DUES. Otherwise it is considered delinquent and its delegate cannot vote on anything.**
4. **Committee Reports.**
    - a. *Bylaws.* Chair **Evelyn Wilson** (SPEAK)
    - b. *Government & Elections.* Chair **Charles Head** (SHARP) Besides calling for a vote on the CEQA resolution, Chair Head directed delegates to the resolution (full text on page 4 of the March *Neighborhood Views*).  
**Resolved, that the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods, by action of its General Assembly, does hereby declare its continued opposition to the proposed development of 8 Washington, as hereinabove described, and to the Ordinance, which, if defeated by the ballot measure, will reverse the action of the Board and thus restore the long-standing height and density restrictions which governed the development of 8 Washington before the passage of the Ordinance by the Board. (THD)**  
Approved by the delegates.  
**17 ayes, 1 nay, 1 abstention.**
    - c. *Land Use.* Chair **Hiroshi Fukuda** (RCA) directed delegates to page 2 of the newsletter for the report.
    - d. *Open Space.*
    - e. *Transportation.* Chair **Gary Noguera** (MPIC)
    - f. *Water Task Force.* Chair **Joan Girardot** (MCI&POA) noted that recycled water would be used for watering parks that had previously been taken from the local aquifer. • A PUC meeting regarding Lake Merced will be held on March 26.
  5. **Unfinished Business.** Nominations from the floor and election of the Nominating Committee for election of officers 2013–14. (See February *Neighborhood Views* p.6) Elected by acclaim are **Melinda LaValle** (CHNA), **Cathy Lentz** (PMAc), and **Ellen Kernaghan** (PBNA). Thanks NomCom volunteers!
- Special announcement:** David Pilpel announced that a public workshop would be held in Room 421 on March 31 from 4:00 to 7:00PM at City Hall regarding new rates proposed for trash pick up by Recology.
6. **Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 8:35.  
...Penny Clark (RHIA)

## Save Marina Green

Please sign this petition urging that the BoS prevent commercialization of Marina Green!:

<http://signon.org/sign/stop-commercial-use-on>

Details here:

[http://savemarinagreen.org/Detailed\\_Notice.html](http://savemarinagreen.org/Detailed_Notice.html)

## Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee met via email April 3rd and has begun contacting existing ExComm members and potential candidates. A full slate will be presented at the April meeting for consideration at the May General Assembly.

...Melinda LaValle (CHNA)

## The Power of *Nextdoor.com*: What It Can Do For You, Your Issue, and Your Organization

In general skepticism is a good thing, however in the case of Nextdoor, it is misplaced (otherwise I wouldn't have sent you the invitation!)

About Nextdoor's suitability to issues-oriented organizations like CSFN and its member organizations:

Nextdoor is perfect as a complement to the outreach and support-rallying efforts of any neighborhood org.

Probably 90% of the positions taken by CSFN and its member organizations would receive the overwhelming support of community residents and members if they were simply made aware of the issues.

Nextdoor is effective for raising awareness quickly, effectively, and at no cost and relatively little time for interested neighbors.

Very often well-funded or well-connected interests from outside of a neighborhood are able to influence the governmental process regardless of neighborhood views just because they've got money, connections, and experience in doing it.

The best way for neighborhood organizations and their residents to respond fairly and effectively is to rally support in the community through education and outreach. That's really hard in a short period of time if you have to go door to door or otherwise rely on walking streets to raise awareness.

Apart from the personal categories such as referrals and recommendations, Nextdoor is perfect as a complement to existing channels for very quickly (and cheaply) helping with outreach, rallying support, and getting new volunteers to join the neighborhood cause.

A neighborhood organization like LHIA, JPIA, SPEAK, SHARP, GWPNA and CSFN does not have to rely exclusively on Nextdoor to educate its residents; rather, it's one of many channels to reach out to neighbors about community concerns. It's a very powerful and effective tool.

