

Board of Selectmen's Meeting Minutes

November 17, 2021; 5:00 P.M.

Board Members Present: Glenn R. Zaidman, Vice-Chairman; Robert J. McHatton and Paul A. Tworog.
Absent: Carmen E. Lone, Chairman; G. Frederick Packard.

Administration Present: Town Manager Robert A. Peabody, Jr.; Deputy Town Manager Georgiann M. Fleck.
Absent: None

Also Present: Forrest Kollander, Transfer Station Foreman.

Also Present Recycling Committee Members: Kate Fitzcharles (In Person); Donna Joss (Remote); Therese Johnson (Remote); Sally Chappell (Remote) and Rachel Miller (Remote)

1. Call to Order

Vice Chairman Zaidman called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Board recited the "Pledge of Allegiance."

3. Workshop with Recycling Committee

Recycling Committee Member Chappell said this is to discuss the new initiative regarding pay-per-bag. The Recycling Committee prepared a DRAFT Ordinance for review (see attached). Selectman Tworog said that the original Ordinance had a price per pound if you did not have a bag, however, the proposed Ordinance does not have a price per pound included. Recycling Committee Chair Chappell said that was not necessary because everything needs to be in a designated bag. There will be no option for weighing trash in lieu of a bag, you can either buy a bag at the Transfer Station or take your trash away and taking into consideration the Transfer Station personnel, everything needs to be in a designated bag. Selectman McHatton said the Ordinance lists a 30 gallon bag which weights approximately 23 pounds and a 13 gallon bag which weighs approximately 10 pounds but it does not list a price. Recycling Committee Chair Chappell said we purposely left it blank so the Board of Selectmen could determine a price. Town Manager Peabody said you do not list prices in an Ordinance because an Ordinance goes to the voters so anytime there is a price change it needs to go back to the voters for consideration. The way you determine the price of a bag is you determine the cost of the operation which has to do with MSW and then you use the approximate weight of the bag to determine a price. Fees do not go in an Ordinance but are indicated on the Fee Schedule which is updated by the Board of Selectmen as necessary. Therefore, Section 6 of the proposed Ordinance should not have a fee listed. Selectman McHatton said you may not need to put it in the Ordinance but you have to give the voters an approximate amount so they know how much this is going to cost.

Vice Chairman Zaidman said I think that the Recycling Committee needs to have a staff person assigned to them to assist in writing the Ordinance and various other administrative duties.

Selectman McHatton said the public also needs to know where the bags are going to be available. Recycling Committee Chair Chappell said we assumed that they would be available at food stores, hardware stores and Transfer Station.

Vice Chairman Zaidman said if some of the stores in Town agree to sell the bags available is there going to be a charge to do that? Town Manager Peabody said there is the price of the bags and then there is a tax on the bags and you do not allow the vendors to add on to that price. You can get around the tax by paying the tax up front when you purchase the bags and then pay the tax to the State.

Town Manager Peabody said it is hard to regulate the commercial haulers, they will pick up citizens trash in an unapproved bag and they would pile the approved bags on top of the regular trash bags. We had it so they could purchase bags or get weighed.

Vice Chairman Zaidman said we don't know if we are getting someone else's trash or not. Town Manager Peabody said at that point it doesn't matter because you are getting paid by the pay as you throw. The costs are covered by the cost of the bag which factors in the trucking and tipping fees. Vice Chairman Zaidman said what if we start getting a lot of trash from other towns and our disposal costs go up. Town Manager Peabody said you factor in the entire operating costs. When we did it it worked out to be about a \$1.00 to \$1.25 per bag and now it is \$2.50 per bag.

