

SWAT meeting minutes - October 6, 2023

Present: Julianne deRivera, Norma Chanis, Duane Henry

Absent: Jennifer Warren-Dyment (Town Administrator), Ann Ramminger, Kristina Pedone

Chanis calls the meeting to order at 12:30 pm.

Chanis motions to approve minutes from SWAT's last meeting September 14, 2023. Henry seconds. Vote is unanimous to accept minutes.

Chanis motions to maintain SWAT's current name. Henry seconds. Vote passed unanimously.

De Rivera reads the paragraph to be presented to the town at the upcoming town meeting October 16th. All approved. Copy to be sent to the town clerk.

Chanis will call Casella for tour dates available to any SWAT members to attend. Henry feels it's important to assess the operations at the plant to allow a better understanding of what can be negotiated in any future contract when our current contract expires in June 2025.

De Rivera showed the recent curbside collections costs from the SWAT spreadsheet: \$249,311 (FY18), \$257,673 (FY19), \$263,312 (FY20), \$344,799 (FY21), and \$358,591 (FY22) representing increases of 3.3%, 2%, 31%, and 4% respectively.

Henry wondered about what factors contribute to the curbside collection costs; are there any variables that we could mitigate. For example, their needing new trucks, their projected wage rates, limiting the amount of trash folks could put on a week (< 5 bags per house as in other towns), or opting for extra services like curbside pick-up of bulk items (using a prepaid sticker) or compost or textiles (valuable services that would divert these products from trash tipping fee costs to town. Henry also noted that the trash budget is a relatively small percentage of the total town budget.

Chanis noted that the insurance costs for trash collectors to leave their truck is increasingly expensive. It seems to be the main reason for the industry moving to everyone using toters. However, SWAT can still recommend small size (35 or 48 gallon) toters for trash and larger size (64 to 95 gallon) toters for recyclables. Additionally, we should investigate whether or not bidding for haulers that would offer toters, discount them etc and/or see if West Boylston would be willing to use their RDP (Recycling Dividend Program) money to supplement costs to purchase. Chanis also wondered if there was anything in our current contract or worth considering in our new contract, to see if we 'shared' in any money made from our recyclables

like cardboard. In addition, PAYT bags may still be used inside toters as is done in Upton, for example (these trash trucks have cameras mounted inside, so any incorrect colored bag is noted and the address flagged for a fine.

Chanis also wondered if Casella could do another trash audit for 'heavy weights' and 'banned items' like textiles and recyclables. In this context, any bag fee increase would be offset by fewer bags used. Henry wondered if the paper insert in the PAYT trash bag rolls could contain information useful for how to divert banned items from the trash.

Chanis will contact the town administrator for a copy of the contract with WasteZero (the supplier of PAYT bags to WB). She has spoken with other towns who may have a better deal with a cheaper supplier.

Chanis also commented on some local towns deciding not to use haulers and instead have their residents bring their trash and recyclables to a transfer station.

Chanis asked for a vote to approve SWAT having a scarecrow for the town's Octoberfest in 2 weeks; she and Ramminger plan to make the scarecrow with all the items that are textile recycling friendly. For example, using stuffed animals and mis-matched shoes which are, in themselves, recyclable in a textile bin.

WB uses Planet Aid textile bins while the recycling center uses Salvation Army and Helpsy. Chanis stated that the town administrator is mostly hoping for regular textile drives in town to divert textiles from the trash. Chanis wondered what the townwide survey gleaned from citizens about the previous Pink Bag Program (informally it was noted that nearly all the respondents were in favor of reinstating the program). Chanis also felt that the for-profit CMRK would be better for the town as their took a larger array of material than Helpsy. Chanis also noted that Black Earth used to do curbside pick-up of compost and textiles; she agreed to research that company more.

Chanis hoped that SWAT could maintain a monthly meeting schedule; agreed to have the next meeting on November 15th with the time to be determined.

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

Submitted by
Julianne de Rivera, SWAT Clerk