

Town of West Boylston
40 Worcester Street, West Boylston, Massachusetts 01583

Solid Waste Advisory Team (SWAT) Meeting Minutes

August 3, 2017
4:30 PM
Town Hall Meeting Room

Members Present: Elise Wellington, Norma Chanis, Duane Henry, DPW Director Vernon Jackson, Julianne deRivera

Members Absent: Barur Rajeshkumar

Guest: PEG Director Brittany Blaney-Anderson

Meeting began at 4:30 p.m.

We introduced ourselves to our new member, Duane Henry and our guest, Brittany Blaney-Anderson. Having recently moved to West Boylston, Duane was interested in our committee's work because as the Purchasing Agent for the L.S. Starrett Co., a position from which he recently retired, he had negotiated their trash and recycling contracts.

Video Promoting Recycling on Local Cable TV: Brittany has just been hired by the town to be its PEG (Public/Education/Government) Coordinator for our local cable T.V. station. We discussed how and what Brittany could do to help SWAT develop and broadcast public access videos focused on educating the town towards recycling and reducing trash. Some of our ideas were: introducing the *Wachusett Watershed* Recycling Center as a resource (tour of the facility), using videos already in existence like 'The Story of Stuff,' or videos put out by EL Harvey, and working with some high school students who have an interest, *such as* Bruce Palmer's students researching the issue of gas leaks in town. The possibility of her working with our High School students to make a video promoting our local recycling program was endorsed enthusiastically by Brittany, but she will have to wait until the town hires an Access Coordinator before she can do so. Norma Chanis agreed to send Brittany the contact information for Irene Congdon, DEP's Central MA Recycling Coordinator. Irene has many video links on recycling and trash that Brittany could use before a local video is produced.

Minutes: We reviewed and approved minutes from our April 27, 2017 meeting.

Casella Landfill Closing: We had a discussion on the imminent closing of the Casella Landfill in Southbridge (by 2018 unless they can expand), which is where our town sends its trash and how this would impact the town. Would we then use *the* Wheelabrator incinerator? Norma had toured this facility and was impressed that the exhaust air was clean and that they even extracted usable metals from the remaining ash. Elise commented that they had put in a bid that was *slightly* lower than the original Casella bid when our disposal contract was put out to bid in 2015. [The day after this discussion, the T&G reported that Casella had announced that it would be shutting down its Southbridge landfill in 2018!]

Trash Bags: We discussed the Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) trash bags. After having been asked to investigate whether other bag producers supply better quality bags than our present supplier, Waste Zero, Vernon reported that the quality of our current bags *is* comparable to the quality of bags produced by other companies and *is* actually thicker. We also noted that West Boylston's trash bag costs to consumers are less than in surrounding central Massachusetts towns. *We agreed that we needed to inform the Board of Selectmen* and the Town Administrator, Anita Scheipers, that a bag fee increase *is* needed along the lines of \$0.75/\$1.50. Duane commented that the bag fee should go up automatically after 5 years if there has been no increase. Vernon agreed to assess the financial impact to the town *of* different rates of increase.

FY 2016 and FY 2017 Trash/Recycling Spreadsheets: Vernon was thanked for completing SWAT's FY 2016 Trash/Recycling Spreadsheet in time for SWAT Chair Julianne DeRivera to present its results to the May 2017 Town Meeting. It showed that our trash tonnage for FY 2016 had increased by 3%, and our recycling rate had decreased by 6%. Since FY 2017 has just ended, Vernon agreed to compile the trash and recycling numbers for SWAT's FY2017 Spreadsheet so that we can examine how the town did in the year that just ended.

Next Meeting: We agreed that our next meeting would be September 21, 2017 at 3:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Julianne deRivera
SWAT Chair