

**Ad-Hoc Curbside Trash Committee**  
**Thursday, January 26, 2023, 6:00 PM**  
**Veterans Room**

Minutes (draft)

1. **Call to Order 6:00 PM**

2. **Roll Call:** Councilors: Michael Marketti (Chair), Gus Steeves, Health Inspector Daniel Wasiuk, Board of Health Member Daniel Grabowski. Citizen Members Kevin Buxton, Steve Gregoire, Mark Lataille, Kathy Grenier.  
Also in attendance: Town Manager Michael McCall, Recycle Coordinator Anna Smith, MassDEP Municipal Assistance Coordinator Irene Congdon, Assessor Rachael Carney.

3. **Consider and approve Curbside Trash Committee minutes of January 12, 2023.**  
Approved by a vote of 8-0

4. **Update on Curbside Collection 2024 website and survey.**

**Discussion:** Daniel Wasiuk commented about the survey and Website is up and running. There was further discussion about the timeframe for mailing. Mr. Buxton asked that the Website include all of the agendas and views of the committee meetings.

5. **Review/discuss RFP draft template and scope of service.**

**Discussion:** Town Manager McCall spoke about working with the consultant, Michael Scipione, who took his first crack at redlining the draft. They will be meeting next week to merge all of the changes McCall, Anna Smith and Mr. Scipione have made. After that they will share the changes with the committee. Ms. Smith commented about the framework and said they have looked at the current landfill contract for things we would maintain or let go.

Councilor Steeves asked if there are any particular issues we should be addressing in the future? The town manger talked about future recycling issues and if there are changes in trash regulations it be built into the contract language. Councilor Steeves talked about the potential for landfills closing, and asked what we would do then? McCall talked about Casella's landfills in New York and New Hampshire, the transfer stations in Oxford and Auburn, where they would sort out our trash and recycling before shipping it off. There was further discussion about the future challenges of trash and recycling.

Kevin Buxton asked about the timeframe for RFPs going to Council for approval and out to bid? McCall said they are working on sending out proposals by the end of February, getting returns by March to start negotiating, getting solid numbers by April in order to get it on the ballot by June. Buxton asked about accurate ballpark figures so that we will know how much money we will have to generate for curbside pickup. McCall said last year Ms. Smith and Mr. Pellitier put together a ballpark figure of about \$1.8 million, for curbside. He also said going through the RFP they would get tighter numbers for future costs.

Irene Congdon spoke about accounting mechanisms such as Enterprise Funds vs. General Funds. She said it's not either/or, it's which way do we want to fund the curbside program. She also said Enterprise Funds make it "neater" on money coming in and going out. Also, we have an estimate of \$1.8 million.

6. **Continue training with Irene Congdon, MassDEP Regional Recycling Coordinator.**

**Discussion:** Ms. Congdon asked if we have discussed billing? The Chair opened it up to billing discussions.

Kevin Buxton said the work necessary for developing the billing department is something grant money should be used for.

Mr. Wasiuk said he thinks it would be advantageous to utilize a company to do billing. Rachael Carney spoke about the problems with the Assessors Dept. doing additional billing besides water and sewer.

Steve Gregoire spoke about the template he is working on for costs. We would need more information from the Assessors Office to determine the additional costs for billing.

McCall spoke about staffing issues that need to be addressed. Making the Assessors office more efficient and separating out billing. Steeves asked about costs. McCall said he would get some numbers. Steeves asked about other duties. McCall said possibly other things such as hearings, collections, leases at the airport, parking tickets and other things.

Mr. Gregoire said he thinks billing should stay in house. MS4 is something which will also have to be included in billing.

Mr. Lataille asked if we started a new billing department, could we take staffing from the assessors office? McCall said we would need to take a look at staffing.

Ms. Congdon talked about billing and collections. She then continued with training and education. Irene showed a map of the state's numbers and town's numbers on household trash tonnage. She spoke about costs, billing and outreach. A bag program which would bring about a million back. She spoke about taxes, flat fees, bags and the costs to residents. Ms. Congdon said a flat fee would be about \$250.00 per household per year with a little taxes, around \$300,000 included, without going into a 2-1/2 override.

