

Special Informational Meeting Minutes

July 18, 2018

7:00 p.m. – Town Council Chambers – Town Hall

1. Call to Order

Chairman McNally called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call

Present were Councilors Caron, Jaskiewicz, Pike, Pollard, and McNally. Absent were Councilors Rogers and Rogulski.

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

Kristen Brown, WasteZero Vice President of Municipal Partnerships and DEEP (Department of Energy and Environmental Protections) Consultant, introduced herself and provided a brief background of her experience in the industry and the success of the Program. Hired by DEEP, WasteZero has been providing technical assistance to work with communities to find more efficient and effective ways to deal with the amount of trash being produced due to a capacity shortage for garbage throughout New England. In an effort to encourage residents to reuse, recycle, and compost, DEEP has instituted a diversion goal of 60%; the State is currently at 30%. One of the programs she has worked on is Unit-based Pricing or SMART (Save Money and Reduce Trash), which is utilized by all of the States as their number one tool for reducing trash. The Program, which is currently mandatory in the States of Vermont, Washington, Minnesota, has been adopted by 556 New England communities with great success and at a scale that is above and beyond any other alternative waste management program. These communities are currently disposing up to 50% less trash per capita in comparison to those communities that have not adopted the program. There are approximately nine Connecticut communities that have instituted the Program, including Stonington, Stratford, Portland, Salem, and Sprague. A campaign entitled “What’s In? What’s Out?” was recently launched by the State to educate the public, streamline the message, and increase participation by providing information regarding recyclable and reusable items. In addition, residents may visit recyclect.com for information on how various materials can be diverted, including such items as one shoe, stained or damaged clothing, etc.

Though the Town currently produces approximately 700 lbs. of garbage per capita, which is less than the average community in Connecticut, in part due to their unique offering of curbside recycling, it is still more than that of one that has instituted the Program. For example, the town of Stonington currently generates approximately 398 lbs. of trash per capita. Other communities throughout New England have witnessed similar decreases due to behavioral changes. When surveyed, 79% of the respondents in 10 communities who take part in the Program favor the Program, 74% feel that it is easy to participate, and 89% feel that the Program is effective. The issue was brought to a referendum in Stonington, where an overwhelming number of residents voted in favor of the Program and, since its institution, has saved approximately \$6 million to date. East Lyme also implemented the Program, but has since abandoned it due to a political decision. Currently, the Town pays a tipping fee of \$58.00/ton to process the garbage, slightly less than the State average due to the subsidization of costs by SCRRRA (Southeastern Connecticut Regional Resources Recovery Authority), and those costs are paid for through the Town’s General Fund (69%), Transfer Station fees (19%), and Bulky Waste and other fees (12%). Should the Program be instituted those costs that are paid for through the General Fund would be shifted to those who are utilizing the Transfer Station and purchasing a \$55.00/\$45.00 sticker or paying the \$3.00 per trip fee. Those who utilize the services of a private hauler would not be affected. By reducing the amount of trash being generated, the Transfer Station’s operating costs not only decrease,

but would also be offset by the revenue generated through the sale of the bags, thereby resulting in a reduction of the Town's overall budget. Should the Town opt to adopt the Program, residents who purchase a transfer station sticker would receive 13-gallon bags, free of charge – the number of bags received would depend upon if/when the Program is adopted and/or when the sticker is purchased. Those who visit the Transfer Station on an occasional basis to discard their garbage would not be charged the \$3.00/trip fee. Residents may purchase (additional) bags for approximately \$1.25 for a 13-gallon trash bag or approximately \$2.00 for a 30/33-gallon trash bag at the Transfer Station and local retail outlets. Based upon data collected from over 800 communities, the average household utilizes 0.9 kitchen size (13-gallon) bags per week. By adopting the Program, the Town would reduce their overall costs, their environmental impact through the production of less greenhouse gases, decrease their reliance on the incineration of trash and the Town's exposure to price hikes, and would result in a more equitable system.

