Solid Waste Committee

Minutes February 10, 2021

**Present:** Cathy Curtis, Susan Brown, Lisa Wesel, Patrick McDonough, Michael Smith, Bryan Benson, David Berry, Betsy Steen, Paul Denis

**Call to Order:** Cathy Curtis calls that meeting to order at 5:30.

**Amendments to the Agenda:** Lisa Wesel reports that she had a phone call with a member of the Woolwich Solid Waste Committee about their program; she suggests that we not go over their discussion until the Committee’s next meeting as the agenda for this meeting is relatively full. Susan Brown also states that she will send the Committee a note about the information she’s gathered about composting, but would also like to add a follow-up discussion to the agenda for our next meeting. Cathy Curtis notes that she will add her report on plastics to the next meeting as well.

**Approval of Minutes from January 27, 2021:** Lisa Wesel motions to approve the minutes; Susan Brown seconds; all approve.

**Old Business:**

**Review Information from Select Board 2/9/21 Meeting as it pertains to the Committee**: There was no discussion at the 2/9/21 Select Board meeting that pertained to the Committee.

**Survey Results**: (See results on the town website’s Document Library.) 471 surveys were filled out. Committee members appreciated that comments included requests for live music and a cafe. Additional great appreciation for the depth and thoroughness of the graphs and spreadsheets that Eli Rubin and Madeline Winston generated from the data.

Discussion on how to interpret the Comments section when there were recurring opposing responses to certain issues: suggestions to using a “mode” measurement; quantifying answers to include why a comment is for or against a topic; possibility of breaking down the comments into categories to be divided between members (i.e., for or against the barn, for or against fees, etc.); discussion about what those categories could be; Susan Brown, Betsy Steen, and Cathy Curtis volunteer to research responses (Cathy Curtis will send a note about possible categories which others can add to).

Overview of data from graphs: Notable outcomes include tires, brush, grass clippings, leaves, composting and bottle returns were not high on the list of residents’ priorities. Most other services were desired. Residents were mostly evenly split about their willingness to pay fees to recycle and for curbside pick-up (48.6% willing to pay for curbside pick-up; 51.4% willing to pay to access a facility). Requests for days and hours the facility would be open generally reflected the current Thursday/Saturday schedule.

(Question about attendance during new Tuesday hours: Bryan Benson reports that the first and second Tuesday were in the mid-30’s; the third Tuesday (1/9, when it was lightly snowing) was 17.)

Cathy Curtis notes that some of the responses in the survey’s comment section showed a certain amount of misinformation; she wonders if Committee members could use the Solid Waste Facebook page to correct some of the misunderstandings people are making.

Discussion on how to move forward with the survey results: mining the data for additional specific information, and using the data to guide our next steps. Lisa Wesel suggests ranking the services based on data results in order to see an overview. Cathy Curtis hopes that the Committee will move towards a consensus over the next month about what the survey says about the services that residents want, and that we will then come up with the costs of those services to provide to the Select Board and the Town Manager. Clarification that while it is not the Committee’s task to recommend a location, that reflecting the residents’ views about location is useful information for the Select Board to know.

**Review Recyclable Materials Information**: Lisa Wesel discusses Hazardous Waste information (See addendum 1). She specifically was looking into (1) if the program continued as is, how much space would be needed, and (2) what other options there are for residents to dispose of hazardous waste. Cathy Curtis notes that she plans to put together a spreadsheet that will break down information for each recyclable material along similar lines. She adds that a Plastics report and a Composting report are still ongoing.

Betsy Steen notes that David Berry’s Source Separated Pilot Program will offer useful information about recycling options, and adds that David Berry has recently decided to include #1 and #5 plastic collection to the program.

Discussion of Hazardous Waste disposal alternatives: Lisa Wesel is concerned that while there are several options for alternative disposal if Bowdoinham eliminates collection of certain materials, alternative disposal is not offered in one easily accessible location; she notes that with each additional effort a resident has to make for disposal, there is more likelihood that things will end up as dangerous materials in the waste-stream and/or the environment. The exception to this concern would be tire collection: since most residents only need to dispose of old tires when getting new tires, and since disposal of old tires is routinely part of new tire purchases, eliminating the enormous amount of space required to store tires would be in the town’s best interest. The same would be true for old appliances.

Paul Denis (via the chat box) writes “While I do think costs and disposal alternatives are important, one other consideration might be environmental impact, regardless of importance. One example may be engine coolant.”