Mark Lataille asked where the money would come from if there was a shortfall in taxes? If there is a bag program, what happens if there is a shortage in bags? Ms. Congdon explained that there is an abundance of plastic for bags. The bag companies are not running out of bags nor is there any jump in prices.

Kevin Buxton talked about residents and how they will feel about a flat fee.

Steve Gregoire asked about opting out and if it would impact the bag program? Ms. Congdon said residents could opt out, but they would pay more for a private company to pick up their trash. Gregoire spoke about inequity of paying for trash out of taxes and would like to keep taxes out of the program. He favors a flat fee with a bag program to keep costs down.

Marketti spoke about the landfill royalty funds, which the Finance Director reported there is \$3.9 Million in the fund. He recommends we use it towards the curbside program.

Anna Smith asked about the flat fee plan and the opt out rates? Ms. Congdon said it depends on the community. The town has never had to pay for trash program before, so hopefully we will keep the costs low and residents won't opt out.

Buxton asked about opting out and multi families. He thinks the owner of a property with an empty apartment should not be allowed to opt out, and he also spoke about event bags. Mr. Lataille said he thinks the bags should be for the property owners to purchase.

Ms. Congdon spoke about communities using free vendors or charities for certain pick ups, such as household items. Some charities offer the bags for free. There was further discussion about charities picking up bulky items for free.

Ms. Congdon spoke about the schedule for future discussion. She talked about the items we have discusses. Next she would like to discuss education for Seniors and Landlords. Continue with public education and outreach.

Kevin Buxton asked where he could find the recycling percentage for curbside pick up for week ending January 7th? Ms. Smith said she doesn't keep numbers for a particular week. Ms. Congdon asked if he wanted tonnage rates? Kevin said he wants the public to know percentages and how it will fluctuate. Ms. Smith said she thought posting the recycling percentages was a good idea and she will post it on the town's website. There was further discussion about trash and recycling rates.

7. **Review/discuss funding options including Steve Gregoire's proposal.**

**Discussion:** Mr. Gregoire spoke about the ideas he handed out at the last meeting. He said he found an error in the spread sheet. He recalculated his numbers and said the quarterly prices would increase for single families, two families and three families. Four and six families are a little sketchy. He continued to share the numbers in his plan. Also felt we should incorporate a bag program to offset the costs.

Councilor Steeves spoke about single families on the outskirts of town whose trash is always overflowing. He felt that single families are always violating an issue.

Mark Lataille said he thinks we have to find out the fee for dumpsters or private haulers. As long as the numbers for Mr. Gregoire's plan are low, residents wouldn't want to opt out.

Ms. Smith said she also looked at the private haulers, and it's between \$400 to \$600 per year. Mr. Laitaille said as long as we are under the average cost of private trash, no one is opting out. He also asked if we have someone who can look at this who has a financial background?

Ms. Congdon said she has a model that she uses. We are looking at the \$2 Million cost, and how many parcels. She's including the billing part; staff, salaries and the tonnage of recyclables and trash. Also calculating the reduction if we did the bags. She would bring that to our next meeting so we can include it to Mr. Gregoire's plan for the revenue. She also spoke about taxes and flat fee.

Mr. Wasuik said we have an expert working with the Town Manager, Mr. Scipione of Weston & Sampson.

There was further discussion about the plan. How small businesses can opt in and write off the costs. Kathy Grenier asked if the town can use the funds for any purpose, as she felt it should be earmarked for trash only. Rachel Carney spoke about where she lives in Warren they have a bag program, and it works well. Maureen Doyle spoke about recycling and reusing paper products. Denise Clemence spoke about our history of free trash and asked that any plan we come up with be simplified.

8. Next meeting date. February 9, 2023 at 6:00 PM in the Veteran's Room.
9. Adjourned at 7:30 PM

Respectfully submitted by Committee Chair Councilor Marketti