

West Boylston Solid Waste Advisory Team
DRAFT Minutes
April 26, 2010
Town Hall Offices, 127 Hartwell Street

Present:

Julianne DeRivera, Chair
Janet Vignaly, Member, Clerk
Judy Doherty, Member
Elise Wellington, Member
John Westerling, DPW Director
Julia Doherty, Guest

Not Present:

Craig Gonyea, Member

The meeting began at 10:00 a.m

I. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Doherty proposed to approve the minutes from the January 26, 2010 meeting. Ms. DeRivera seconded and all approved.

II. Special Municipal Employee Designation

Mr. Leon Gaumond had sent out the email, and Ms. DeRivera asked for an explanation.

Mr. Westerling explained that if you have a seasonal employee who is paid, then once they leave, they cannot come back to the town to ask for unemployment. This did not seem to concern the SWAT.

III. Mr. Westerling's presentation of bids

Mr. Westerling passed out the bids which he had emailed to members the previous Friday. Three of the four companies had bid on all four options:

1. Current program
2. Weekly collection of MSW and Single Stream without toters provided
3. Weekly collection of MSW and weekly collection of Single Stream in toters provided by the bidder
4. Weekly collection of MSW and biweekly collection of single stream in toters provided by bidder

Mr. Westerling gave some background and details: West Boylston is currently paying about \$240,000 for collection. Harvey bid \$236,000, so it is less expensive, especially considering the current \$240,000 would normally increase by the consumer price index, so we would have expected to pay more than \$240,000.

Ms. Doherty asked if there was anything about an increase in cost for fuel. Mr. Westerling said that a fuel adjustment clause was not included in the contract the companies bid on, and the contract also did not include market share for recyclables, so the town would not bear the risk if the market for recyclables went down.

Mr. Westerling noted that Cassela did not bid for 2 reasons: they would have to buy 2 new trucks, and because town was not involved in market share for recyclables.

Mrs. Doherty noted that Option 2 was the same price as Option 1, for Harvey and Waste Management. Mrs. DeRivera said she ethically didn't agree with single stream because the stuff has to be sorted somewhere—either upstream or downstream. Mr. Westerling responded by explaining the process of where the recyclables go, which he learned when he took a tour of the Auburn plant. Recyclable

containers from West Boylston are deposited together in the same area of the facility as are Single Stream recyclables from other towns. But paper that is pre-sorted is placed separately. The biggest problem, explained Mr. Westerling, is that 20% of paper coming in has other material embedded in it. However, it was recognized that Cassella has less than 5% contamination. He said that residents in Holden and West Boylston residents he had talked to thought that single stream was easier. Mr. Westerling said he believed that a switch to single stream would cause the recycling rate to increase, as it did in Worcester (2%). The other convenience is that it is weekly.

Ms. DeRivera said that San Francisco had curbside composting and their recycling rate was 70%. Ms. Wellington asked if that composting included leaves, and that yardwaste often complicates statistics.

Mr. Westerling reported that West Boylston's recycling rate has gone from 20% to 30%, but we are still processing the same tonnage of recyclables.

Ms. Doherty asked about the reputation of LLHarvey and Sons. Ms. Wellington said they have a good reputation. They have their own materials recovery facility, so they would not be bringing the recyclables to Cassella. They traditionally do commercial trash, and are just now getting into municipal trash for stability. Mr. Westerling said they have been in municipal solid waste for 3 years.

Ms. Doherty said that she feared a 95-gallon toter would be viewed as normative, instead of incentivizing people to reduce trash.

Ms. Wellington asked Mr. Westerling to clarify what home-owner provided containers. He said that whatever is being used currently could be used for single stream—it would be lifted manually, so regular recycling bins or boxes would work.

Mr. Westerling explained that this bid was not covered by Mass Procurement Laws, so it's not a competitive bid. This means that the town does not have to go with the lowest bidder. Though Harvey had the lowest bid, he thought Allied Waste might be willing to negotiate, in order to keep the contract. The contract is a 5-year contract with an option to 5- year extension. The prices given would be subject to annual increase. Ms. DeRivera said that although Cassella's contamination rate was 5%, if the town went with Harvey, we would not be using Cassella.

Ms. Vignaly said she had spoken to Fred Litchfield, the Town Engineer in Northborough, and he had heard some serious concerns about Single Stream. According to Mr. Litchfield, a member from the paper industry was dead-set against single stream, as the paper is difficult to recycle, after glass and plastic get embedded in the paper.

Ms. Wellington said that part of the reason for single stream was that benefit was legitimize what was already happening—that people were already in effect doing single stream, so Worcester's adoption of single stream made the program work better and reduced contamination from recyclables.

