

Town of Montville Town Council  
**Special Informational Meeting Minutes**

**June 5, 2018**

11:00 a.m. – Town Council Chambers – Town Hall

1. Call to Order

Chairman McNally called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call

Present was Councilor McNally. Absent were Councilors Caron, Jaskiewicz, Pike, Pollard, Rogers, and Rogulski. Also present was Mayor Ronald McDaniel.

4. New Business

A. Presentation by CT DEEP (Department of Energy and Environmental Protection) regarding the Pay-Per-Bag/SMART (Save Money and Reduce Trash) Program

Public Works Director Donald Bourdeau, Jr., provided a brief background on the Pay-Per-Bag/SMART Program and introduced Jennifer Weymouth, CT DEEP; Kristen Brown, WasteZero Vice President of Municipal Partnerships and DEEP (Department of Energy and Environmental Protections) Consultant, and; Dave Aldridge, Southeastern Connecticut Regional Resources Recovery Authority (SCRRRA) Executive Director.

CT DEEP Representative Weymouth thanked everyone for inviting them to speak and provided a statewide perspective on trash and recycling. Her role with CT DEEP involves aiding municipalities to identify solutions to reduce solid waste and increase recycling. Municipalities are currently seeking alternative methods to dealing with their solid waste management systems as reductions in State funding and increases in trash costs continue to strain their budgets. In CT, trash is sent to Waste-To-Energy facilities, which are aging and shutting down throughout the northeast. As the total capacity of the Waste-To-Energy facilities decreases, the disposal/tipping costs (currently approximately \$65.00 - \$70.00/ton) for the disposal of trash increases resulting in higher costs for towns and its residents. In response, CT DEEP has established a statewide diversion goal of 60% by 2024, which concentrates on waste reduction and involves reusing, recycling, and composting. To help achieve their goal, they have requested that municipalities implement a waste reduction initiative designed to reduce their total waste by 10% by December 2018 and have identified that the SMART Program is the most effective way to achieve their goals. A campaign entitled “What’s In? What’s Out?” was recently launched to educate the public, streamline the message, and increase participation in addition to providing information regarding other forms of recycling, including electronics, paint, textiles, and plastic bags. Over 556 New England communities have adopted SMART Programs with great success and at a scale that is above and beyond any other alternative waste management program. Examples include Massachusetts where 41% and Maine where 31% of their cities/towns have implemented the program, resulting in approximately 44% waste reduction, in both cases. Other States that have mandated the SMART Program includes Minnesota, Oregon, Vermont and Washington. CT DEEP hired WasteZero for technical assistance and is currently working with 30 communities to control costs and trash more efficiently and effectively.

WasteZero Vice President and CT DEEP Consultant Brown provided a brief background of her experience in the industry and the success of the Program, stating that each of the communities who have adopted the Program have immediately cut their trash by 40% to 50%. The SMART Program would primarily affect those who purchase either a \$55.00 or \$45.00 sticker to utilize the Transfer Station and not those who receive private collection. By reducing the amount of trash being generated, the Town’s Transfer Station costs would decrease thereby resulting in a reduction of the Town’s overall taxes. Currently, the Town produces 1,750 tons of trash annually and pays

\$58.00/ton to process the garbage, slightly less than the State average due to the subsidization of costs by SCRARRA. Unique to Montville is the offering of curbside recycling. The costs of the Transfer Station Expenses are currently being paid for by the General Fund (69%), through the Transfer Station fee (19%), and Bulky and other fees (12%). The costs that are paid for through the General Fund would be shifted to those who utilize the Transfer Station. The Town currently produces approximately 700 lbs. per capita in comparison to the town of Stonington, which has implemented the Program and generates 389 lbs. of trash per capita. Similar communities throughout New England have witnessed similar decreases due to behavioral changes. The average household utilizes 0.9 bags per week. The less waste a community produces, the more the tipping fees are reduced. Should the Town opt to adopt the Program, those who purchase a sticker would receive 50 free 13-gallon bags and additional 30-gallon bags may be purchased for \$2.00 and/or 13-gallon bags for \$1.25 at various locations. By implementing the Program, the Town's revenue would increase through the reduction of trash being generated and the revenue received through the sale of the bags would offset the costs of the Transfer Station. The Program reduces their overall costs, their environmental impact through the production of less greenhouse gas and energy, their reliance on the incineration of trash and the Town's exposure to price hikes, and would result in a more equitable system. When surveyed, 79% of the respondents in the 556 communities who take part in the Program favor the Program.