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

Kristen Forde, 559 Raymond Hill Road, questioned whether WasteZero was a for- or not-for-profit corporation, the contract under which they/she is under to conduct the project, and if they are required to have a certain number of communities adopt the Program. She noted that the Town's local forum has been inundated with those complaining about the Program. She also questioned how many towns have abandoned the Program after instituting a trial period.

Response: WasteZero is a for-profit corporation and is receiving a fee from the State to conduct a four-year project in an effort to aid municipalities in seeking alternative methods and identify solutions to reduce solid waste and increase recycling as trash costs continue to increase and strain their budgets. She questioned whether the complaints derived from those who have experience with the Program and encouraged towns and their residents to gauge their thoughts after trying the Program for one-year. Two out of 556 municipalities in New England have abandoned the Program after the trial period. There are several thousand municipalities across the country have adopted the Program.

Allison Hoffman, 120 Fort Shantok Road, stated that most of the residents who use the services offered at the Transfer Station do so for budgetary reasons. Upon conducting some calculations, she estimates that, based upon the usage of three 13-gallon trash bags/week by an average family of four, the Program would cost \$270.00/year, which equates to the cost of a private hauler. She stated that they already do a lot of recycling and have issues with Willimantic Waste not picking up their recycling bins causing them to take their recycling to the Transfer Station, themselves. She felt that a more reasonable solution would be to increase the cost of the sticker by \$10.00 to help cover the Town's costs. She also commented on the abuse she has witnessed by those who throw away up to 30 bags of garbage on a weekly basis.

Response: WasteZero The total expected revenue for the Town is estimated at \$53,000.00 and, based upon the revenue, the average home would need to purchase approximately 0.25 bag/week. The purpose of instituting the Program is, in part, to curb the abuse and create a more equitable system for the residents of the Town who are subsidizing those costs.

Mike Preble, 46 Spruce Lane, who works for Ledyard's Public Works Department and is a business owner, stated the evident mismanagement of funds, purchasing of equipment, and the funds earned by SCRRRA from the power generated by the incineration of garbage. He felt that a better solution would be for the Town to better enforce those who are abusing the system. He suggested limiting the number of bags one is allowed to throw away per day, speaking with the abusers, and being more aware of those who are not residents, but are utilizing the Town's services. He commented on the issues that would arise from adopting the Program, including the need to maintain the garbage bag until it is full, inviting mice and other rodents into their homes. Neither the towns of East Lyme, who hated the Program, nor Stonington, who adopted the Program, appears to care about paying the necessary amount to dispose of their garbage.

Response: While she could not speak for SCRRRA, she could request that they provide a written response that would be available to the public. She stated that SCRRRA does subsidize the Town's tipping fee of \$58.00/ton compared to the average cost of \$72.00/ton.

Mr. Preble, commented on the need for SCRRRA to utilize those funds to create a better, more efficient plant and questioned whether they were wasting money because the Town is paying them too much. In addition, he felt that the Program would result in an increase in littering or people burning their garbage.

Gary Donovan, 1422 Route 85, who has three children, spoke against the Program, stating that the bags included in the cost of the sticker would not be adequate for the amount of trash his family generates. His family recycles extensively and helps the Town earn additional revenue by bringing in scrap metal. He questioned whether they have approached the larger towns/generators of garbage, e.g. Hartford, Bridgeport, New Haven regarding the institution of the Program, what the incentive is for residents to separate their garbage, whether the Program would save the Town money and lower their taxes. He commended the Transfer Station employees for directing the residents as to what is and is not recyclable.

Response: They began their pursuit by contacting the specific communities, including larger generators and several are in the process of adopting the Program. Many towns, including Montville, contacted them directly. While there is currently no incentive for any resident to separate their garbage and recycling, it is the law. Both DEEP and Montville have Ordinances in place. In Montville, for every recyclable item that is thrown in the garbage, there is a \$10.00 fine, upwards of \$90.00. The Town would save money as less funds would be expended for Transfer Station costs. Councilor McNally estimated that that the overall savings of \$86,000.00 would result in a savings of 0.25 cents per household in taxes.

Tim May, 1297 Route 163, questioned where the excess material that each family does not throw into their garbage is diverted.