Susan Brown notes that Brian Hobart is ready and willing to pick up compost from the town facility anytime. Bryan Benson says that he has spoken with Brian Hobart a few times and plans to set up a program in the future.

Emailed Questions from Michael Smith about Hazardous Waste: (See Addendum 2) Michael Smith notes that whatever program we come up with, it will all be based on space. He wonders if there are alternative ways to store materials (i.e., vertically, on shelves) and whether some materials can be shipped in smaller quantities. He also wonders about storage restrictions (e.g., if some fertilizers need to be stored away from others). A brief non-definitive discussion about lightbulb collection. Bryan Benson will aim at coming up with answers to as many questions as he can before the Committee’s next meeting.

**Discuss gathering information from recycling programs in other towns**: Cathy Curtis points out that China and Dresden were mentioned in the survey as towns worth looking into. She asks Committee members to take a town and research their programming.

West Gardiner: Susan Drucker; Dresden: Lisa Wesel; China: Susan Brown; St. George: David Berry; Topsham: Bryan Benson; Richmond: Patrick McDonough.

Brief discussion about the viability of collaborating with Bowdoin or Richmond on a program; decision that if any of the towns we research have any insights into their own possible collaborations, we could build on that information.

Susan Brown asks about what might be happening with the glass crusher: Bryan Benson answers that it is being stored at the Public Works building but there isn’t a plan to use it there; David Berry believes that the machine is operable, and he plans to ask the town as a private citizen if he can use it for his pilot program.

**New Business:**

**Review SWC draft document for the town’s Annual Report**: Cathy Curtis states that her goal for the report was to give a factual and diplomatic overview of what the Committee has done this year. Members offer edits on the document. Committee approves the final document.

David Berry wants the Committee to know that he is considering asking the town to re-establish curbside pick-up for the source-sorted materials (i.e., single bags of cans, plastic, etc.) that he will be collecting in his pilot program. He asks the Committee for feedback and for a possible recommendation for the proposal. He notes that adding a curbside option would help determine a clearer picture of how much source-sorted materials residents might generate, including participation levels, and that it would also uncover any issues that might occur under a new model. He reminds the Committee that taking these materials out of the single-sort stream will still save the town money by reducing overall weight on tipping and hauling fees. Lisa Wesel (echoed by Michael Smith) wonders if a recommendation falls within the purview of the SWC’s tasks, especially considering how the Select Board has been adamant that the Committee not veer outside our charges. Betsy Steen believes that David Berry’s program helps the town understand how alternative collection models might work and thereby falls within the committee’s tasks. Susan Brown also believes the program will offer useful information. Cathy Curtis suggests that we table further discussion on the proposal until our next meeting when it can be added to our regular agenda. David Berry notes that he doesn’t want to put the Committee in a bind and recognizes that the decision is up to the Select Board.

Brief discussion about rescheduling a Casella presentation (Casella cancelled the scheduled meeting due to a timing conflict).

**Public Comments**: No public comments.

**Next Agenda and Follow-up items**: Reviewing information about other towns’ recycling programs; Bryan Benson will follow-up on Michael Smith’s hazardous waste questions; Cathy Curtis hopes to have a document to synthesize the materials information gathered so far; Composting and Plastics presentations; David Berry’s proposal to reinstate curbside pick-up for source-sorted materials during his ten week pilot program; continued review of information from the survey results.

Discussion about what questions we want to ask other towns; decision that we can start the process without a template and that if other questions come up at our next meeting we can follow-up with the individual towns.

**Next Meeting**: Wednesday, February 24th.

**Adjournment**: Cathy Curtis adjourns the meeting at 7:00pm.

**Addendum 1**: Hazardous Waste report:

Here’s a description of everything we used to collect at the Barn, and how much space it required:

FYI: A pallet measures about 40 x 42 inches. When determining the floorspace they require, add 24 inches to the width, because staff need to be able to access them from the side.

**Electronic Waste** (computers, printers, etc.)

Electronic waste is sorted into six categories that is stored in separate pallets. They are shipped out 12-15 pallets at a time.

Space: 12-15 pallets

Cost: only labor

**Lightbulbs:**

Lightbulbs are sorted into four different-sized boxes (specialty boxes that are sealed in plastic in case the bulbs break in transit) that fit onto two pallets. As soon as the boxes are full, Bryan calls FedEx and they pick them up with a few days, so no long-term storage other than the two pallets.