Town Manager Peabody said if the bags are yellow and the typical bags are white. If a truck comes in with a mixture of color bags, what are you going to do now? Recycling Committee Member Joss said why would the hauler pick up bags that are not in the appropriate colored bag to deposit at the Town of Bridgton Transfer Station, why wouldn't he tell the homeowner that he will pick up their trash but the trash must be in the appropriate colored bag? Town Manager Peabody said you can turn the truck away. Bob Fitzcharles, previous Transfer Station Foreman, would spot check trash that a commercial hauler brought in. Transfer Station Foreman Kollander said we still spot check to make sure that trash is not being hauled in from other Towns by a commercial hauler. Town Manager Peabody said if they bring in trash not in the appropriate colored bags you would charge them the cost of a bag. Selectman McHatton said it is going to take a good 6 months to get the program established.

Selectman McHatton said in the proposed Ordinance it has a definition for "packer truck". Town Manager Peabody said we don't allow packer trucks so that would need to be removed.

Selectman Tworog said we are going to charge a fee to get more revenue. If we had a formula that included all costs, in some sense it doesn't matter what we charge as long as we can justify the savings.

Recycling Committee Member Johnson said the cost of bags is going to be offset by the savings in hauling and tipping fees. Vice Chairman Zaidman said the pay-per-bag is a user fee, so if you want to take all your recyclables and put them in a bag you are going to pay for that.

Recycling Committee Member Fitzcharles submitted a spreadsheet from EcoMaine of Towns that currently have pay-per-bag and the most expensive is \$2.50 per bag (See attached). Every department has to pay for its personnel and the expenses that go with it but it is most important to cover expenses. As gas goes up the cost of hauling is going to also increase. Average findings are one 15 gallon trash bag and one 30 gallon trash bag per week per household.

Vice Chairman Zaidman said to Foreman Kollander what have you heard for feedback from the public about the pay-per-bag proposal? Foreman Kollander said a lot of complaints from the general public are gas is more than \$3.00 a gallon, groceries are double and now you are going to charge me my sticker fee and a per bag fee. I

know this system works but it is wrong timing. It is the savings in the long term that people are not going to look at. I am for this but I do not think that the general public is for this at this time, this is bad timing.

Selectman Tworog said if this were to pass what do you perceive as additional work? Foreman Kollander said it is not any additional work. Selectman Tworog said any less work? Foreman Kollander said no, it would be more recycling and less trash. If you are going to charge a per bag fee what is the point of a transfer station sticker? Town Manager Peabody said what is the revenues generated for stickers? Foreman Kollander said I am not sure but it is a lot.

Selectman Tworog said what would you do for electronics, tires, etc.? Town Manager Peabody said that would be handled differently. Selectman Tworog said then you would still need a sticker because you would still be taking in electronics, demo, etc. Vice Chairman Zaidman said I don't think we would need to charge for the sticker, maybe the cost of the sticker could be absorbed in the cost of the bag?

Recycling Committee Member Johnson said you are going to hear from the opponents but not from the ones that are in favor of pay-per-bag. It is not fair for the person that puts a small amount of trash vs. someone that deposits a lot of trash and yet everyone is paying the same amount.

Vice Chairman Zaidman said the Board of Selectmen has asked the Recycling Committee to come up with a campaign. What can the Board of Selectmen do to help you, the Recycling Committee? My experience on campaigns took a long time for people to understand and it is going to take a lot of information, there needs to be a lot of education for the public to understand pay-per-bag.

Recycling Committee Member Fitzcharles said maybe a newspaper campaign, which cost money to take out a full page. Maybe the Bridgton News could do articles. Break the process down and maybe every week or every other week have an ad in the paper. We do not have any money budgeted to work with.

Vice Chairman Zaidman said if the Board of Selectmen wants to proceed with this then I believe the Town Manager needs to appoint one of the staff to work with the Committee.

Selectman McHatton said in the past we put this on the ballot 4 times, and once was during an election year, and it came in with a 4 to 1 vote against. That was after heavy campaigning. Citizens said we pay for police department, recreation department and fire department and we want to pay for our trash the same way. Selectman Tworog said what was the cost per bag at that time? Selectman McHatton said I would need to review my information.