Mr. Westerling said that at the Auburn plant, there is an amazing process that was an assembly line where people were taking pieces of non-recyclables off the conveyor belt, and after sorting, there was pure material (e.g., milk jugs).

Ms. Vignaly asked where contamination level is measured and who decides to reject the load. Mr. Westerling said that would be a good question to ask, but he clarified that DEP is the party that rejects loads and subjects towns to fines.

Ms. DeRivera made a motion to recommend Option 1. Ms. Vignaly seconded the motion.

Ms. Wellington said she was leaning toward Option 2, and that after her conversation with the DPW at Worcester, that's the way the world is going. She said that Cassella had upgraded their equipment and that seemed to be the way that the industry was going. If West Boylston can offer single stream, she continued, residents wouldn't have to have recyclables hanging around the house for 2 weeks, so the added convenience for the resident makes up for any added cost. Ms. DeRivera said that perhaps we should have it as a straw vote at Town Meeting between Single Stream and the Current system. Ms. Doherty said that she supported bringing the choice back to the Town Meeting. Ms. Wellington said she was reluctant to bring up a straw vote at Town Meeting as it could open a can of worms, and open the floor to the debate we had a year ago, over PAYT. She noted there could be many vocal residents who may speak out against PAYT.

Ms. Doherty said she did feel strongly that we stick with Options 1 or 2, and not go with Options 3 or 4, paying more for the town to provide toters for all the residents. Mr. Westerling said that it could be that buying toters for \$15,000 could save \$40,000. Ms. Wellington said her gut feeling was that the savings would not be that high. Ms. Vignaly did a ballpark estimate and said that if we were paying \$160,000-\$180,000 per year on disposal, then \$40,000 savings would be a significant percent trash reduction—over 20% reduction, not the 2% that Worcester saw.

Ms. Wellington said that she thought single stream could help to increase recycling and make recycling as easy as possible for people, but that the environmentally best option would be to continue to do dual stream.

Mr. Westerling said he still hasn't gotten data on what happens with a community goes single stream, gets toters, etc. and he suggested that the SWAT meet again when that data is available, so that any official recommendation coming from SWAT be based on numbers, and not just gut feeling. Members agreed to meet before the May 17 Town Meeting to review data and decide on the option to recommend.

III. Update on PAYT

Ms. Wellington asked for the results of PAYT since our year is three-quarters over. She asked how these results compare with the projections made when the town voted to adopt PAYT.

Mr. Westerling said on the updates he had been sending out, the last page always has running totals on bag fees collected, bag production, solid waste disposal, etc. His projection was that the town would have \$30,000 balance remaining in the trash budget by the end of the year. In other words, he explained, PAYT is sustaining the disposal cost. He said it would be difficult to say the Year One cost, as in the first year, people were buying excess number of bags. Also, he pointed out that we had to purchase bags to have enough bags in the stores in advance. Members agreed that these numbers should have balanced out by the end of the fiscal year, but they wanted to get some updated numbers. Mr. Westerling said he would provide the spreadsheet.

Ms. Vignaly asked if we could run the risk of spending too little, and as the previous year, Selectmen had been concerned that we would be interfering with the Prop 2 ½ Override.

IV. Bottle Bill

Ms. Wellington said she had gotten through to Representative O'Day, and his aide called back and said the representative supports the bottle bill, but it is stuck in committee. Ms. Wellington said she thinks it's going to be "bottled up" again. She said she also wanted to call Senator Chandler, but she did not think it's in the Senate yet. She said that senators and representatives should be concerned as it would save towns money. Mr. Westerling said that if the bottle bill were expanded to water bottles, it would make a huge difference, because there are consistently water bottles strewn all across the parks. Ms.

Doherty suggested Mr. Westerling write about this problem in the Banner, but Mr. Westerling declined.

V. New Wachusett Greenways Recycling Center in West Boylston

Ms. Wellington said there's a lot going on in recycling in West Boylston, e.g., the recycling day at the Catholic Church, and the new recycling center on Huntington Ave. She said it seemed that everything was going well, and that the complementary efforts should be recognized by the SWAT.

VI. Future of SWAT

Members discussed whether the committee should continue. Members acknowledged the work that had been done to get PAYT adopted in West Boylston, and admitted there could be some fatigue after such an intense load of work. Ms. DeRivera said that some members had mentioned the idea of serving through the contract proposals, but discontinuing after that. Ms. Doherty said she would be willing to commit to the 3 years of service at a more relaxed level. Ms. Wellington said that in most successful municipalities she knew of, there was some Solid Waste board to advise the decision making regarding solid waste. Ms. Wellington clarified that it is up to the Board of Selectmen about whether they want to continue to have a Solid Waste Advisory Committee.

Members agreed to meet May 10 at 10:30 am.

The meeting adjourned at 11:07 am.

Submitted by,

Janet Vignaly, Secretary