Solid Waste Committee Report 2021

Solid Waste Town Survey. DRAFT

When the Solid Waste Committee was told that their new job was to discover exactly what the people of Bowdoinham wanted for a “Pie-in-the-sky” recycling program, they decided that a survey of the residents would be an important tool.

For the next two months (meeting every other week) they drafted and revised the “Solid Waste & Recycling Survey 2020”. It was printed and included as an addition to the *January-February 2021 Bowdoinham News* (It goes to approximately 1400 households)*.* Eli Rubin also created a site, featured on the Bowdoinham Website, at which folks could record their answers online.

471 surveys were completed by the deadline 1/31/21. Madeline Winston entered the data from the paper surveys into the Online Version. Eli could then create graphs to illustrate the results for each of the 15 ‘rate 0-5’ questions, 2 fee questions, and a question on preferred times of operation. He also printed all the entries in two open ended comment questions.

**SERVICE RATING SECTION. 0 = “Not at all important”. 5= “Extremely important” I am rating numbers 3, 4, & 5 as indicating that the subject of the question is important to the person answering. The percentages represent the number of such positive responses.**

**Curbside Recycling Collection:**  **71%**

44% rated it 5 (of highest importance) another 27% rated it 4 and 3 for a total positive responsive of 71%.

**A Local Recycling and Waste Facility: 96%**

82% felt this was a top priority. 14% more tased it 3 & 4 for a total of 96%.

**Hazardous Waste Disposal**:  **89%**

62% #5, plus 27% at #3 & 4 = 89%

**Electronics disposal: 86%**

48% high priority, plus 38% = 86% felt this was important to them.

**Oversized, Bulky Waste Disposal: 90%**

53% + 37% = 90% wanted this option.

**Tire Disposal:**  **55%**

55 % rated it 5,4,or 3. 43% felt it was only somewhat or not at all important to them.

**Styrofoam Collection: 89%**

44% + 45% (#3&4) = 89% especially valued this service. [Styrofoam is not actually recyclable. The town, in the past, collected it, squashed it, and added it to the trash. This service meant people weren’t filling their trash bags with bulky styrofoam.)

**Brush Disposal: 28%**

47% + 25% = 72% rated this 0, 1, or 2 or unimportant to them

**Leaf and Grass Clipping Disposal: 21%**

79% rated this service #0, 1, or 2.

**Composting:**  **30%**

70% gave this low priority (#0, 1, 2)

**The Store [Gift Shop]:**  **86%**

where people can take serviceable but unneeded items for others who need them, and vice-versa.

54% rated this highest priority; 32% rated it 4 or 3 - 86% valued this service.

**The Book Section: 69%**

36% said this was #5 or highest importance. 33% rated it #3 or #4. =69%

**The Clothing Exchange: 69%**

43% rated this highest priority; 29% considered it #3 or 4. =69%

**Returnable Bottle Collection (proceeds to local charity):**  **58%**

26% rated it 5 +32% = 58%. However 24% Rated this 0, with 19% giving it 1 or 2 =43% saying it was not important to them.

**How important is it that the town has program whereby materials can be reused or recycled instead of going into the waste stream: 91%**

76 rated this utmost importance to them. 15% rated it #3 or 4. = 91% in favor.

**This is the end of the first section. Of the fifteen questions asking what services were valued, only 3 [all outdoor services] appeared to be of little importance to the Bowdoinham citizens who completed the survey, suggesting that any facility will need space to collect and store items until there are enough to bale and sell, as well as a space in which to offer reusable items (including furniture), clothing, and books for others to take [Gift Shop].**

**RECYCLING FEES**

**Willingness to pay a part of recycling costs:**

**Curbside Recycling Pickup** (per bag fee)  **48%**

54.4% said they would not pay. 48.6% said they would.

**Access to a recycling facility:**  **51%**

48.6% said they would not pay. 51.4% said they would be willing to pay.

**BEST HOURS OF OPERATION**

**Saturday mornings and afternoons** were the most popular times of all days.

**Thursday afternoons and mornings** were the next most popular.

**Thursday evening** was next, though a good deal less than the previous times.

Saturday evening was next in line.