Recycling Committee Member Fitzcharles said would it help if we came up with a campaign proposal and present it to the Board. We were thinking about beginning in January and we are going to need some financial assistance.

Selectmen McHatton said I would like the Board to consider focusing on one item each week in relation to pay-per-bag and explain it to the public. Right now there is a lot of negative information and comments.

Recycling Committee Member Fitzcharles said does the Board want to come up with a list of questions? Selectman McHatton said I think the public needs to know what the cost of the bags are going to be and why. Recycling Committee Member Fitzcharles said we have set up a table at the Transfer Station but people want to come in, dump their trash and go.

Vice Chairman Zaidman said maybe a venue could be the Farmer's Market.

Vice Chairman Zaidman said the Town Manager should appoint someone from his staff to work with the Committee.

Recycling Committee Member Fitzcharles said people have gotten a free ride and costs continue to increase. People throw everything in a bag but if they have to pay for the bags then they are going to have to recycle to save money.

Selectman Tworog said one thing that would be interesting is how many bags are people going through on average, it is the volume of trash. Recycling Committee Member Fitzcharles said not if they recycle, it will be less.

Foreman Kollander said when Fryeburg went to pay-per-bag, it increased the amount of trash that was dumped everywhere. I don't want to see our town become a dumping ground for trash OR burn barrels everywhere. Vice Chairman Zaidman said it is a justifiable concern but we have a Police Department who can investigate dumping. Recycling Committee Member Johnson said we did do some investigating and initially there were issues when pay-per-bag was first implemented but once enforcement kicks up it ceased.

Recycling Committee Chair Chappell said I would like to discuss the low income people which Town Manager Peabody requested that that reference in the Ordinance be removed. Everyone is going to have to think about their trash and every income level will have to consider recycling and composting to save money. However, if people do not have enough money to buy food how are they going to buy bags. Therefore, I would like the Town and the Committee to research ways that low income people can be helped. It might be distributing bags to every person who goes to the food pantry.

Vice Chairman Zaidman said how does the Board want to proceed. Selectman Tworog said everyone knows that there is a benefit to recycling but they are reluctant to pay for bags, however, we do need to make sure everyone knows the benefit to this type of program. There needs to be an effective campaign of facts. Vice Chairman Zaidman said pictures are important, a display of trash dumped out of a 23 pound bag and separated showing what is trash and what can be recycled. We are coming into budget season so we can budget for this program.

Foreman Kollander said in Conway, New Hampshire, recycling is mandatory with clear bags, and if the Transfer Station attendant sees recycling in your bag you will be fined and you could be banned from the Transfer Station.

Selectman Tworog said can we get statistics for what we recycle in comparison to other towns that might have this type of program in place? Town Manager Peabody said EcoMaine does that and Bridgton is in the low 20's. Recycling Committee Member Johnson said in Town's that have adopted pay-per-bag their recycling increased to 40% and that would be a substantial savings to the Town.

Vice Chairman Zaidman said does the Board want to instruct the Town Manager to work with the committee? Selectman Tworog said I would be in favor of that. Selectmen McHatton said there is time. Town Manager Peabody said we are going to begin the budget process next month. It would be helpful if the Committee could come up with a campaign to estimate costs. Recycling Committee Member Fitzcharles said she could have the Committee come up with a plan to submit for review within the next month.

Recycling Committee Member Johnson said there was an entity, Wastezero, that would manage a campaign. Recycling Committee Member Fitzcharles said Wastezero did a presentation in 2019.

Town Manager Peabody said there are a few other issues with the Ordinance but I would suggest we make our changes and submit it to the Committee for further review. Do we want to send it to legal for a review? Vice Chairman Zaidman and Selectman McHatton said not quite yet.

4. Adjourn

Motion was made by Selectman Packard to adjourn the meeting at 6:08P.M.; second from Vice-Chairman Zaidman. 4 approve / 0 oppose

Respectfully submitted,

Georgiann M. Fleck
Deputy Town Manager