

**MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL SOLID WASTE COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2013, AT 6:30 P.M. IN ROOM  
207, TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410**

Present

Chairman Robert Oris, and Liz Linehan and Sylvia Nichols  
Staff: Michael A. Milone, Town Manager; George Noewatne, Public Works Director, and  
Walter Gancarz, Town Engineer.

**1. ROLL CALL**

The clerk called the roll and a quorum was determined to be present.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The group Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

**3. DISCUSSION OF AUTOMATED RECYCLING; STATUS REPORT**

The committee was informed by Mr. Milone that the automated recycling program was scheduled to be revisited in December 2013, at the recommendation of the prior Solid Waste Committee. Mr. Milone gave a brief history of the automated recycling program, which was intended, in the first full year, to increase recycling by 10%, reduce solid waste trash by 10%, and lower tipping fees. It was stated by Mr. Milone that Cheshire people have an interest in recycling, but the smaller 18 gallon buckets were insufficient. With larger recycling containers the recycling would increase and solid waste would go down. Research was done, other towns with recycling programs were studied, and the Council decided to go forward with an automated recycling program, which was also designed to generate savings.

The Solid Waste Committee undertook implementation of the recycling program, with collection being done every two weeks. 96 gallon and 64 gallon containers were ordered for residents for recycling to be collected by the automated recycling truck. A three (3) person truck was now a one (1) person truck, the collection route moved more quickly, and savings from the hauler were passed along to the Town. The contract with A.J. Waste was extended out three (3) years; the hauler purchased a new automated truck; and there was \$70,000 saved on a \$950,000 contract.

Mr. Oris asked about the recycling program going out to bid to vendors.

The committee was informed by Mr. Milone that Cheshire had a five (5) year contract with A.J. Waste, was in year two (2) of the contract, and the Town would have had to wait out the remainder of the contract to bid the program. A.J. Waste was willing to bring costs down, extend the contract three (3) years, and \$70,000 in contract savings was the result.

Mr. Milone explained that the expectation was to reduce solid waste by 10%. Cheshire was averaging 7,200 pounds of solid waste per year; the estimate was a reduction of 700 tons, and this would be another \$50,000 savings with reduction of tonnage.

The automated recycling program was funded through current dollars and cash, without bonding. In FY 2012-13 the Town had a large surplus, and the Council used excess surplus to pay for the recycling program. The biggest cost was acquisition of the recycling containers, 96 gallon and 64 gallon sizes, and their cost was about \$480,000.

Mr. Milone reviewed the financial summary of the recycling program, what was budgeted and expended. The total amount budgeted for the program was \$477,909. Expenditures included purchase of 2,800 of the 64 gallon containers, \$116,900; purchase of 6,400 of the 96 gallon containers, \$309,760; RFID tags, \$4,600, and miscellaneous expenses of \$6,877. The total expended was \$438,137, leaving a balance of \$39,772 in the account. Mr. Milone explained that the RFID tags identify a house with a container. There are 181 of the 96 gallon containers, and 54 of the 64 gallon containers stored at the Public Works yard.

At the present time, Cheshire does not have a program to weigh individual containers and track them. Mr. Milone said some haulers can track a container with the sticker; will not pickup containers with wrong products; and some stations will turn back the entire truck load if there is contaminated material.

The committee was told by Ms. Linehan that some towns have incentive programs for households that increase their recycling, such as gift cards from local merchants.

Mr. Noewatne noted that Cheshire did have a public relations program and information about what is, and what is not, for recycling (such as plastic bags, Styrofoam). He advised that there are few complaints from the hauler about the recycling products found in the Town's pickup.

Information on the recycling program was published in the *Cheshire Herald* and *Cheshire Citizen* this week.

Mr. Milone explained that the hauler gets paid for dumping recycling materials; recycling does not go from trash to energy; but the solid waste that goes to the Wallingford plant is the trash to energy. There is \$94,000 left in the account from the CRRA contract, along with reserve account funds, for future expenses related to the recycling program. The current tipping fee is \$69 for every ton, and in March 2014, it will increase but not by more than the 3% cap.

Automated Recycling Analysis – this information was reviewed with the committee for the program that started in November 2012. Recycling tonnage had a variance of 305.71 tons (January to September comparison 2012 to 2013). Solid Waste tonnage had a variance of -344 tons (January to September comparison 2012-2013). Mr. Milone stated that the hope is for A 700 ton reduction in solid waste. The 2013 total tonnage is 6,100, about 55 tons a month, with the goal of getting these numbers lower through more recycling.