Join Nextdoor here:

<https://nextdoor.com/invite/nlzqv71wpdacfxmbs59r>

On February 27 ABC7 did a piece on the crime fighting utility of Nextdoor:

<http://abclocal.go.com/kgostory?section=news/technology&id=9010184>

...Judith Berkowitz (EMIA)

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Judith Berkowitz                      Rafael Mandelman  
Penny Clark                      Bert Polacci  
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Steve Williams, Attorney

### How to Reach Us

**President:** Judith Berkowitz • sfjberk@mac.com • 824-0617  
**1st VP:** George Wooding • mother\_ed@bigeds.com  
**2nd VP:** Rose Hillson • gumby5@att.net  
**Recording Scrtry:** Penelope Clark • penelopeclark@yahoo.com  
**Corresponding Secretary:** Dick Millet • milletdick@yahoo.com  
**Treasurer:** Dick Millet • milletdick@yahoo.com  
**Member-at-Large:** Charles Head • charleshead@hotmail.com  
**Member-at-Large:** Jeanne Quock • winchellq@sbcglobal.net  
**Parliamentarian:** Evelyn Wilson • evelynwilsregparl@earthlink.net

### COMMITTEE MEETINGS

**Land Use & Housing** • Monday 5:00PM May 13 • Northern Police Station • Chair Hiroshi Fukuda • ninersam@aol.com • 386-2212  
**Open Space** • Ongoing Meetings • Chair Nancy Wuerfel • nancenumber1@aol.com • 731-6432, Co-chair Ramona Albright • 621-9621  
**Transportation** • Chair Gary Noguera • garynoguera@earthlink.net  
**Water Task Force** • Chair Joan Girardot • 346-5525  
**Bylaws** • Chair Evelyn Wilson • evelynwilsregparl@earthlink.net • 566-7826  
**Gov't & Elections** • Chair Charles Head • charleshead@hotmail.com

<b>AGENDA</b>	
<b>General Assembly Meeting</b>	
<b>April 16, 2013</b>	
6:30	I. Sign In and Refreshments
7:00	II. Call to Order/Ascertain Quorum A. Introduction of Delegates and Guests / Short Announcements B. Hosts 1. Ewing Terrace Neighborhood Assn — ETNA 2. Fair Oaks Community Coalition — FOCC
7:10	III. Approval of March 2013 Minutes
7:15	IV. Officers' Reports A. President — with remarks from SFPOA's Marty Halloran & Gary Delagnes B. Vice Presidents C. Secretaries D. Treasurer
7:30	V. Committee Action Items — written reports in Newsletter A. Bylaws B. Government & Elections C. Land Use & Housing D. Nominating — List of NomCom candidates + nominations from the floor E. Open Space F. Transportation G. Water Task Force
7:45	VI. New Business. Introduction of Reso for consideration at May GA: <i>Resolved</i> that the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods supports the undergrounding of all remaining overhead utility lines within the city limits of San Francisco and that the CSFN urges the Board of Supervisors to immediately follow the recommendations of the 2007 Utility Undergrounding Task Force, most importantly to develop a city-wide, fully funded undergrounding program. (RHN)
8:00	VII. Program. Yin Lan Zhang, Bureau of Environmental Management SFPUC & Jeff Gilman Groundwater Project Manager SFPUC How San Francisco's water supply is diversifying by blending aquifer water and secondary sources of water to the city's Hetch Hetchy water supply. This relates to the San Francisco Groundwater Supply Project EIR. Karen Kubic, Wastewater Enterprise Capital Program Director & Tyrone Jue, SFPUC spokesman. San Francisco's Sewer System Improvement Program (SSIP)
VIII.	Adjournment

*CSFN meets the third Tuesday of each month except for December at Northern Police Station Community Room, Corner of Turk & Fillmore Streets (Parking in rear off Turk) Public Transit: Muni #22 Fillmore, 31 Balboa & 38 Geary Lines*

**Visitors: Please Sign the Register**

**NEIGHBORHOOD VIEWS** is published monthly, the official voice of the Coalition for SF Neighborhoods, Inc., a 501(c)4 organization.  
To Submit Articles: Email articles by the 5th of the month to [sjberk@mac.com](mailto:sjberk@mac.com)  
Either inline text or an attached document can be used.  
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*Coalition for SF Neighborhoods  
P.O. Box 320098 San Francisco CA 94132*

**Next Meeting  
Tuesday  
April 16**

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