There was some interest in Sunday

The rest were fairly equally chosen (all far less that Saturday and Thursday, with Monday being the lowest.

**The current times were acceptable and preferableto most people.**

**THE COMMENT SECTION:**

Not all of those who completed the rest of the survey chose to write out answers to one of both comment questions.

Many people put several different ideas in their comments.

**“Is there any service that you would like to see added to the recycling program?”**  (147 completed this section)

18 wanted to be able to recycle **glass**

11 wanted better r**ecycling education**

9 wanted **film plastic** (plastic bags) to be collected and recycled)

9 wanted to **go back to the way it was before**

9 wanted **yearly curbside bulky waste** pickup

8 wanted to **“return to the Barn”**

8 wanted the **Gift Shop**

8 wanted **waste oil** disposal

8 said **Thank You** for doing this study

5 wanted to be able to **dispose of trash at the recycling facility**

5 wanted **composting**

4 wanted **furniture exchange**

4 wanted **household construction waste disposal**

**There were many other items suggested by 1, 2, or 3 people.**

**“Do you have any additional comments about the future of the Recycling Program?”**

Since there was a good deal of overlap in the comments people wrote in these two sections, it is useful to consider both sections together:

(Question 2 + Question 1 = Total) in order of numbers of people making a specific comment.

**Need for Bowdoinham to have a good/robust Recyling Program.** 60+3 = **63**

(Bham history of award-winning program often mentioned)

**Go back to How it Used to Be:** 56 + 9 = **68**

**Return to the Barn:** 36 + 8 = **44**

**Better Recycling Education:** 10. +11 = **21**

**Recycle Glass:** 2 +18 = **20**

**Need a Town-Owned-Building: 18**

**THANK YOU for Survey** 9 +8 =**17**

**Gift Shop**  9+8 =**17**

**Do Curbside again:** 11 + 4 **=15**

**Fix the Barn:** 13 + 1 = **14**

**Need a New Building: 13**

**Fees on Recycling would Keep people from doing it: 13**

**Encouraging Participation is more important than $$:** 11 + 1 = **12**

**Current Program (Public Works) is not working / unacceptable: 12**

**No New Building-Too Expensive & Wasteful:**  11. +1 =**12**

**Be nimble, flexible, have VISION:**  9 + 2 = **11**

**Missing the Community Aspect of the Barn: 11**

**Don’t Reduce the Recycling Program:** 10 +1 =**11**

**Be sure material is actually recycled:** 8 +3 =**11**

**Need plenty of Space.** 5 + 2 **= 7**

**Too Political:** 4+3=**7**

**Stay at Public Works: 6**

**Respect David Berry and his program:**  4+2 **= 6**

**Do Self-Sort Recycling:**  3+3 =**6**

**NOT Single-stream 4+1 =5**

**Have Hazardous Waste drop.**  2+3 =**5**

**Continue Single-stream 1+3 =4**

**Recycle/reuse the historic building** 3+1 =**4**

**Punish/Control contamination.** 2+2 =**4**

**Would/can not pay for recycling**  3+1 =**4**

**Current Team good. 4**

**Keep out Non-residents.** 2+2 =**4**

**Many other comments & ideas were generated by 1, 2, or 3 citizens.**

**SUMMARY:**

These results show that people surveyed are not willing to give up most of the services they have been accustomed to in the Barn, only questioning the need for compositing etc. which many deal with at home. Handling all these categories will require space in what ever facility we choose.

Most surveyed want to return to “the way it was before,” to “return to the Barn;” they wish to go back to real recycling especially now that saving and then selling recyclables is once again possible. They miss the Gift Shop: the books, clothing, furniture, and miscellaneous items . They miss the community aspect of the Barn. They want a Recycling Program they can be proud of.

The Solid Waste/ Recycling program is regarded as a service the town should continue to provide, at the same level we have enjoyed in the past.

*Include in this chapter Eli’s Survey results and my analysis of the two comment sections.*