

SWAT zoom meeting minutes - March 9, 2023

Present: Julianne deRivera, Kevin Duffy (Director of Public Works), Ann Ramminger, Duane Henry, Kristina Pedone, Norma Chanis, Jennifer Warren-Dymment (Town Administrator)

The meeting began at 12:30 pm

Pedone motions to approve minutes from SWAT's last meeting January 12, 2023. Ramminger seconds.

deRivera reviews the top priorities gleaned from all 139 responses (out of 300 citizens on the town's listserv) to SWAT's town wide survey distributed last month: 50% of respondents were satisfied with West Boylston's trash/recycling program; the majority of respondents found the town websites hard to navigate and preferred facebook's site for accessing information; a large number of respondents were dissatisfied with the trash bag system preferring toters; and finally, almost all respondents requested a return of the Pink Bag program (or something similar).

Pedone concurred; emphasizing many frustrations aired over 'poor' bag quality (altho SWAT members mentioned that over-stuffing with heavy food or textiles would tax any bag). Pedone reported that she had been working with Nicole from Helpsy. Chanis also noted that Helpsy had donated a textile bin for the Wachusett Watershed Regional Recycling Center which would collect not just clothing, but textiles, and textile scraps. Ultimately, the end goal would be to re-establish curbside textile collection services for the town as has been recently done in Worcester. Chanis agreed to compare the services offered by Planet Aid versus Helpsy. Warrant-Dymment voiced her concern over dumping if too many bins were placed around town.

Pedone mentioned several town members' complaints over their 6:30 AM trash pick-up. Duffy met with representatives from Republic several months ago about this very concern; in response they changed the work shift times to align with 7:00 AM. Only if there is a replacement driver would there be any possibility of an inadvertent earlier pick-up time.

Warren-Dymment stated that she was in charge of posting on the town's facebook page. Therefore, any information for posting should be sent via email to her address. She is also in charge of checking for incoming emails on the SWAT website which she will then forward on to SWAT. Ramminger wondered if WB should have its own Freecycle Unit; Chanis noted the Wachusett Group already had a Freecycle unit. She also said that CMRK would not be a good fit to work with WWRRC. Henry noted that Craig's List had a freecycle site.

All agreed that the survey results could be posted on town website and facebook; Ramminger agreed to edit her Google docs powerpoint and add general answers to the most commonly

asked questions on the survey. All also agreed to sending an email from the SWAT chair to the 6 folks that volunteered to help in SWAT's mission.

Pedone reviewed her progress to date on WB's town wide clean-up set for April 22, 2023: 22 people have signed up so far, not including the high school students and the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts that usually show up the day-of. Three boxes of large yellow trash bags have been procured (2.5 boxes were used last year). The Republic dumpster has also been arranged. Finally, The School Yahd has graciously agreed to host (one free hour of indoor play) any volunteer or any one who brings a bag of clothes/textiles. Unfortunately, no one has yet volunteered to do any large pick-ups that day (like mattresses or furniture).

Duffy announced that due to an increase in the resin market and other increases, the trash bag fees would need to be increased. Duffy added that there has never been any increase in the bag cost in 15 years.

deRivera spoke about her productive meeting with high school principal Chris Fournier on February 1st. Principal Fournier was quite eager to implement food waste diversion, and maybe composting. Jason Disalle (high school teacher), heads the Green Group in the high school and is keen to switch over the plasticware to reusable silverware to avoid adding up to a ton of trash to the school's total trash which is now costing approximately \$5,700 per year. deRivera signed up for the Green Team and the Green Sword for materials helpful to the school's trash reduction and recycling mission. Rammingier advised laying the groundwork for these system changes over the summer so that they will be in place at the start of the school year.

Rammingier requested clarification about SWAT's advisory role to make recommendations versus make policy. Warren-Dyment explained that general discussion differed from formal discussion which would require motions for approval.

Next Meeting: SWAT will be April 13, 2023 at 12:30pm

Meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm.

Submitted by
Julianne deRivera, Chair SWAT