SCRARRA Executive Director Aldrige stated that SCRARRA was formed in the late 1980's to serve the 12 towns located in Southeastern CT to fund the construction of a waste energy plant in Preston. The bonds for the plant have since been paid off and Covanta Energy now owns the plant. Over their 25 years they were directly involved with the Plant through the bonds, they were able to invest the funds that were earned by selling the electricity that was produced into reserve accounts that are utilized for most of the activities they offer to the communities, e.g. subsidization of 40% of the tipping fees; collection of such items as tires, fluorescent bulbs, propane tanks, Freon, electronics; hazardous waste recycling programs, and; utilization of wood grinders. Currently, SCRARRA is under contract to subsidize costs for ten years. Should the Town opt to adopt the Program, the subsidization of costs could extend to as many as 20 years.

Mayor McDaniel, who is a member of SCRARRA's Board of Directors, added that the Board does a phenomenal job of keeping the costs of solid waste disposal down. In addition to all of their services, the projected savings of \$76,000.00 through the limited pilot implementation of the program equates to an increase of \$36.00 per Transfer Station sticker price and results in a more equitable situation.

5. Remarks from the Public with a three-minute limit

James Stuller, 63 Sarah Drive, questioned the municipal partnership of the panelists.

Response: WasteZero Vice President and DEEP Consultant Brown stated that she has worked as a consultant for DEEP for the last three years speaking with communities throughout the State regarding the Program.

Danielle Butzgy, 19 John Luty Drive, questioned the towns that have tried the Program and those that have dropped out of the Program.

Response: The curbside communities of Stonington and Mansfield and over 24 Transfer Station communities have successfully implemented the Program. Stonington, which is similar in size to Montville, has witnessed a savings of over \$6 million in disposal fees since its inception. In Columbia, following a six-month pilot program, with a projected savings of \$40,000.00/year, a Town referendum was held in which the residents voted not to adopt the program. Similarly, the town of East Lyme, where the Program became a

political issue, also discontinued the Program though the numbers showed that the Program was working.

Ms. Butzgy also questioned the possible increase in littering.

Response: SCRRRA Executive Director Aldrige stated that the Program encourages people to pay more attention to what they are doing and how they are handling their trash and recycling. Through their research, they have found that those who litter do so with or without the Program.

Ms. Butzgy, whose recycling bin is quickly filled, stated the need for additional recycling containers and, as a family of five, still produces approximately one bag of trash/day. Implementing the Program would cost her family approximately \$400.00/year. She questioned whether other, more economical options, including increasing the sticker fees, were reviewed.

Response: WasteZero Vice President and DEEP Consultant Brown encouraged her to keep in touch with them regarding her waste/recycling production should the Program be adopted. Chairman McNally stated that numerous options were reviewed and discussed, including increasing the fees and a punch card system. Unfortunately, there appears to be a significant amount of residents piggybacking on other stickers. So much so that even doubling the costs would not recover the Transfer Station costs resulting in a financial burden on the Town and its residents, creating an unfair situation.

Dana McFee, 27 Crestview Drive, a big advocate of solving the waste crisis, encouraged the residents to support the Program. He recognizes the piggybacking of trash and, after conducting extensive research on the matter, he agreed that the SMART Program is the best option, adding that people, in general, are not recycling enough. He disagreed with the numbers regarding the cost of the bags and felt that the cost should be lowered. He added that the punch card system was also reviewed, but due to the resulting increase in traffic at the Transfer Station and the need for increased staffing, such a system would result in a cost increase and would not be a feasible solution.

Mike Hillsberg, 39 Lisa Lane, questioned whether there was a minimum trash requirement.

Response: There is no minimum trash requirement and, therefore, no penalties. Those who purchase

Mr. Hillsberg also commented on the affect the Program would have on those who purchase one-day passes, issues with stolen bags, the possibility of increased littering, the reasoning behind singling out only those who utilize the Transfer Station, the affect the Program would have on private haulers as well as its affect on the commercial establishments as more residents might utilize their dumpsters. He did not feel that the savings would be significant.