According to Mr. Gancarz, the Town of Cheshire is at about 25%, and could reach 30% with a good public relations and education program on recycling. He commented on some municipalities using pickup in bags at a cost to the homeowners, and this type of program can result in more contaminated recycling products in the bags.

Stating the Council will probably hear about this type of pickup program, Mr. Milone reported it is used by municipality paid trash pickup programs. It can reduce recycling and also create hostility.

Guidelines for Container Exchange and Replacement – Mr. Milone explained that this was an issue which was reviewed and discussed by the Solid Waste Committee. A plan was recommended and it was adopted by the Town Council. The containers were distributed based on the size of the household; senior citizens and disabled persons were given the 64 gallon containers.

Disabled residents – requesting a switch of containers, complete application form, submit to Public Works Dept. and no charge to change containers.

Households with people over 65 years of age - – requesting a switch of containers, complete application form, submit to Public Works Dept. and no charge to change containers.

Damaged Containers – written request with police report, no charge; for new homeowner where there is no container, no charge; missing container without a police report, \$50 for 96 gallon, and \$42 for 64 gallon containers.

Request for additional container – written request and proof of existing container submitted to Public Works Dept. no charge; only 96 gallon containers available.

Purchase of 18 gallon bin – can be picked up from Public Works Dept., \$4.00 charge.

Ms. Nichols commented on the 96 gallon containers, their easy maneuverability, and noted there is a rear yard pickup program for those who cannot get the containers to the curb for pickup. The rear yard pickup is coordinated through the Public Works Dept.

Since implementation of the program, Mr. Milone said there have been many accommodations made for people. At this time there are few problems, and people are satisfied with the automated recycling program. Initially, there was 3-month trial period using the new containers, and after 3 months people could change containers. The replacement requests were very low; no one was forced to keep the initial container; and at the end of each year (December) people who reached age 65 or those who are disabled, can switch containers. These requests are reviewed on per case basis. At any time the Solid Waste Committee can change requirements, especially for the elderly residents.

Mr. Noewatne reported there are very few requests from the elderly to change containers. The condo complexes in Town were visited by staff to help arrange and accommodate containers for garages or common areas. Mr. Noewatne advised that the collection schedule for A and B weeks is on the web site.

A request was made by Mr. Oris that "senior age group" information be included in the guidelines and on the web site so people are aware that they qualify for a smaller container by meeting the age requirements.

This information is in the application form, but Mr. Milone will include it in the guidelines. He said that the former committee decided to collect names and addresses of those reaching age 65 in the calendar year, and switch containers on an annual basis in December.

#### **4. BULKY WASTE COLLECTION (POSSIBLE EXECUTIVE SESSION)**

Mr. Milone distributed copies of Bulky Waste Collection Options and Specifications, and reviewed them with the committee. He reported that the bid for the collection program went out in August; one bidder responded at \$450,000 cost; two bidders sent letters stating they would not respond to the bid. Mr. Milone is reticent about going out to bid again, and said there will be modifications to the specifications.

The last time the Town held a bulky waste collection the cost was \$150,000. Due to the expenses associated with the collection program, Mr. Milone said the Town would want to have a biennial program. The last collection was in 2008, with 815 tons of bulky waste and 55 tons of scrap metal collected.

Options – Mr. Noewatne reviewed the options with the committee, noting that the last bid resulted in one bid at \$450,000, and two letters stating the vendor would not bid. He said the risk with the collection program is with the hauler, not the Town. The cost in the bid received was estimated at \$50 per household, for 9,000 households, for a total of \$450,000.

Mr. Gancarz called the bidder who had concerns about there being no collection in many years, and the bid was all inclusive. He said that with the hauler picking up materials, and the Town disposing of the materials, there are issues to be considered. With the solid waste collection the Town pays for the tipping fee which reduced the contract costs a little. There could be the same type of program for a bulky waste collection, but an issue is monitoring the bulky waste materials, which would require a Town crew member on the trucks. At the Wallingford plant, the trucks hauling Cheshire waste are randomly checked to insure the waste is coming only from Cheshire.

The committee discussed how to control the amount of bulky waste allowed per household. Mr. Oris suggested a limit of 6 cubic yards as the maximum which would control the tonnage, and people would have to be informed of the exact size of this cubic yardage. He is in favor of a free pickup to a certain amount, and material over this amount would be charged back to the household.