Space: three pallets (two for the lightbulbs and one for the empty, flattened boxes)

Cost: only labor. Everything is federally funded, including the boxes and the shipping.

**Paint:**

We fill one box (on one pallet) at a time, which holds about 100 gallons. Must have three boxes full in order to ship it. Only accept factory-labeled cans of household paint and paint thinner.

A separate box holds unlabeled and miscellaneous paints (marine, automotive, etc.) which go to a different company.)

Space: Five pallets (four for the paint and one for the empty, flattened boxes)

Cost: For household paints, only the labor to collect it. For miscellaneous paints, the labor to collect it and truck it to Auburn once or twice a year.

**Batteries:**

Single-use batteries can be thrown away in the trash. Rechargeable batteries are collected in a small box and shipped via UPS when full at no cost to the town.

**Tires:**

Need a minimum of 100 tires before BDS Waste Disposal of Fairfield will come to pick them up.

Space: area of 10 sq feet tires can be stacked 10 high. Must be stacked inside a building

Cost: None – the town charges residents $3 or $3.50 per tire, depending on the size. Minimal labor – BDS loads the truck.

**Household hazardous waste** (cleaning solutions, and other toxic material):

Space: one pallet at a time; when it’s full, it is disposed of

Cost: labor, transport and disposal; $475/pallet in 2020; cost depends on weight and contents

**Pesticides/insecticides/fertilizers and flammable liquids:**

Must be kept separate for safety reasons. Sorted in three metal cabinets.

Space: Each cabinet measures 15 inches deep, 4 feet wide and 6 feet tall

Cost: varies, depending on weight and contents

**Alternative Disposal Options:**

**Batteries (Rechargeable):**

* Home Depot
* Lowes
* Best Buy

**Batteries (Automotive):**

* [Riverside Recycling Facility](http://riversiderecycles.com/hazardous-waste) in Portland

**Cell phones:**

* Lowes
* Best Buy

**Computers and computer components:**

* Goodwill stores
* Best Buy

**Fluorescent bulbs:**

* Home Depot

**Mercury thermometer and thermostats:**

* K&G Hardware in Richmond (So do a lot of [other places](https://www.thermostat-recycle.org/zipsearch/results/04008?), but that’s the closest.)
* [Environmental Depot](https://www.avcog.org/977/Environmental-Depot-in-Lewiston) in Lewiston

**Paint:**

* Sherwin Williams (latex and oil-based paint; 5 gall. max per customer per day. Call first because their bin is often full (It was when I called); NO spray paint/aerosols

**Motor oil:**

* [Riverside Recycling Facility](http://riversiderecycles.com/hazardous-waste) in Portland

**Tires:**

* Any tire dealership will take old tires, usually for a fee

**Mass collection sites for hazardous waste:**

[Environmental Depot](https://www.avcog.org/977/Environmental-Depot-in-Lewiston) **in Lewiston** (run by Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments) (207) 783-9186

Collection only on certain days; haven’t posted a schedule for 2021 yet

Residents in non-member towns charged [$36 per unit](https://www.avcog.org/974/Household-Hazardous-Waste) (a unit is 5 gallons of liquid or up to 20 pounds of dry waste).

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| * Aluminum cleaner * Aerosols * Artists’ Paint and Mediums * Auto Transmission Fluid * Auto Body Repair Products * Battery Acid * Brake Fluid * Bug & Weed Killer * Bug Sprays * Car Wax with Solvents * Chemistry Sets * Cutting Oil * Drain Cleaners * Driveway Sealer | * Dry Cleaning solvents * Engine De-greaser * Fertilizer with Pesticides * Fiberglass Epoxy * Fire Extinguishers * Flea Control Products * Floor care Products * Formalin, Formaldehyde * Fungicide, Insecticide * Furniture Polish * Gas Cylinders (camping size) * Gasoline, Kerosene and Diesel Fuels | * Gun Cleaning Solvents * Hot Tub Chemicals * Lighter Fluid * Metal Polish with Solvents * Moth Balls * Muriatic acid * Oven Cleaners * Paint Brush Cleaner Solvent * Paint - Auto and Marine * Paint Thinners and Strippers * Pesticides * Photographic Chemicals | * Primers and Wood Preservatives * Rat Poison * Roofing Tar * Rubber Cement * Rug, upholstery & Spot Cleaners * Smoke Detector (Limit 2 detectors=1 unit) * Solvents and Solvent Based Glues * Swimming Pool Chemicals * Thermometers and thermostats |

