

SWAT meeting minutes - September 14, 2023

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

The meeting began at 12:30 pm

Chanis motions to approve minutes from SWAT's last meeting May 11, 2023. Pedone seconds. Vote is unanimous to accept minutes.

SWAT discussed the request from the Town Administrator and Select Board to formalize SWAT from advisory team to advisory committee with designated officials and more formalized recommendations in writing to the Select Board. Pedone spoke to her desire to address increasing trash costs as her reason to join SWAT as an informed citizen. Chanis discussed the presence of Select Board members on SWAT as a way to increase communications. Henry addressed his concern that SWAT was composed of volunteers, not town elected officials. Henry underscored the town's trash budget as a part of the town's larger total budget. Chanis noted that all of us were working towards "doing the right thing for the town."

Pedone and Chanis both mentioned options for SWAT on how to decrease the town's trash budget: combing trash and recycling in one bag again, changing to toters, privatizing trash so each household has their own trash hauler (Chanis noted that Boylston who has privatized their trash, has 5 separate haulers, and had no trash pick-up for weeks when one hauler's truck broke down), or actually creating the town's own transfer station where residents bring their trash. We agreed that these complicated topics needed their own specialized meetings and sub-teams of 2 persons; bag fee issue (deRivera/Ramminger), new contract issue (Chanis/Henry), and textile diversion from trash stream (Chanis/?). deRivera will follow-up with Pedone who had to leave the meeting earlier as to whether she is interested in working on any sub-committee. Ramminger wondered whether SWAT needs another sub-committee for educational purposes (flyers, news articles, Facebook presence, and/or programs)

Henry motioned to change SWAT from advisory team to advisory committee. deRivera seconded. Unanimous vote to approve.

deRivera motioned to elect Chanis as Chair. Ramminger seconded. Unanimous vote to approve.

deRivera motioned to elect Ramminger as Vice Chair. Henry seconded. Unanimous vote to approve.

Ramminger motioned to elect deRivera as Clerk. Henry seconded. Unanimous vote to approve.

The next topic of discussion was whether to change the day and time of SWAT's meetings as some members found it difficult to meet during the typical work day. SWAT used to meet in the evenings but then changed to daytime to allow the Town Administrator and DPW head to attend. We agreed to first solicit the DPW director as to what time was best as Duffy is an important source of information for SWAT.

Chanis agreed to obtain a copy of the town's existing trash contract; the Casella contract expires January 31, 2026 while the Republic (sub-contract with Casella) expires 2025. Henry felt that a SWAT visit to Casella would help SWAT understand where the cost of sorting recyclables and tipping trash occurred and how they might be modified to cut costs. Chanis agreed to arrange the field trip. deRivera wondered whether the town could negotiate the tipping fee for trash as for the recyclables; Chanis commented that trash was currently hauled out of state while recyclables were managed in-state where wages might be higher. deRivera also mentioned that the town could decide to continue with PAYT bags inside totes so that any violators would be fined (with a camera installed on most trash trucks now). deRivera also mentioned the idea of negotiating the contract for 'services performed' as opposed to tons of trash to decrease trash production incentives.

deRivera mentioned her questions concerning WasteZero's monthly mailings which detailed the monies deposited and withdrawn from the town's bank account; specifically if the deposits from the local bag vendors were what they sold the bags for, and if the outgoing wire transfers were the cost to the town for the bags. Lastly, if there was a way to find out how much it cost to manufacture a single 15 gallon bag and a single 33 gallon bag. According to earlier figures, it cost \$2.20 to pick-up and dispose of each trash bag.

Ramminger wondered about adding new members to SWAT; Chanis mentioned a citizen who was interested in working on SWAT so as to involve WB's apartment complexes of more than 8 units to improve their trash and recycling issues.

Next Meeting: October 5, 2023 at 12:30pm

Ramminger moves to adjourn the meeting; Henry seconds. Meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.

Submitted by
Julianne de Rivera, Chair SWAT