Florence Turner, 204 Route 163, who has worked at the Transfer Station for the past 16 years reflected on the widespread abuse she has witnessed at the Transfer Station. This Program would alleviate the unfairness and residents would pay equally for the amount of waste they produce. The amount of waste produced can be decreased dramatically through the reuse and recycling of everything from bottles, cans, and paper to textiles, including those torn or stained articles of clothing or shoes that are tattered or torn or, even, one shoe. She also informed the public of an Ordinance regarding a \$10.00 per item fine for not recycling a recyclable item.

Cheryl Gregoir, 28 Cook Drive, questioned the number and size of the bags they would be receiving with their sticker purchase and how it would be monitored at the Transfer Station.

Response: Fifty (50) 13-gallon bags would be provided with each sticker purchase and the bags, which will most likely be orange in color, will be clearly visible by the attendant. Should the sticker be purchased mid-fiscal year, the bags would be prorated.

Tony Siragusa, 39 Hillcrest Drive, questioned the disposal of such large items as rugs, plaster, etc.

Response: Such items are considered bulky waste and would be part of the punch card system. The Program is related to household garbage only.

James Stuhler, 63 Sarah Drive, questioned the availability of a grant similar to that which New London received.

Response: CT DEEP is currently in the process of securing additional funding to replenish the grant pool and, should the grant become available, Montville would be eligible to receive funds.

Mr. Stuhler expressed his skepticism of the immediate 44% reduction and the maintaining of that reduction and the public's evident lack of recycling knowledge.

Response: The contamination of recyclables is one of the increasing problems with recycling involves and, as the result, the industry is experiencing growing financial stress. As such, steps are being taken to avoid such issues, including SCRRA's "What Goes Where?" Program, which is available online and as an app, that will help residents determine what is/is not recyclable. In addition, SCRRA has developed a recycling education program, which is presented to the schools and the public, including one that will take place this month at Ledyard High School. WasteZero Vice President and CT DEEP Consultant Brown emphasized that most people do try to do the right thing and the Program helps by educating the public as to what is/is not recyclable. Along with the sticker and the bags will be an informational sheet. She was unable to respond to his skepticism and the reasoning behind the immediate reduction in waste once the Program is instituted.

Mr. Stuhler questioned the sewage issues in the town of Stonington.

Response: The problem, it was felt, is unrelated to the SMART Program.

Mr. Stuhler questioned the timing of the institution of the Program and its effect on the current recycling contract.

Response: The Program could, possibly, be instituted as soon as July 1, 2018 and would not go to a referendum. While the Town does currently have a five-year recycling contract, the contract could be canceled at any time. It was noted that the Program relates only to household waste; the recycling program would remain the same and the Program, if instituted, would be on a trial basis.

Mr. Stuhler also questioned the savings gained from the energy being produced by the waste recovery plan.

Response: Because the bonds have been paid, the Operator is now reaping the benefits gained from the energy that is being produced by the Plant. Likewise, the Operator would suffer any economic hit(s). WasteZero Vice President and CT DEEP Consultant Brown added that, by shifting those resources out of the waste stream and back into the supply stream, a more efficient and healthier environment is created by decreasing their overall carbon footprint and creating less pollution.

Mr. Stuhler questioned the possibility of offering a reduced pricing structure for low-income/indigent residents.

Response: There is no reduced plan being offered at this time for low-income/indigent residents.

Dana McFee, 27 Crestview Drive, requested that the Town consider offering the option of receiving the larger bags or combination of large and small bags in addition to the small bags.

Ray Wheling, 45 Driscoll Drive, questioned how the public would receive their bags should the Program be instituted after the purchase of the stickers.

Response: Public Works Director Bourdeau stated that the bags would be prorated.

John Desjardins, 523 Raymond Hill Road, having listened to the presentation felt that it is a good program and would work with time and effort and ultimately result in a savings for both the Town's families and the Town, itself.

6. Remarks from the Councilors and the Mayor

Mayor McDaniel stated that the Program is only one step in the continuum of items they need to do to reduce their waste stream. There is no doubt that the Program would save the Town money, as is evident through the stewardship programs for mattress, latex paint, and tires. The Government should mandate manufacturers to produce their products in a recyclable manner so as not to contribute to the waste stream.

Chairman McNally thanked everyone for attending the meeting this morning.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Agnes Miyuki, Recording Secretary for the Town of Montville

**AN AUDIO RECORD OF THE MEETING CAN BE FOUND ON THE TOWN'S WEBSITE LOCATED UNDER RESOURCES – FORM REPOSITORY – MEETING RECORDINGS**