Response: Some of the garbage is diverted directly into the recycling stream. Other items, such as clothing, used textiles, handbags, bedding, old towels, and shoes, are moved into the reuse stream. It is estimated that the average household throws away 87 lbs. of such items annually.

Mr. May stated that, being ecologically minded and environmentally conscious, he constructed an Energy Star home 18 years ago with a geothermal heat pump and, more recently, installed solar paneling. He also actively donates clothing to local organizations and practices recycling. Nevertheless, his family of five generates four to five, sometimes six, bags of garbage per week. Upon further research, he has found that, on average, one person is estimated to generate one bag of garbage per week and fails to see how the amount of change she has articulated would come to fruition, especially as more stringent rules are being placed on what can and cannot be recycled. He felt that emphasis should be placed upon the reduction of the amount of people who are piggybacking their garbage by, possibly, limiting the number of trash bags each household can bring in to the Transfer Station and imposing an additional fee for any extra bags. He expressed his concern for the administration costs and issues related to the purchasing and availability of the bags. He felt that the system they currently have in place is good and that, first and foremost, the abusers should be dealt with prior to encouraging recycling as it is evident that residents are recycling. He added that much of the 700 lbs. per capita of garbage that is being generated in the Town could be due to illegal dumping.

Marc Kashar, 41 Richard Brown Drive, requested clarification regarding the lack of the \$3.00 per trip charge for occasional users, which would result in the loss of revenue for the Town. He felt that the Town should, instead, place a limit in the amount of garbage bags a car is allowed to dispose of at the Transfer Station.

Response: It was confirmed that a sticker would not be required for occasional users of the Transfer Station; he/she would need to provide proof of residence and bring in their garbage in the required orange bag.

Charlie Bussher, 3 Brewer Street, recalled that the two trash-to-energy plants located in the towns of Preston and Lisbon were purchasing trash in order to meet their obligation and ensure that the minimum amount of trash needed to generate energy was met. He questioned whether this has changed and inquired as to whether the State was receiving any revenue from trash that shipped out of state and requested clarification regarding the tipping fee. He commended the Transfer Station, which, he felt, was very efficiently run.

Response: The State is not receiving funds to dispose their garbage out of state. They are, instead, paying to dispose the garbage out of state. The tipping fee is the cost of running the incinerator, which, it was noted, is not run by SCRRA. The current policy regarding scrap metal, brush, leaves, and the like, will remain the same.

Flo Turner, 204 Route 163, who has worked at the Transfer Station for 16 years, stated that, based upon her experience, the Pay-Per-Bag System would be the most equitable solution as the taxpayers are subsidizing the garbage that others are bringing in by piggybacking their trash. Should the Program be instituted, those who utilize the Transfer Station would be required to purchase and utilize the designated bags and pay only for what they are throwing away. The Transfer Station offers many other services and, through SCRRA, they are able to recycle electronics, light bulbs, batteries, used motor oil, propane tanks, etc. The Town also pays a very minimal fee to utilize their tub grinder. She encouraged residents to recycle, adding that her family of three generates one bag of garbage per week.

J. Jurkiewicz, 17-A Massapeag Point Road, believed that the Pay-Per-Bag System would penalize those who are unable to afford the services of a commercial carrier. As a retiree, he is open to paying an extra \$10.00 to \$15.00/year for the use of the Transfer Station. He felt that the Town should better inspect and enforce those who are bringing garbage for his/her tenants who reside out of town. He felt that, should the Program be adopted, the bags should be offered free of charge. The fairest system would be to increase the Transfer Station fees.

Monica Pomazon, 90 Pequot Road, who believed that the larger-sized bag would be most economical due to its capacity, stated that, as a senior citizen, the weight of the bag would preclude her from using them and the use of the smaller bag would be an added expense. She questioned whether there would be individuals who might be able to assist them with the bags and whether they would be ADA compliant. She actively recycles and composts, but requested they review the Pay-Per-Bag System for those with physical limitations.

Response: The average weight of a full bag of garbage for the smaller trash bag is 13 lbs. while the average weight of that of the larger bag is 22 lbs., making the smaller bag a better value in that sense. There have been discussions regarding the possibility of also offering an 8-gallon trash bag.

