

## Minutes of Waste Management Committee Meeting 23 July 2018

Meeting was called to order at 1:05pm by Steve Whitman, Chairman

Present: George Whittaker, Ken Hall, and Steve Whitman

Absent: Mike Provost, Tony Brown

Purpose: to address the increasing cost associated with the recycling of materials, specifically co-mingled plastics/tin cans and the mixed paper. Processing fee for co-mingled has increased from \$45/ton to \$155/ton, and paper has increased from \$45/ton to \$60/ton, additionally the hauling charge for paper has increased from \$195 to \$275. Increases were effective as of 1 July 2018.

### New Business

**Opening comments:** Recycling has been in effect in Alexandria for over 10 years and has proven to be successful. Benefits from the program not only save the town money but preserves our renewable and non-renewable natural resources; and has a positive impact on our environment. When looked at as a total concept, recycling does save money in the long run. However, with the recent increase in charges, the co-mingled, and now paper, are costing us money to recycle rather than handling them as household trash in the compactor (co-mingled \$144/ton and paper \$5/ton). I think we can all agree that, in concept, recycling is the responsible thing to do, but as managers of waste disposal for the town we need to evaluate the economic impact it has and balance the two. We need to be mindful of the long-term impact of how we manage waste in total.

**Discussion:** The town is somewhat limited in what it can do because of restrictions created by not owning the property on which the transfer station is located. There is inadequate space in which to expand to incorporate facilities which would improve efficiency and allow Alexandria to maximize recycling efforts. Any improvements made need to be of a nature that can easily be relocated to a permanent site. We are aware of this and have been looking for land suitable for our needs.

### **Alternatives Proposed:**

*Eliminate the recycling program* – It was decided that it would not be in the best interest of the town to suspend the recycling program. The reasoning behind this was: 1) in spite of the increased charges, the program is [and will continue] saving us money, and 2) as a town we have a responsibility to follow “best practices” to protect the environment and our natural resources.

*Modify the treatment of co-mingled materials* – The majority of the co-mingled material [volume wise] is plastic; tin cans make up only about an estimated 15%. Markets for plastics are drying up and it's becoming very difficult to find centers willing to take any plastics and those that do are only recycling a small percentage of what they receive; the rest goes to a landfill. However, there is a market for the tin cans.

#### Options:

1. Eliminate the co-mingled container and throw everything in the compactor along with the household trash. This will add some additional volume to the compactor which may require more frequent hauling; however, plastic lends itself to being easily compacted so this should not be a major consideration. If cans are included, we are giving up a revenue source, but on the positive side, there will not be a need to keep tin cans separated.

2. Provide a separate container for tin cans only [like what we do for the aluminum cans now] and continue to recycle them. This will mean that people will need to continue to sort the cans for recycling as they do today, the only difference being that they will no longer be included with the plastics, which will now go in with the household trash.

*Eliminate the recycling of paper products* – We currently combine mixed paper with cardboard; this is an undesirable mix from a processing center prospective as it requires sorting on their end. The most profitable way to go is to bale the cardboard and process the paper separately. However, a baler requires a covered area for the baler and the storage of the cardboard bales; this is not an option for us at this point. Paper is heavy and takes up volume and adding it to the compactor would result in more container hauls. Cardboard is currently causing a problem for processors and many are no longer accepting it unless it is of high quality and baled. We think that the reason for the increase in trucking charges for mixed paper is because it was necessary for the hauler to change processing vendors resulting in a greater distance to haul – Tony is verifying the reason for the increase.

**Summary:**

The committee will continue to pursue purchasing land suitable to support a new transfer station facility.

George Whittaker will contact the NH Recycling Cntr. to see what's available for grant money and what qualifies – Tony also has information on grant funding.

The committee will recommend to the BOS:

1. We continue the recycling program in the town.
2. Make modifications to the recycling of co-mingled materials [plastic and tin cans]: all plastics including plastic bags and Styrofoam will now be included with household trash and disposed of in the compactor; tin cans will be disposed of separately in the same manner as the aluminum cans are and recycled. Tony will need to contact Gilpatric to confirm how the cans need to be packaged – baling is not required. The container currently used for the co-mingled materials will be retired and a new area for tin can disposal will be created.
3. The processing of paper material will remain the same for the time being. However, serious consideration should be given to providing a cover to keep the paper dry, as wet paper increases the weight and decreases the value.
4. No changes to the handling of glass or any other recyclable materials.
5. Committee members and the BOS should continue to look for property suitable for a new transfer station.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:15pm. This committee meets on an adhoc basis and there are no further meetings scheduled at this time.

Addendum to minutes of the 23 July meeting of the Waste Management Committee

These are comments that were received from members of the committee who were unable to attend the meeting; however, it is felt that their input should be included in these minutes as it will influence the final recommendations the committee makes to the BOS regarding the recycling program.

Co-mingled materials: it was felt that all co-mingled materials should be diverted into the household waste compactor rather than trying to recycle the tin cans separately. The reasons sighted were 1) the tin cans make up such a small percentage of the co-mingled mix that it doesn't make sense to try to separate them out, and 2) the cost in manpower to process tin cans only is not justified.

Mixed paper materials: although the hauling fee increase for paper was contingent upon the vendor having to haul to Concord vs. Belmont (current processing site), the fee increase of \$15/ton will remain in effect, which reduces our savings on paper to \$23/ton. There is the potential that we may be forced to create a protective covering for our paper container, as wet paper may no longer be accepted. Because of our situation of not owning our property, construction of a covering system for the container would be costly (it must be effective, yet mobile) and at \$23/ton saving it would take considerable time to recover the cost. Therefore, the recycling of paper/cardboard should also be suspended, and it too disposed of in the household waste compactor. Note; paper decomposes relatively quickly, and the impact on the environment would be minimal from a contamination prospective.

The importance of obtaining our own property was also underscored as critical if we are to become an efficient recycling facility.

Respectfully Submitted

Steve Whitman, Chairman