**Transfer Station Sitting Committee** **Report** **Dec. 31, 2020**

Background

In March of this year, Alexandria's voters approved the purchase of a 17-acre parcel of land at the SE corner of Rte 104 and Cass Mill Road, to be used as a location for the Town's transfer station. The warrant article that was presented to the voters at that time included the purchase price of $200,000 and an additional $10,000 toward the necessary permitting, this last amount having been added at February's deliberative session. In September, the Selectboard appointed and charged a group – the Transfer Station Siting Committee (TSSC) – to work toward the goal of beginning operations at the new location. The TSSC consists of Ken Hall (supervisor of the transfer station), Steve Whitman (chair of the Recycling Committee), Jeff Cantara (Road Agent), and Sue Hunt (abutting property owner), as well as the members of the Selectboard and Jennifer Dostie (the Board's administrative assistant). The TSSC's meetings take place every two weeks, immediately following the Selectboard meetings on alternate Tuesday evenings, and are open to the public. The TSSC is also advised by Erin Darrow (Right Angle Engineering) who in the past has worked for the Town on a variety of Highway Dept projects, and who has extensive experience in the development of transfer stations. The following is a report on the TSSC's progress toward our goal, to date.

Information Gathering

The TSSC recognizes that public input is crucial to the success of this project. Since Covid-19 restricted large public meetings, we decided to develop and distribute a questionnaire to solicit opinions about the current operation of the transfer station as well as suggestions and priorities for future services. This questionnaire was distributed in paper form at the municipal building, at the current transfer station, and at the polls on primary day (September) and voting day (November). It was also made available electronically through the Town's website. In all we received over 70 responses to the questionnaire; the resulting feedback is summarized at http://alexandrianh.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/survey-results-10202020.pdf.

Every town in NH is served by a transfer station, and so members of the TSSC visited a number of facilities in the region to gain information about their operation, and to learn from conversations with their personnel. Sites visited were in Bristol, Ashland, Gilford, and Pittsfield, as well as one in Salisbury, CT. We studied features such as traffic flow, staff roles, range of recycling efforts, and financial operation. Three of these facilities (Bristol, Gilford, Salisbury) were recent installations or renovations, so capital costs and financing methods were also of interest in those cases.

On-Site Activity

The property was closed on in July after a title search and following this the Town began the background work for the permitting process. We anticipate needing multiple permits from the state Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) or the EPA, including the following:

- Alteration of Terrain (AoT) with NHDES - We will probably need two separate AoT permits, one for the excavation and one for the transfer station. This is required for land disturbance of more than 100,000 square feet.
- Subsurface Wastewater Disposal System (Septic System) with the NHDES – needed for the future septic system.

- Transfer Station Permit by Notification with NHDES – for the actual operation of the transfer station.
- Closure of Existing Transfer Station Plan with NHDES – needed to close the existing transfer station.
- Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan with EPA – needed for all land disturbances of more than 1 acre.

The above permitting requires a thorough assessment of the topography and environment of the property, and this process is underway. During the summer and fall Right Angle Engineering (RAE) compiled a topographic map of the site with 2' contours, and all wetlands were delineated by RAE in consultation with a certified wetland scientist. The latter required numerous (30+) shallow excavations that were done by Selectboard member Chet Caron, who contributed his labor and equipment.

The main past use of the property was agricultural, but it does include several dilapidated sheds that seem to have been used for various storage purposes. For this reason, it was important to check for hazardous materials (hydrocarbons, heavy metals, etc.) through several borings followed by laboratory analysis. This work was done in November through a contract with Stonecipher & Clark (Littleton, NH). Fortunately, all results were negative, which reduced our concerns in this regard.

Using the Highway Department mower, in August the staff of the Transfer Station mowed all the open areas of the property. In the fall the staff also removed over 300 tires that had been discarded there; more remain to be removed in spring.

<u>Planning</u>

Early TSSC discussions included identifying project phases and tasks and outlining their sequence in a tentative Gantt chart. A subgroup of the committee (Sue Hunt, Steve Whitman, George Tuthill) has been identified to investigate various methods of financing the project, to include grant opportunities. Regarding the latter, committee member Hunt has extensive experience with the USDA Community Facilities program. We will be meeting with the state's USDA program representative in January to discuss a possible grant application.

The committee is working to settle on an efficient facility design that:

a) meets the near-term needs of Alexandria, given past experience and present community feedback/input,
b) has a cost that is manageable over a 10-20 year timeframe, and
c) can be further developed or expanded, if and when need arises – e.g., due to community growth, changing recycling economics, need for regionalization, etc.

With the assistance and guidance from RAE, the committee is examining various layouts (access, numbers of roll-offs, structures, etc.) together with estimated costs, and attempting to identify "needs vs. wants" in the creation of an efficient design. The proposed design will form part of the permit application, as well as any grant applications, to be submitted in early 2021.

Our present goal is to have cost estimates and permits in place, together with any approved grant funds, by early 2022, so that a warrant article for necessary funding (e.g., bonding or loans) can be placed before the voters in March 2022.

For calendar year 2021, we expect to ask the voters to approve a warrant article to fund professional design and engineering services, as well as preliminary site preparation, both for gravel excavation and for the transfer station itself.