



Transfer Station Committee

Minutes of Tuesday, February 27, 2018 Meeting
Volunteer's Room, Town Hall

Attendees: Tim Kilhart, Libby Levison, Tom Philippou

Irene Congdon, Central Mass Municipal Assistance Coordinator
Tessa David, Director, MassToss Coop

Guests:

David Fay, resident

The meeting was called to order at 12:40 p.m.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT:

David Fay cautioned the Committee to be careful of “mission creep”. Libby Levison replied that we are still waiting for the Selectmen to finalize our charge, but we believe that we will also be responsible for an Implementation Plan, which explains some of the additional topics for discussion.

2. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Review past financials. The current Transfer Station permit price (\$250) covers the cost to haul Harvard's trash and recycling, but that three-year hauling contract is over in June. Tim Kilhart and Tessa Davis are in the process of evaluating the bids from companies to haul Harvard's trash and recycling for the next three-year contract (7/2018-6/2021). Once a hauler is selected, they can calculate a permit price and the Committee can begin to model the costs for a SMART program.

Tim Kilhart told the rest of the Committee that the disposal costs for 1) comingled plastic and metal cans and 2) glass have gone up. He also reminded the Committee that in addition to a disposal cost, each time a compactor is emptied there is a hauling cost. So while mixed paper does not currently have a disposal cost there is a hauling cost for each load. (Note: 'currently' refers to the current contract; this might change in July 2018).

Tom Philippou asked if the Transfer Station budget for FY19 is already set. Tim Kilhart replied that all department budgets were submitted in Sept 2018 and are already approved. The Committee discussed that any infrastructure changes would need funding and decided to return to that discussion at a later meeting.

- b. Discussion: Response to questions and getting the information into the public domain
The committee members reviewed the draft SMART FAQ (version 1). Several changes were requested. Libby Levison agreed to revise and have the FAQ posted on the Transfer Station Committee website. Libby Levison moved that the revised FAQ be posted, Tim Kilhart seconded, vote: all aye.

The Committee agreed to continue to ask town residents for questions and to post additional FAQs as needed. The group identified two additions: Do you know what happens to your recyclables? and Probable permit price increase in FY19 if SMART is not adopted.

Tom Philippou asked how to provide information to the town. Irene Congdon suggested announcing SMART at televised Selectmen meetings, put info blurbs on local cable, website, local paper. Later the Committee can do a town-wide mailing. Libby Levison told the Committee a Transfer Station Committee website has been created with links to it from BoS, BoH, and DPW.

- c. Discussion: Proposals and options available to be considered for Harvard's implementation of SMART. Irene Congdon explained that there are three ways of implementing SMART.
- 1) Residents pay for a permit and buy bags as they need them
 - 2) Residents pay for a permit and get an allotment of bags. The town sets the number of allotted bags, e.g., 50, and residents buy additional bags as needed.
 - 3) A hybrid system, where some residents do each.

Libby Levison said that given the feedback she has received requesting small bags for very low-use households, she thought that option #2 would not work for many people and would result in surplus bags. Irene Congdon said that a mixed model in Harvard, where seniors buy the permit and get an allotment of bags, and other residents purchase all bags as they need them, might make the most sense. The Committee decided to proceed with this hybrid model (resident/senior model), but left details to be worked out until more information is available about cost.

Irene Congdon brought information on changes in the volume of trash (in tons) in surrounding SMART towns before and after SMART was implemented, as well as the financials in the towns of Acton, Ayer, Bolton, Groton, Littleton, Lunenburg, and Shirley. Some of these towns subsidize the permit price with taxes. Libby Levison said she would like the Committee to look into that. Tom Philippou suggested that the Committee develop two proposals for the Selectmen, one with some of the permit subsidized with taxes and one without. Libby Levison asked if there is evidence that more people buy permits as the permit price goes down; Irene Congdon said yes, but it's hard to measure. The Committee again decided to continue this discussion until more financial information is available.

David Fay asked if there will still be free Recycling Only stickers under SMART. The Committee postponed discussion of this until more financial information is available.

Irene Congdon brought sample bags and a summary of bag color and weight in surrounding towns. Tim Kilhart asked that the Committee select a color which is distinct from store-bought bag colors, to make monitoring as easy as possible for the Transfer Station attendants. The Committee preferred purple with white lettering.

Irene Congdon also discussed bag size and weight. Irene also said that Mass DEP data shows that most families use one 33-gallon and one 15-gallon bag per week. Libby Levison

said that she has gotten several requests for smaller bags. Irene Congdon said that Littleton bought 8-gallon bags and most of them haven't been used. Tessa David said she would contact the bag manufacturer to see if they can sell the bags on Amazon. It was decided that the committee would initially offer two bag sizes (15- & 33-gallon) and would consider adding the smaller size at a later time if there is a need.

The Committee discussed how bulky items will be handled. Tim Kilhart said that the attendants are already skilled at handling and charging for bulky items and the current system works.

- d. Consider change of meeting times.
Tabled, because two Committee not present.
 - e. Proposed agenda items for next meeting
 - Transfer Station infrastructure and possible required changes under SMART.
 - Discuss need for Memorandum of Understanding with some organizations, businesses in town.
3. OLD BUSINESS
- a. Discussion: Implementation process for SMART / PAYT

Irene Congdon told the Committee that Harvard received the grant for Technical Assistance (her time). However, there is a change in process for the financial assistance grant. The person who manages the grant has retired, and while the next person comes up to speed, the grant process is postponed. Harvard needs to re-apply in April. Irene Congdon will advise when. For the grant, the Town Administrator must have sent the annual email to all Town Departments with the "Buy Recycled" reminder. This date change means the funds must be spent in two months. Irene and Tessa David do not think this is an issue, because often this entire grant is applied towards the purchase of bags.

Tim Kilhart told the Committee that he is on vacation the first week of June.

Tom Philippou asked Tessa: Is a change to SMART possible with existing infrastructure? Tessa said she knows we need a backup container for cardboard/paper, regardless of SMART status. Libby Levison asked if the Transfer Station can change out any containers; Tim Kilhart said no, only the haulers can change them. Currently the haulers know when the Transfer Station is open, and plan to come between noon Wednesday and Friday afternoon, and either Monday or Tuesday to empty the compactors.

Tim Kilhart said he is concerned about flow. Tessa David said she's thinking about flow too. Irene Congdon said most people will have paper, and will use the paper compactor. Tim Kilhart suggested a second paper compactor next to first, but noted that that requires electricity, moving compactors means moving electric conduits/infrastructure. Tom Philippou asked if it's possible to add a 2nd paper compactor next to trash/municipal waste compactors. Tim Kilhart said no, the area is not flat enough and he can't expand back as the old landfill isn't capped.

b. Approve minutes. Libby Levison made a motion to approve the 2/13/18 minutes at the next meeting, Tom Philippou seconded, all aye.

The meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Libby Levison

Documents referenced:

- Draft SMART FAQ, version 1
- Handout from Irene Congdon, decrease in tonnage & prices in neighboring towns
- Handout from Tessa David, bag color and pricing in neighboring towns