

PINE HILL WATER DISTRICT FAQ

2/10/2025 – updated 2/21/2025

1. Where does the water come from?

From 2 cisterns that houses water from a natural spring

2. What are the main components of the water district?

- Source- Natural spring near water treatment plant.
- Treatment- Treatment building and reservoir at the end of Bonneview road.
- Mains- Main water lines that start at the reservoir and end near wastewater treatment plant on Route 28.
- Meters/Residents supply- Each house that is in the district and uses the town water system has a meter and a line coming off of the main and going to the residence. Currently there are 167 meters.

3. What testing is performed on the water?

The water is tested daily for ph and chlorine levels.

These tests are done post treatment at the reservoir/treatment plant

4. How is the district funded?

Funding comes from three sources.

- A. property tax levy (expected \$58,647)
- B. base water district charge (\$100 per 6 months)
- C. metered usage [B+C are estimated at \$51,695]

D. pre-existing fund balance (unspent funds from prior year. \$14,000 in this budget)

Total funding for 2025 is \$124,342

5. Who is in charge of water district operations?

The district commissioner is Ethan Bernstein and the deputy is Shane Berryann

6. Where / when can the yearly water report be found?

The previous year's water report can be found on the town's website around June 1st.

7. What outside support / expertise are we able to tap into for the water district?

We use New York Rural water to identify leaks and answer more complex operation questions.

8. What capital funding opportunities exist for the water district?

The National Rural Water Association's Rural Water Loan Fund offers 3% loans up to \$200,000 that cover 75% of a project's costs. We are evaluating other potential grants as well, but these are generally more available for capital enhancements. Water meters are considered maintenance and not covered by all funding sources.

9. What are the districts biggest challenges?

The biggest challenges are that we rely on a spring as our source water so in times of droughts the pressure may go

down. Also the meters and metering system are at the end of their lifespan and need to be replaced. We lack real time monitoring of the system which makes it a challenge to evaluate baseline usage and capacity.

10. What are the plans for the water district?

The plans are to replace the meters and metering system and to improve the system as a whole to bring the highest quality water to the residents of Pine Hill as efficiently as possible without any interruptions to service while obtaining accurate usage readings in real time. If we can get leak detection options for our main water lines it would be a huge bonus and would help us keep interruptions to a minimum.

11. How much will new water meters raise my bill?

The water meters are expected to cost \$150,351 with an annual maintenance charge of \$3,813.

The installation charge is expected to be mostly covered by a 10-year 3% loan for \$112,763 resulting in yearly payments of \$13,066 (The loan can only cover 75% of total project cost). The remaining \$37,587 would need to be paid out of the district's fund balance / capital fund. The 2025 budget already specifies a \$10k payment to the capital fund so the remainder needing to be paid from the fund balance is

\$27,587. There is currently ~\$40,000 in the fund balance/capital fund available for this project.

The annual maintenance charge (\$3,813 / 167 meters) is expected to raise the average rate payer's bill by \$22 per year. The loan repayment (\$13,066 / 167) is expected to raise rates by \$78. We hope that this will be partially offset with lower leak repair costs due to them being easier to locate, nevertheless rate payers can expect that by calendar year 2027 the average rate payer will be expected to pay \$100-125 more per year (with the actual amounts proportional to assessed value and usage).

Note: As meters age, they become less accurate and will routinely measure less usage than actually took place. As a result, new meters will often show that owners are / have been using more water than previously measured. If this proves to be the case with these new meters, the additional funding necessary (\$100-\$125) will potentially be seen primarily in greater usage charges.

It is additionally worth noting that Pine Hill took out a loan requiring \$50,000/year that will conclude in April 2036. While that's still very distant, once paid that money will be directed toward future improvements and replacements.

(These meters are expected to have a 25 year-lifespan and will themselves need replacement in ~2051)