SOLID WASTE COMMITTEE - Minutes

Attending	Not in Attendance
Wendy Cunningham	Paul Denis
Pat McDonough	
Paul Tabor	
Bryan Benson, Solid Waste and Recycling Director, Staff	

INPUT FROM TOWN OFFICE ON POTENTIAL PAYT TRASH SUBSIDY

Guests: Nicole Briand (TM) and Kelly Hodson (Deputy Treasurer)

Per prior discussions the Committee is recommending a subsidy program for Bowdoinham citizens who have financial difficulties which may be a barrier for them. This also in in line with recommendations from the US EPA; According to the U.S. EPA, 'in most communities, there will be a percentage of residents for whom pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) may pose particular challenges. Resident who may need assistance … include low-income and senior citizens.' The EPA recommends communities using a PAYT program, such as Bowdoinham's trash tag program, develop some type of assistance or subsidy for these special populations.

We have also included the desire to have a subsidy program in the current draft Ordinance:

> 7.1.2.1 Subsidy program(s): The Select Board shall establish and fund a program to provide substantive, but not necessarily full, relief from the cost of these fees for lower income residents of the town.

While we are desirous of a subsidy program our goal is to develop a program with no/ minimal impact on the Town Office staff that is busy enough. Some ideas included leveraging State programs, e.g. if a citizen was eligible for WIC (or other program) we could rely on that for eligibility. We also discussed placing a maximum on the program. Outlined below are comments from Nicole and Kelly on difficulties they might face with a Town sponsored program.

- How would we administer some type of cap, e.g. only 4 tags/month per family? Running list? Mailing out specified number of tags to each qualifying family (costing postage)? Running list would require Town to set up administration, e.g. check off list or make additional spreadsheet.
- Getting qualifying information ourselves would be difficult (e.g. income levels). For General Assistance there is an 11 page application that needs to be filled out and

monitored. *The committee agrees with this, having the Town personal do the qualifying would be more infrastructure than is reasonable.*

- Based on current pricing, if we were to set a cap of 4/month we're only talking about a subsidy of $12.
- Many people in Town who might qualify don't ask anyway - based on Town's experience with General Assistance program.
- Can we leverage other Town institutions, e.g. Bowdoinham Food Pantry. We'd discussed with BFP previously, but the program suggested at that time (which included BFP purchasing discounted tickets) needed to be vetted a bit more with the BFP before they could administer.
- We discussed the Town allocating some amount of money to cover some tickets that would be donated. An issue with this is the amount of money would be taken out of the Solid Waste budget, which could actually increase the future cost of trash tags as the trash program needs to be self sufficient based on trash tags revenue (i.e. lower revenue due to donation money would influence the self sustaining price).
- One idea that came through strongly is to leverage the citizens generosity by ramping up a program to stress tag donation. For example setting out a box at the Town Office and other places trash tags are sold so people can donate a couple tags while they're buying their own tags.
- Another donation idea was to leverage the Christmas Tree giving program to include trash tags as well as other items.
- There also may be opportunities through the Age Friendly Committee to identify citizens who could use donated tags.

SUBSIDY PROGRAM DISCUSSION

The Committee agreed to continue to explore a program, however based on the discussion we will eliminate the language in the draft ordinance. Also based on input from other towns, those towns we have asked so far with PAYT funding do not have a formal subsidy program(s)

We will request that someone from the BFP attend a future meeting to discuss what, if any, role they might be able to take on in a subsidy program. **Wendy will coordinate this.**

PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

Minutes from April 24, 2024 meeting were approved.

UPDATE FROM SOLID WASTE DIRECTOR

Bryan and Nicole are meeting with the DEP for a walk through of the site for the transfer station. Once that has happened we'll know if the results require more work than currently anticipated to obtain Transfer Station license.

Bryan also asked Codes Enforcement whether there was language in other Town ordinances dealing with citizens having to clean up any trash bags left out that are disturbed (e.g. crows picking them apart). We have language on that in the Rules document. There is no language on this elsewhere in B-ham ordinances (including reference to littering). While next step would be to check to see if there are any State has any language, it may not be worth the effort to do that.

The Rules document states; Any trash bag/container disturbed by animals, or other forces, prior to collection shall be cleaned up by the resident/business whose trash was disturbed.

We agreed that language could remain in the Rules document. This document is used as a communication tool as well as rules - as it the Ordinance itself. As discussed with Legal there are clauses in the draft Ordinance that are just reiterate what is in State statutes, just having them in Ordinance helps citizens understand without having to be an expert on State statuses. We are not looking to add any enforcement burdens, only communication and possibly something for Town to rely on if this becomes a problem. Based on current experience this happens rarely and eventually gets cleaned up with minimal town effort.

UPDATES ON CALLS TO TOWNS ON TRASH MODELS

Most of us have made good progress on the calls. Here are some of the preliminary observations so far:

- Many of the towns have a Transfer Station
- Many also use the 'silver bullet' model, i.e. people bring their trash to the Town's transfer station (like people used to do when bringing trash to town dump)
- Many have private hauler fees exceeding what Bowdoinham charges, e.g. $250/$275
- Only one town so far has a town administered swap shop (Gray) even then it is only staffed by volunteers, like the B-ham 'Gift shop'. Based on discussion the committee still recommends keeping the current B-ham model where the Town is not involved, but we did discuss seeing if we can help support by including things about the Gift Shop when we work on communication strategy.
- Not much curbside and those that do use contractors, e.g. Casella who uses automated trucks. We believe in those models the Town has to obtain the containers. We agreed it was worth finding out specifics of this program from Casella, however we are concerned that model is too expensive for B-ham to sponsor. We will explore more however.

REVISED ORDINANCE

We are looking to move forward with this to make sure we can meet the timing required to have the new ordinance on the November ballot. There are 3 small changes to make:

- Definition of Solid Waste and Recycling Rules - need to change that the SB 'may' to the SB 'will'

- remove reference to limiting permits per household from 2 to no limits (this needs to be changed in rules as well.
- remove subsidy requirement

There are also a couple of changes to make in the Rules document, including
- remove reference to limiting permits
- change composting model
- adding list/prices for bulky waste
- correcting Bryan's email

Wendy will make these changes and forward.

We agreed to get public input before we bring formally to the SB, towards that end our June 12 meeting will be a public hearing/input session. **Bryan will publish on the Town's site, Wendy will post on social media.**

NEXT MEETING

We agreed to a short meeting on 5/22 - as Bryan will not be able to join we may need to do this exclusively on Zoom. **Wendy will check with Nicole on this and let the committee know.** Agenda items on that meeting will include update on other towns' input and anything needed to move forward on 6/12 public session.