Howard R. Beetham, 60 Riverview Road, commented on a nice presentation and recommended that a printed booklet be made available for those sitting in the rear of the room and unable to clearly view the screen. He spoke against the Program, stating that, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it". He felt that their current system works well and informed them of the requirement for the Town to generate a minimum amount of garbage in order house a Transfer Station in their Town or be penalized as well as a minimum amount of garbage the Town is required to keep the plant running and generate the necessary power. Like Eversource, who is proposing a 13% increase in electricity costs because residents are utilizing less electricity, the proposed SMART Program would have the same result. He questioned the administration and the selling of the trash bags to the various individuals, businesses, and casino and commented that it would be discriminatory to require only homeowners to recycle. He commended the Transfer Station Employees.

Response: She appreciated his suggestion regarding the availability of a printed copy of the presentation for those attending the meeting. She stated that there is twice as much garbage being produced than is necessary to run the plant/generate the necessary power and, as such, the prices are continuing to rise. DEEP predicts that the tipping fee can rise from the current rate of \$72.00

to \$76.00/ton to over \$100.00 in less than ten years unless the amount of trash being generated is drastically reduced. By law, it is mandatory for everyone to recycle in the State of CT. Currently, this particular Program is aimed at residents and not commercial businesses and would reduce the overall costs that taxpayers are paying to dispose of the garbage at the Transfer Station.

Jon Chase, 1011 Route 163, in contrast to Mr. Beetham, felt that they should fix what's broke. One of the common threads throughout the discussion is the abuse of the system and the inherent costs that are created by that abuse. He felt that, with the help of the right tools and directive, the smart and efficient employees of the Transfer Station/Public Works Department would be able to generate good ideas to resolve the abuse. Limitations to the number of bags an individual/car can bring in an effort to stop the abuse may be a possible solution. He also proposed passing an Ordinance mandating the institution of a common dumpster for trailer parks. He also noted that he regularly picks up garbage that is deposited in his neighborhood and, should the Program be adopted, he would discontinue doing so due to the cost of the bags and questioned how the Town would handle such issues as littering. He recommended that the Town provide the staff with the proper tools to help curb the abuse and decrease the amount of garbage coming into the Transfer Station by identifying the culprits and the abusers rather than penalizing those who play fairly by the system.

Chuck Longton, 31 Laurel Drive, emphasized that the Transfer Station charges, not \$3.00/day, but \$3.00/trip, for those who utilize the Transfer Station on an occasional basis. He felt that larger capacity incinerators should be purchased in order to accommodate the influx of garbage. The Transfer Station is one of the most efficient, best run Transfer Stations in the State of CT and the residents already think in terms of recycling and reusing as evidenced by the Transfer Station's donation area, which is always filled with a number of good, usable items and the Town's robust recycling program, as earlier stated. In reviewing how the proposed Program would affect him, he estimated that his family would need to purchase an additional \$130.00 worth of trash bags, in addition to the \$45.00 senior citizen sticker. Known as the recycling police in his growing family, he stated that part of the problem lies in their inability to recycle certain items within the State that is deemed recyclable by the Federal Government. He felt that the Pay-Per-Bag System would not solve these problems and it would be unaffordable for senior citizens on a fixed income. Residents do not need to change their thinking; rather, the employees should be provided with the proper tools to enforce the rules and stop the abuse.

Walt Varney, 460 Old Colchester Road, stated that his stepson, who resides in Maryland, visits him in order to go to the Transfer Station with him because he is so impressed with the way the facility is run. He expressed his appreciation to Transfer Station Employee Turner for her help with unloading his garbage. He quoted the old adage, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" and questioned how much revenue the Town would be earning from the sale of the small trash bags.

Response: The Town would generate \$1.04 from the sale of the small, 13-gallon trash bag and \$1.69 for the larger 30-gallon trash bag.

