

West Boylston Solid Waste Advisory Team
DRAFT Minutes
February 3, 2009
Town Hall Offices, 127 Hartwell Street

Present:

Judy Doherty, Chair
Craig Gonyea
Janet Vignaly
Julianne DeRivera
John Westerling

Not present:

Elise Wellington

The meeting began at 7:15 p.m

I. Approval of minutes

Members considered minutes from previous meetings and unanimously voted to approve the minutes of: October 19, 2007, October 26, 2007, November 30, 2007, December 21, 2007, January 25, 2008, August 13, 2008, September 16, 2008, October 7, 2008, and November 18, 2008, all which had been reviewed by members prior to the meeting.

II. Message from Ms. Wellington

Ms. Wellington said she had updated the website.

III. Updates

Ms. DeRivera went to Mr. Gaumond's office. He was going to meet with a woman who was going to be part of the Sustainability Committee, and he was still looking for other members, especially engineers and others already experienced in energy savings.

Ms. Derivera said also there would be the West Boylston 5K Annual Road Race 06-06-09. They were looking for someone to partner with so the money earned would go to a good cause. Ms. DeRivera said she had put out the message to different groups in town. She thought of doing an energy consult or a greenhouse or other things to do with energy. She asked members to brainstorm what could be done with \$1000.

Mr. Westerling said he spoke with Selectman DiPietro, who was asking the SWAT to renew interest in Recyclebank, that there was overwhelming success in Everett, expanding out to Chelsea and other areas. Earlier, there were issues with who pays for the toter, who pays to have the truck have the scale, etc. but the person in Everett said the people really liked the program with the incentives. He said that a rep from RecycleBank would probably come in soon to speak to the BOS, the SWAT. Ms. Doherty said she remembered this system wouldn't encourage people to reduce trash, only produce more to put in the recycling bin, but she said she'd be happy to revisit it. She said it didn't mean we would rule out PAYT, but that incentives might help obtain buy-in. Everett has a full-time recycling coordinator, though that would not be an option for West Boylston, given the current financial crisis, although perhaps part of the savings would go to the salary. Questions—who buys the bins, and does the program pay for itself?

Ms. Vignaly informed the team that she was also approached by Selectman John DiPietro about a few ideas for consideration. One was the system used by Everett which was a point system for recycling:

resident trash was weighed each week and households received statements from the hauling company each month. Recycling earned residents points, which they could redeem at a local Target store, either for more bags or for merchandise at the store. Mr. DiPietro told Ms. Vignaly that the town experienced a 38% increase in recycling.

Mr. DiPietro also told Ms. Vignaly that in 1997, West Boylston was approved to create a transfer station at the site of the old landfill. As he described, residents would bring their trash to the landfill—trash would be taken for free if residents also brought recycling, but there would be a \$1.50/bag charge if trash were not accompanied by recycling. Residents from Boylston may also be invited to use the mini-transfer station (2-3 roll-off containers), with all bags being charged a fee. Mr. DiPietro encouraged the SWAT to look seriously into those two suggestions.

Mr. Westerling said the DEP issued a draft permit, never a final permit. The Town would have to start the permit process anew. Mr. Westerling also advised the meeting that John Regan, Central Regional Office of DEP, Solid Waste guru, would be coming to speak to the BOS about reuse of the landfill.

Ms. DeRivera reported that Mr. Pruneau and Mr. Ruccho also were thinking of taking trash out of the budget. Ms. Vignaly reported that her attention was called to the following, from the December 10, 2008 meeting of the Board of Selectmen: ***“Pay-as-you-Throw: Mr. McCormick recommends removing trash all together from the budget and not bringing forth an override. Mr. Phillips would support and (sic) override.”*** Mr. Westerling said an override would mean that the \$200,000 override previously passed would have to be given back to the people. Ms. Vignaly asked how the money would be divided—and perhaps it would not be fair, as some people might get a higher percentage, so others would not receive enough to cover the costs of bags under a PAYT system. Ms. Doherty said, however, if you look at the logic of those who support an override, if you take trash out of the budget altogether, then give the \$200,000 back to the people, it could look like a very popular decision. Ms. DeRivera said Mr. Gaumond said that just charging a flat fee for one private company could be better than people going to different private companies.

Mr. Gonyea said that if it seemed the public wanted PAYT, the BOS should go for it. He asked, are they hearing something different? Ms. Doherty said she thought it was getting more absurd as the paper reports each week about the hundreds of thousands of dollars deficit.

Mr. Westerling said there would be another BOS/Finance Committee/School Board meeting about the budget on Thursday, February 5. Ms. Doherty said she had seen emails where school leaders were putting PAYT on the table as an income producer, and they asked as many SWAT members as possible to attend. Ms. Doherty clarified that it couldn't really be seen as an income producer, but that savings would go to offset the cost of the DPW. Ms. Doherty said it would be good to have available the letter sent to the BOS in December, with the different options. Ms. Vignaly said she would resend the letter to Ms. DeRivera. Mr. Westerling said the departments hadn't even been given budget worksheets to work out, but that the time was coming soon, so he thought Thursday's meeting could be the arm-wrestling night for which department would take which cuts. Mr. Gonyea said he thought we would be wasting our time trying to convince them if they've already made their mind. Ms. Doherty said it might be helpful if members went and explained to the public the recommendation made to the BOS. Ms. DeRivera pointed out that a plus for the PAYT option is that it did not require start-up costs. Ms. Doherty speculated that some people would be against PAYT because they would be against any new tax, and they would perceive PAYT as a new tax. She said other households may put out eight bags per week and privatizing may be a cost-savings to them.

Ms. Vignaly reminded the committee of the email they had received from Mr. Gaumond about the

upcoming SWOT meeting (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats). He said the meeting was open to representatives from each group in town. Participants would be asked to: be present for the entire program (9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Feb. 28th), and register their participation by contacting the Town Administrator's office at 508-835-3490 to save a seat for the exercise by February 6, 2009.

Ms. Doherty said she's doing a Recyclables Into Art afterschool special February 12 from 2:30 to 4:30 and all were invited to join in. She informed the 3rd grade teacher that there's an environmental science unit in the curriculum and SWAT has speakers available. She also said that she heard the fifth grade science teacher was retiring, and that if there were no science teacher there to replace him, that could be a niche for SWAT members looking to volunteer.

Ms. Doherty invited members to write an article for the Banner. Ms. Derivera said she thought it could be a limited audience, and nobody volunteered to write an article.

The team set the next meeting for April 14 to prepare for the Town Meeting report.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Submitted by,

Janet Vignaly, Secretary