They DO NOT ACCEPT PAINTS OR FLUORESCENT BULBS

**[Riverside Recycling Facility](http://riversiderecycles.com/hazardous-waste) in Portland**, open first Saturday of the month, April through November, 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Cleaning Products

* Oven cleaners
* Drain cleaners
* Wood and metal cleaners and polishes
* Toilet cleaners
* Tub, tile, shower cleaners
* Bleach (laundry)
* Pool chemicals

Indoor Pesticides

* Ant sprays and baits
* Cockroach sprays and baits
* Flea repellents and shampoos
* Bug sprays
* Houseplant insecticides
* Moth repellents
* Mouse and rat poisons and baits

Automotive Products

* Motor oil
* Fuel additives
* Carburetor and fuel injection cleaners
* Air conditioning refrigerants
* Starter fluids
* Automotive batteries
* Transmission and brake fluid
* Antifreeze

Workshop/Painting Supplies

* Adhesives and glues
* Furniture strippers
* Oil, Latex and Enamel based paints
* Stains and finishes
* Paint thinners and turpentine
* Paint strippers and removers
* Photographic chemicals
* Fixatives and other solvents

Lawn and Garden Products

* Herbicides
* Insecticides
* Fungicides/wood preservatives

Miscellaneous

* Driveway sealer

Other Flammable Products

* Kerosene
* Home heating oil
* Diesel fuel
* Lighter fluid
* Gasoline & Gas/Oil Mix

[Best Buy](https://www.bestbuy.com/site/services/recycling/pcmcat149900050025.c?id=pcmcat149900050025)

Accept for recycling many household goods, including:

* Electronic waste
* Appliances (no freon)
* Vacuums/hair driers
* Ink and toner

**Addendum 2**: Michael Smith’s Hazardous Waste Questions:

I have removed all references to labor, although an important expense, it is really an hours of operation rollup. If recycling is open, accepting these items will not significantly increase labor costs, unless there is a requirement for more staff onsite to accept them. Is there?

Size of a building is a big determining factor on cost. I’m curious if these items could be stored vertically on shelves (similar to Lowes) instead of on the floor. The ability to store vertically, will reduce size requirements. Additionally, for safety, is there a separation requirement? What has to be stored separately? I do know that some pesticides and fertilizers have to be stored away from each other.

When I was a licensed Pesticide applicator, both state and federal, my facilities were designed to hold chemicals separately. Many requirements are grandfathered, however if the choice is a new bldg, what would be the hazardous waste storage requirements? Could they be stored outside, under cover? Safety equipment required?

Here are my specific questions to the waste collected, presently. Electronic Waste (computers, printers, etc.)  
-What are the 6 categories?  
-Instead of storing full pallets until a specified load, are there other smaller quantity options? could reduce the overall costs if it results in a smaller footprint.

-When were the last 5 shipments, and quantity and cost for each? Is there a charge for residents to dispose, and fee?  
Lightbulbs  
-What are the sizes of the boxes?

-What is the quantity, per box? If varied, then a breakdown. What were the dates of the last 5 shipments? -Instead of storing on pallets, could they be stored on shelves?  
Paint:  
-Is there a cost, shipping or disposing, the 3 boxes (100 cans each)?

-Where is it sent, company for disposal? When were the last 5 shipments and costs?  
Even if more expensive,  
-Is there a cost associated, with the non label paints, to ship and dispose? What are the dates of the last 5 shipments. Do residents pay a fee?  
Batteries:  
-What is the size of the box?  
-What were the last 5 dates they were shipped? Is shipping free?  
Tires:  
-Could they be stored in a trailer, outside? In a 3 sided covered building outside?  
-When were the last 5 times, BDS came to pick up the tires and cost for each pickup, if applicable? -Household hazardous waste (cleaning solutions, and other toxic)  
-What was the cost, weight and contents the last 5 times they were disposed?  
-Where are they disposed?  
-Is there a log of what is received and disposed?  
Pesticides/insecticides/fertilizers and flammable liquids:  
-What was the date, cost and contents of the last 5 disposals?  
-Is there a log of all the contents in the cabinets? A log of what was received and disposed of?  
-Why are we storing fertilizers, instead of using them on town spaces? It is easier and less costly to use than dispose. We can discuss safety of using, at another time.