Mark Chapman, 805 Old Colchester Road, felt that a better solution would be to control the amount of garbage that is being brought into the Transfer Station. He recommended that, should they host another such meeting, the Town host a Facebook Live event, which would allow more residents to participate in the discussion and provide additional information, i.e., extending an invitation to a representative from Stonington or East Lyme regarding their experience(s) with the Program.

Mike Preble, 46 Spruce Lane, questioned whether paper was still being provided to Rand-Whitney, as Ledyard, who used to provide paper to Rand-Whitney, discovered that it was not being recycled, but disposed of and incinerated. He also questioned why the trash bags are not made of paper instead of plastic.

Response: Public Works Director Donald Bourdeau stated that the Town no longer provides paper to Rand-Whitney. WasteZero Vice President and DEEP Consultant Brown stated that the plastic bags burn cleaner than paper.

Chuck Longton, 31 Laurel Drive, stated that the small bag would not fit in the average kitchen garbage can, rather people will continue to utilize smaller bags, which would, then be disposed of in the larger bags resulting in doubling the amount of plastic that is sent to the incinerator.

Howard R. Beetham, 60 Riverview Road, questioned whether the item would be voted upon by the Town Council or a referendum would be held.

Response: Chairman McNally stated that it would be referred to the Public Works/Solid Waste Subcommittee, who, depending upon their discussions, might forward it to the Town Council.

Tony Siragusa, 39 Hillcrest Drive, feeling that the smaller trash bag was too small, suggested they be provided with the larger bags. He agreed that the piggybackers would no longer be an issue if they were required to purchase the bags and, thus, are paying to dispose the amount of garbage they are generating. He questioned how the Program would affect the Town's businesses.

Response: The Program will not affect businesses as it is focused on residences.

6. Remarks from the Councilors and the Mayor

Councilor Caron thanked the public for attending the meeting and expressing their concerns. As a member of the Public Works/Solid Waste Committee, he stated that he would like to have the Committee review and update their regulations prior to discussing and making any final decisions regarding the SMART Program. He agrees that it is not right to penalize those who are following the rules and doing the right thing and that the employees should be provided with the tools to handle the abuse. The Town Administration/ Rules & Procedures Committee will also be reviewing the Regulations. He is also aware of the concerns regarding the weight of the bags for seniors and disabled members of the community. While he has always been against raising the Transfer Station fees as he feels that they need to do more for the Town, they may consider raising the fees. He, again, thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Councilor Jaskiewicz recommended holding a Public Hearing and agreed with Councilor Caron regarding the Regulations in an effort to eliminate the abuse and, should that not remedy the issue(s), consider adopting the SMART Program on a trial basis. He commended WasteZero Vice President and DEEP Consultant Brown on a great presentation and taking the time to listen to the residents and their concerns.

Councilor Pollard stated that she is happy with the current system, as she visits the Transfer Station on a monthly basis to dispose of her garbage. She agrees with both Councilors Caron and Jaskiewicz regarding reviewing and updating the Regulations and identifying and dealing with those who are abusing the system. She would like to do what she feels is best for the Town and, like Councilor Caron, would like to give more to the Town. She thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Councilor Pike, who has been reviewing and updating the Town's existing policies and regulations, including the Solid Waste Regulations, stated that he has personally visited the Transfer Station and witnessed the abuse and spoke of a recent incident. He stated that their goal is not to penalize the residents, but to make those who are abusing the system more accountable and create a more equitable system. He emphasized that the issues are not due to a lack of effort at the Transfer Station and agreed that the abuse is an issue that needs to be addressed. The Committees will be reviewing the Regulations in an effort to create an executable, administrative tool that will enable the Public Works staff to help enforce and resolve the issues. He thanked everyone for attending this evening's meeting.

Councilor McNally thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He felt that the issues reflect that the current system is broken and, in an effort to resolve the issues, they have reviewed and

discussed a variety of options over the past six months. Raising the fees would not resolve the piggybacking issues or help reduce the waste they are producing. He agreed that the Regulations are old and the Committee is in the process of reviewing and updating them, which will solve some of their problems. The SMART Program appeared to be the most fair and equitable solutions. He ensured the public that no decisions have been made. He thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

7. Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Pollard, to adjourn the meeting at 8:44 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

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**