

## SWAT meeting minutes - December 7, 2023

Present: Julianne deRivera, Norma Chanis, Duane Henry, Ann Ramminger, Jennifer Warren-Dyment (Town Administrator), Kristina Pedone

Chanis calls the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

Ramminger motions to approve minutes from SWAT's last meeting November 15, 2023.  
Chanis seconds. Vote is unanimous to accept minutes.

De Rivera clarifies SWAT's spreadsheet noting an insignificant change in numbers once the actual bag count was obtained. All agreed that the amended spreadsheet would not need to be re-posted. See attached.

Chanis notes that she is still waiting for a call from Casella concerning possible tour dates available to any SWAT members to attend in preparation for upcoming trash contract negotiations.

SWAT's presentation to the Select Board December 6th, reviewing the argument to increase the cost of the PAYT bag fee, given by Ramminger, was discussed. All agreed that the presentation went well. See attached powerpoint and handout given to the Select Board. Warren-Dyment said that the reporter for The Item requested a copy of the powerpoint and handout presented. However, because there was a quorum for SWAT present, no one except Ramminger could speak to the questions from the Board. The Select Board raised concerns about retailers running out of the PAYT bags, what comparable surrounding towns' PAYT bags cost and how long they had been at that rate, and that the 75% increase seemed too steep. deRivera noted the PAYT composite bag cost to the town (for pick-up and disposal) was \$1.23 5 years ago, and now it is \$1.75 per bag, a 42% increase in price. Pedone said she will make a chart of price increases in a gallon of milk, a cup of coffee, and a quarter pounder for comparison sake. deRivera also noted that, on average, residents used 2 bags per week, therefore 8 bags a month. So the increase in their expense would be \$8/ month for a small bag and \$16/ month for the large bag. Of course, if people divert their recyclables, textiles, food waste from their trash they will use fewer bags. In fact, Irene Congdon, from DEP, has studies that show only 38% of what is in people's trash bags is really trash; the rest can be diverted. Warren-Dyment suggested that at the next Select Board meeting January 3rd, SWAT also have a concurrent meeting which would allow for a fuller discussion of the bag fee issues.

Next we discussed holding our first textile drive January 8th- 13th where there will be Helpsy bins at the town hall. Conveniently there are also security cameras installed there. The second textile drive will happen the week of WB Clean-Up Day April 20th. These bins will be at the Senior Center, as will the Clean-Up Day event. Pedone noted that last year on WB Clean-Up Day 558 lbs of textiles were collected on that one day. DPW, now with a new director, Thomas Deganan, works in conjunction with SWAT, picking up all the yellow collecting bags from the side of the road and has the dumpster from Republic available. Pedone also wants to have free

recycling bins available that day. The large compost bins will also be available and discounted to \$25 at the WWRRC in the Spring. Pedone feels it would be educational to have one as a demonstration at the Clean-Up Day.

Chanis and Ramminger both noted that by diverting textiles and other items from the trash, residents would need fewer PAYT bags. Chanis noted that the WWRRC gets over 600 tons of stuff a year. Chanis noted that our contract Waste Zero ends in June '24; at that time WB may find a less expensive supplier. Until then however, de Rivera wondered whether more recycling information could be added to the yellow paper insert found in the PAYT bag rolls; Chanis will find out how to do this (eg., adding a link to WWRRC, adding the dates of the town's textile drives.

Next meeting January 3, 2024 at 5:00 pm to discuss what bag fee SWAT should advocate before the Board meeting at 6:00 pm. All agreed that 75% but using rounded off numbers would be equitable; ie., now a roll of small bags cost \$5, with the increase it would be \$9. A roll of large bags costs \$10, with the increase it would be \$18.

February meeting to occur on the second Thursday at 5:00 pm

Chanis moves to adjourn the meeting; Ramminger seconds. Meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm

Submitted by  
Julianne de Rivera, SWAT Clerk