

Meeting Minutes

Cleaner Greener Hingham / Long Range Waste Disposal and Recycling Committee

Tuesday January 12, 2021, 7:00 pm via Zoom

In attendance: Andy Ayer/Katie Gallacher/Janice McPhillips//Christine Nielsen/Alyson Anderson/David White

Guest: Denise Dockrey

Absent: Maria Zade/Stephen Jiranek/Pete Stathopoulos/Katie Puzo/Randy Sylvester

1. Transfer Station Updates

Andy invited Randy to the meeting but did not receive a response. In lieu of attendance Andy sent Randy an email asking to give the committee an update on the following:

- overview of his presentation to the Board of Selectmen (BOS)
- current challenges of costings of disposing of both trash and recycling
- his thoughts on Pay as You Throw (PAYT)
- composting - impacts on staffing and costs vs. incineration

Denise gave an update to the committee on the email that she sent to the BOS dated **xx/xx/xxxx** (see attached). Based on her research there would be a reduction in cost to the town if PAYT was implemented. Research by the state shows that PAYT leads to increased recycling and decreased volumes of trash. Grants are available from the state to start up the system. Costs around \$1 per bag and there are ways to reduce the impact on citizens on lower incomes. The following comments were given by the committee:

Janice - there is a bylaw that prevents town residents from paying for trash disposal that was put in place when the landfill was implemented. There are Municipal Assistance Coordinators (MACs) who are state employees available to assist Municipalities with issues like this. **Action: Janice** will send Todd (MAC assigned to Hingham) the town's trash/recycling information and ask for any advice.

Alyson - asked whether PAYT means more people use private haulers - Denise was unaware but said that she would look into it.

Katie - asked whether other towns successfully have PAYT where residents take their trash/recycling to TS, or only with curbside pickup? Denise said that both Cohasset and Scituate use this system and there are no issues.

David - approx. 10 years ago the committee looked into 4 methods of trash disposal (PAYT, curbside pickup, Transfer Station TS, private hauler). Their report

agreed that PAYT would be beneficial to the town but, due to the above bylaw, the then BOS did not want to move forward with the proposal.

Chris - perhaps more people using private haulers isn't a bad thing for the town from a financial point of view? Ask Randy for feedback on this.

Andy - Bill Ramsey (BOS) has asked committee to do some research into PAYT at the current time. Suggested that following questions be addressed:

- What is the average spend per household with PAYT?
- Would composting be considered recycling?
- What space at the TS would be required to do this? (currently installing solar panels at the TS, which will take up valuable space)
- Bylaw change could not happen until 2022 as it needs to be voted on at Town Meeting. (this is an advantage as it both gives a deadline, but also enough time to work on this project thoroughly)

2. Subcommittee Updates and Defining

a. *Bylaw/Reg Review (David, Katie P, Maria)*

Action: Look into a feasibility study to assess PAYT

b. *Community Outreach (Andy, Janice)*

Janice contacted the Hingham Journal about writing regular articles for publication. Feedback was positive. Janice and Andy to review the website. Map of the TS not on the CGH website. Action: David to update the TS map and send to Janice. Action: Janice will update the CGH website with the map

c. *Education (Andy, Chris)*

No update due to ongoing Covid pandemic

d. *Events (Chris, Katie P)*

Poss future event - virtual movie about the state of plastic pollution. Alyson contacted the library to see if there's any interest in this. Action: Alyson to follow up

e. *Refuse/Reuse (Alyson, Stucky)*

No update

3. Items not reasonably anticipated 48hrs in advance

Janice wrote an article for the Hingham Anchor about making New Year's resolutions to 'refuse' single use items. Action: Alyson to review the article and Action:Chris to add an element of the 'Level Up' campaign to this.

4. Approval of Minutes from 12/15/2020 meeting

Minutes approved.

Next meeting February 9th 2021 at 7pm

Respectfully submitted, Katie Gallacher

Attachment - copy of email sent to BOS by Denise Dockrey:

I am writing to request that you seriously consider analyzing and eventually implementing a 'pay-as-you-throw' program to address the substantial increase in tipping costs that were discussed at the recent Selectmen's meeting, the town's decreasing revenue growth, and the desire to decrease our negative impact on the environment. Based on substantial data on pay-as-you-throw programs compiled by Mass Department of Environmental Protection, it is clear that this program should be taken under serious consideration as an alternative means to increase revenue, encourage recycling, decrease waste and, therefore, decrease costs.

As indicated by the [MassDEP page](#), Pay-As-You-Throw, or Unit-Based Pricing "is a system in which residents pay for municipal solid waste (MSW) management services per unit of waste discarded rather than solely through a fixed fee or property tax. It is equivalent to putting a price tag on each container of trash that is placed at the curb or taken to the landfill or transfer station for disposal. When residents pay directly for waste disposal services, they are provided with a financial incentive to reduce their waste through recycling, composting, and source reduction." The program I suggest is the same that is adopted by Scituate and several other communities, and requires residents to purchase specific bags that must be used to discard waste at the transfer station.

Highlights from the MassDEP [Pay-As-You-Throw Fact Sheet](#)

- 153 municipalities out of 352 in Massachusetts that have adopted this approach, 94 municipalities with drop-off programs (rather than curbside pickup)
- In each of these municipalities, solid waste tonnage is reduced by 25-50% through a combination of increased recycling, diversion to reuse, repair, donation, composting, and other methods of disposal.
- This represents more than \$31 million in potential savings by municipalities, assuming an average disposal cost of \$78 per ton.

Additionally, I would like to highlight that the state indicates a municipal grant of up to \$300,000 is available to support the implementation of this program. ([Grant program detailed here.](#))

I would like to direct your attention to the following resources for more details on the program and the significant impact in towns similarly situated to Hingham:

- [MassDEP FACT Sheet: Pay-As-You-Throw For Municipalities](#)
- [Massachusetts DEP, Sustainable Materials Recovery ProgramMunicipal Application - Grant Guidelines \(Section 3, Pay-As-You-Throw Program Funds - up to \\$300,000\)](#)
- [MassDEP Pay-As-You-Thrown Presentation](#)
- [Case Study: Town of Needham](#) (Highlight - In FY98, the transfer station received 13,448 tons of trash. In FY99, with PAYT, trash tonnage dropped to 6,770 tons – a 50% decrease.)
- [Case Study: Town of Duxbury](#)

I am not an expert in waste management and, in fact, this is the first time I have ever looked into pay-as-you-throw programs. I am simply answering the call by the Selectmen to think broadly about ideas to increase revenue and decrease costs. I was aware of this program in surrounding towns, like Scituate, and it seems like a very fair approach for allocating waste management costs across the residents who utilize the transfer station. Please note that under this program, recycling would still be free - although I also encourage the Selectmen to look into eliminating the 'one free sticker per household' policy and implement a sticker fee as found in many other towns.