Ms. Nichols stated her agreement on limitation of materials to be collected, as people bring stuff from their office, summer house, and other locations to Cheshire for the bulky waste pickup. She suggested using a tarp with the exact dimensions for limitation of materials to be collected.

Option #5 – Fixed credit line option was discussed by the committee. In this option the Town would pay for a certain amount, and anything over is charged to the household. This option would not get 100% participation or high volume from every household.

Mr. Oris stated there should be a schedule in place, sectioning off the Town for collection on a certain day.

In response, Mr. Noewatne advised that for bulky waste collection the Town schedules pickup in four quadrants – one week of collection per quadrant.

Mr. Milone believes #5 is the preferred option. It would be more efficient; pickup could be done by appointment within a quadrant; there could be a problem with the hauler being unrealistic about pickup times; people putting out stuff too late; and pickers going through the stuff.

The program Free Cycle was mentioned by Ms. Linehan who explained it is monitored by volunteers. It is a program for people who know what is available, and without investment by the Town.

Mr. Milone said that constituents want a bulky waste collection program.

With fixed guidelines, Ms. Linehan said there would be less uncertainty as to what will be picked up, and there should be correlation of weight and/or recyclables.

Mr. Oris reported that the Town of Enfield purchased its own gripper truck and does its own bulky waste collection. He questioned whether Cheshire has the capability to purchase a truck and do its own program.

This has been discussed within the Public Works Department, and Director Noewatne said the untenable thing is the fact that this truck is a major expense, about \$150,000, and additional Town crews would be needed to man the trucks and the collection program.

Option #6 was raised by Mr. Noewatne, who informed the committee that Public Works does the leaf collection and street sweeping programs for the Town, with Town crews.

For the Town to undertake its own bulky waste collection program, Mr. Milone explained that a crew would be dedicated for 10 weeks. The collection was moved to the Fall of each year rather than Spring for aesthetic concerns, and there were better rates due to more competition from haulers. There is a policy decision to be made by the Council to institute the bulky waste collection for one time only this year, or institutionalize a

program. To institutionalize a program is a change from what the Council initially pursued, and such a program would require more Town crew members.

According to Mr. Oris, people want bulky waste as part of a Town service, on a regular and ongoing basis every two years or every year.

The committee was told by Mr. Gancarz that a multi-year bid may attract more companies to bid, and it is a larger contract.

At this time, Mr. Milone said the biggest problem is not having good information for understanding the real cost of the bulky waste collection. Under option #6 there would be the start of discussion with a hauler, see if there is some way to break down some of the costs, understand how the program works, and institutionalize a program if the Council wants to do so. There are many unknowns such as the collection itself, costs, how much can be collected, and management of the program in out years.

Mr. Milone said he needs the Council's authority to discuss, with the haulers, how to bring costs down. He suggested talking with A.J. Waste Company which has a great knowledge of the Town.

The committee agreed with this suggestion, and the consensus was to authorize the Town administration to discuss the bulky waste collection, without commitments, with A.J. Waste.

Regarding the only bid received for the bulky waste collection program, Mr. Noewatne advised that the bidder would give breaks on some things, i.e. \$75,000 reduction in the bid if the Town pays the tip fee. He said the Town would not assume this risk. The bidder also offered a break at 1,000 tons and no more.

This bidding company was also going to haul the material to another community, and Mr. Milone noted that transportation costs were very high.

The issue of recycling playing into the bulky waste collection was raised by Mr. Oris, and he asked how this could be a component of the collection, such as source separation.

Mr. Noewatne said this has been discussed, and he commented on the pickers coming through Town, taking the scrap metal items, which reduces the haulers payments for this material.

It was stated by Ms. Nichols that the issue is good in concept, but residents will be confused about this.

The committee discussed options #3 and #4, and the problem being the ability of people to get items to the transfer station.

Mr. Milone commented on the discussions and ideas from this meeting and their being a good faith effort on the part of the Town. He explained that with some options there would be overtime costs for Town crews, securing of dumpsters, disposal fees, and opening of the transfer station. This station was closed two years ago at a savings of \$50,000 for the Town. The permit is kept active in case the Town wants to reactivate the station. With a free drop off for residents at the A. J. Waste site on Burton Drive, the Town pays the costs. It would be less costly for the Town to open the transfer station.

The committee authorized Town staff to have discussions with A.J. Waste, get information and report back to the Solid Waste Committee at the meeting in January.

## **5. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION by Ms. Nichols; seconded by Ms. Linehan.

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

VOTE           The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

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Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk