

West Boylston Solid Waste Advisory Team (SWAT) Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2014

The start of FY 2014 began the fifth year of West Boylston's Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) trash program and the fourth year of "single stream" recycling (where all our recyclables can be mixed together in the same bin). Our trash tonnage decreased slightly from 1,420 tons in FY13 to 1,416 tons in FY14, a good trend if we want to hold down costs. The town's trash went to Casella's landfill in Southbridge, where its disposal cost was \$65.73/ton at the end of FY14, as opposed to \$64.76 in FY13. Unlike trash, our recyclables have NO disposal fee, so recycling saves the town money. Our FY14 recycling rate (31.1 %) increased very slightly from FY13, when it was 30.9%. Although "single stream" recycling made it easier for residents to recycle, the **town's recycling rate has remained around 31% .**

The town's total trash costs for FY14 were \$370,104 (Collection - \$233,383 + Disposal - \$91,945 + Bag cost - \$44,775.= \$370,103). This was a 5% increase from FY13, when the total trash cost was \$351,007. Much of this increase was due to increased bag costs from the supplier. With bag fee revenue of \$134,600, **the net cost of the trash program in FY14 amounted to \$235.503, which is 11% more than the prior year**, when the net cost totaled \$212,407. However, the trash program continued to be a huge improvement over FY09, the year before PAYT started, when the town's net trash costs totaled \$395,492. This means **the town's net trash costs have declined 40% since the year before PAYT began – great news!**

To ensure that the town and SWAT have an accurate picture of how our trash and recycling programs are faring, SWAT developed a Trash/Recycling Spreadsheet in FY12. It tracks our recycling rate, our trash and recyclable tonnages, bag fee revenues, and gross and net costs of the program. In October, 2013, at the DPW's request, SWAT simplified this Spreadsheet so that only yearly figures are now needed, rather than monthly figures. This **Spreadsheet comparing FY 2014 to FY 2013 is attached.**

The Spreadsheet comparing FY 2012 to FY 2013 was put on the SWAT'S website and SWAT worked on updating this website in FY14

Our committee reviewed the DPW's 2013 – 2014 Trash Collection/Recycling flyer that goes out to all residents and was pleased to see new information added regarding chemical collection dates and document shredding dates at Wachusett Watershed Regional Recycling Center, which is located in West Boylston.

SWAT's concern that bulky or banned trash items are sometimes put out for pick-up continued.

Our fears that single stream recycling results in more contamination of recyclables than when paper and container recyclables are set out in separate bins was confirmed in the Boston Globe Magazine's (7/14/13) article "Out of Sorts" by Barbara Moran. She reported that this single stream recycling results in the recyclables being contaminated and rejected for re-use by buyers. The article stated that "....for every 100 tons of single-stream recyclables collected, only about 75 tons gets made into new products. The rest ends up in landfills or incinerators....." SWAT sent a summary of the article, as well as the

article itself, on October 27, to the Selectmen, Town Administrator, DPW Director, and Finance Committee.

After much study, the committee voted to support the MA bottle bill update. It would add to the bottle bill the many non-carbonated drinks (water bottles, sports drinks, iced tea, fruit drinks) that have come on the market since the bottle bill was passed in 1982. Only 23% of these “new” drink containers are being recycled, with the rest adding to the town’s trash load and litter. The update would raise their recycling rate to about 70 – 80 %, reducing the town’s trash and litter pick-up costs.

Two SWAT members attended the DEP’s November 2013 workshop on Pay-As-You-Throw, where they learned that PAYT communities having higher recycling rates usually have higher bag fees than we have. Along with the DPW Director, one committee member attended the December 2013 Central MA Recycling Awards Meeting, where new methods of promoting recycling, such as collection of residents’ food waste for composting, were suggested. (Americans throw away 40% of their food!)

Four SWAT meetings were held during FY14 and the committee welcomed Kathy Fahy as its newest member. Reports were given at the October 2013 and May 2014 Town Meetings, emphasizing that many “hard-to-get-rid-of” items can be brought to the Wachusett Watershed Regional Recycling Center.

West Boylston Solid Waste Advisory Team,

Julianne DeRivera, Chairman
Elise Wellington, Secretary
Norma Chanis
Kathy Fahy