

West Boylston Solid Waste Advisory Team (SWAT) Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2016

The start of FY 2016 began the seventh year of West Boylston's Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) trash program and the sixth year of "single stream" recycling (where all our recyclables can be mixed together in the same bin). Our trash tonnage increased from 1,433 tons in FY15 to 1,474 tons in FY16, not a significant change but heading in the wrong direction if we want to hold down costs. The town's trash went to Casella's landfill in Southbridge, where its disposal cost dropped to \$66/ton at the end of FY16, as opposed to \$66.52/ton at the end of in FY15. Unlike trash, our recyclables have NO disposal fee, so recycling saves the town money. Our FY16 **recycling rate of 30 % decreased slightly** from FY15, when it was 32% - not a good trend. Although "single stream" recycling made it easier for residents to recycle, the town's recycling rate has not changed significantly since before single stream started, when it was around 31%.

The town's total trash program costs for FY16 were \$379,026 (Collection - \$241,845 + Disposal - \$97,595 + Bag cost - \$39,586 = \$379, 026). This was only a **0.8 %** increase over FY15, when the total trash program cost was \$375,898. With bag fee revenue of \$136,200, **the net cost of the trash program in FY16 amounted to \$242,826, which is 0.8% more than the prior year**, when the net cost totaled \$240,698. The trash program continues to be an improvement over FY09, the year before PAYT started, when the town's net trash program costs totaled \$395,492. This means **the town's net trash costs have declined 39% since the year before PAYT began.**

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. This **Spreadsheet comparing FY 2016 to FY 2015 is attached.** SWAT's concern that bulky or banned trash items are sometimes put out for pick-up continued, as did its concern that "single stream" recycling results in more contamination of recyclables than when paper and container recyclables are set out in separate bins. At the May 2016 Town Meeting, SWAT summarized our trash and recycling picture. It also **advised residents not to put plastic bags or styrofoam in their recycling bins as these are contaminants and cannot be recycled at Casella's Materials Recycling Facility (MRF).** In fact, they jam the MRF's equipment, causing the MRF to have to shut down! **Residents were urged to take styrofoam, as well as textiles (which make up 6% of solid waste), to the Wachusett Watershed Recycle Center in town.** (*Plastic bags should be taken back to the grocery store.*) The Recycle Center's pamphlets were distributed and residents were also **urged to compost food waste**, which makes up at least 35% of our solid waste.

The **town's trash collection and trash disposal contracts came up for renewal** in June and December 2015 and both existing contracts were renewed without any real changes. They will

be expiring in 5 years.

During FY16, SWAT met five times, once with (our trash disposer) Casella's Paul Degnan and once with (our trash collector) Republic's Eric Curtis to review town trash issues, such as contamination of recyclables caused by single stream. SWAT has also updated its web page with the help of Karen Pare. Please check it out for all our meetings minutes, reports, and spreadsheets. Unfortunately, Kathy Fahy resigned from SWAT due to moving out of town this summer.

West Boylston Solid Waste Advisory Team – FY 2016,

Julianne DeRivera, Chairman

Norma Chanis, Secretary

Elise Wellington

Barur Rajeshkumar