

Town of Montville Town Council
Special Informational Meeting Minutes
June 5, 2018

6:00 p.m. – Town Council Chambers – Town Hall

1. Call to Order

Chairman McNally called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call

Present were Councilors Caron, Jaskiewicz, Pike, Rogulski, and McNally. Absent were Councilors Pollard and Rogers.

4. New Business

A. Presentation by CT DEEP (Department of Energy and Environmental Protection) regarding the Pay-Per-Bag/SMART (Save Money and Reduce Trash) Program

Public Works Director Donald Bourdeau, Jr., provided a brief background on the Pay-Per-Bag/SMART Program and introduced Chris Nelson, CT DEEP Sustainable Management Group Supervisor; Kristen Brown, WasteZero Vice President of Municipal Partnerships and DEEP (Department of Energy and Environmental Protections) Consultant, and; Dave Aldridge, Southeastern Connecticut Regional Resources Recovery Authority (SCRRA) Executive Director.

CT DEEP Supervisor Nelson provided a brief background of their comprehensive materials management strategy. Based upon the direction received by the State Legislature, CT DEEP has set a statewide diversion goal of 60% by 2024, which concentrates on waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting as well as the processing of waste through new technologies, e.g., anaerobic digestion, which creates fuel and compost out of food and yard waste. To help achieve their goal, they have requested that municipalities implement a waste reduction initiative designed to reduce their total waste by 10% by December 2018 and have identified that the SMART Program is the most effective strategy of achieving their environmental goals while, at the same time, aiding the municipality's budgetary issues. The State is currently in the midst of a waste crisis in which most of the trash is sent to Waste-To-Energy facilities, which are aging and shutting down throughout the northeast, rather than landfills. As the result, the disposal/tipping costs, which is currently approximately \$65.00 - \$70.00/ton, are steadily increasing and the cost is being passed on to the municipalities and, ultimately, its residents. Though the recycling market is becoming depressed and the rebates are declining or have altogether disappeared, the cost of recycling is significantly less than that of trash. He reviewed CT DEEP's hierarchy, which designates their priority on waste reduction and recycling and the importance of self-sufficiency. Recognizing the importance of educating the public, CT DEEP has launched the "What's In? What's Out?" Campaign to streamline the message and create a universal list of recyclable items, increasing participation. Other forms of recycling such as electronics, paint, textiles, and plastic bags, are also highlighted. Pricing systems has been found to be the number one method nationwide to achieve significant statewide increases in recycling and decreases in the amount of trash being disposed. To this end, the Program has proven to be fiscally prudent by taking the funds out of the tax base and transferring those costs to the individuals who are paying for the amount of trash they generate while, at the same time, promoting environmental responsibility by reducing waste and increasing recycling. The SMART pricing approach is a key priority in a number of Northeastern States, including Massachusetts, Maine, and Rhode Island, as well as the U.S.

WasteZero Vice President and CT DEEP Consultant Brown provided a brief background of her experience in the industry and the success of the Program, stating that each of the communities who have adopted the Program have immediately cut their trash by 40% to 45%. She informed the public that the SMART Program would only affect those who

purchase either a \$55.00 or \$45.00 sticker and/or utilize the Transfer Station and would not affect those who receive private collection. By reducing the amount of trash being generated, the Town's Transfer Station costs would decrease thereby resulting in a reduction of the Town's overall taxes. Currently, the Town annually produces 1,750 tons of trash and pays \$58.00/ton to process the garbage, slightly less than the State average due to the subsidization of costs by SCRRRA. Unique to Montville is the offering of curbside recycling. The costs of the Transfer Station Expenses are currently being paid for by the General Fund (69%), through the Transfer Station fee (19%), and Bulky and other fees (12%). The costs that are paid for through the General Fund would be shifted to those who utilize the Transfer Station. The Town currently produces approximately 700 lbs. per capita in comparison to the town of Stonington, which has implemented the Program and generates 389 lbs. of trash per capita. Similar communities throughout New England have witnessed similar decreases due to behavioral changes. The average household utilizes 0.9 bags per week. The less waste a community produces, the more the tipping fees are reduced. Should the Town opt to adopt the Program, those who purchase a sticker would receive 50 free 13-gallon bags and additional 30-gallon bags may be purchased for \$2.00 and/or 13-gallon bags for \$1.25 at various locations. By implementing the Program, the Town's revenue would increase through the reduction of trash being generated and the revenue received through the sale of the bags would offset the costs of the Transfer Station. The Program reduces their overall costs, their environmental impact through the production of less greenhouse gas and energy, their reliance on the incineration of trash and the Town's exposure to price hikes, and would result in a more equitable system. When surveyed, 79% of the respondents in the 556 communities with an average of 425 lbs. per capita trash disposal rate who take part in the Program favor the Program, 68% feel it is more fair and 89% feel it is more effective.

SCRRRA Executive Director Aldrige stated that SCRRRA was formed in the late 1980's to serve the 12 towns located in Southeastern CT to fund the construction of a waste energy plant in Preston. The bonds for the plant have since been paid off and Covanta Energy now owns the plant. Over their 25 years they were directly involved with the Plant through the bonds, they were able to invest the funds that were earned by selling the electricity that was produced into reserve accounts that are utilized for most of the activities they offer to the communities, e.g. subsidization of 40% of the tipping fees; collection of such items as tires, fluorescent bulbs, propane tanks, Freon, electronics; hazardous waste recycling programs, and; utilization of wood grinders. Currently, SCRRRA is under contract to subsidize costs for ten years. Should the Town opt to adopt the Program, the subsidization of costs could extend to as many as 20 years.

5. Remarks from the Public with a three-minute limit

Ann Marie Sosin, 38 Glendale Road, questioned the difference between the trash bags being sold by the Town and those sold in retail stores.

Response: Only those who frequent the Transfer Station to dispose of their household garbage would utilize the bags, which would be thicker and more durable and easily recognizable by the employees.

Jeremey Bills, 14 Hale Haven Court, commented on the Massachusetts towns that were used to exemplify the success of the Program that are not of the same income level as Montville. The primary issue appears to be the ongoing abuse of the Transfer Station's services and suggested the possibility of working with private collection companies and the trailer parks, etc. to find an equitable solution. He has two children and frequents the Transfer Station with three to four bags/week.

Response: WasteZero Vice President and CT DEEP Consultant Brown stated that, in her experience, all the residents of those towns that have adopted the Program have considerably reduced their waste, regardless of their income level. For example, Worcester, the second largest community in New England with a very diverse demographic and a town with one of the

longest running Programs in New England, throws away 325 lbs. of trash per capita or an average of 0.8 bags/week.

Florence Turner, 204 Route 163, a 16-year employee of the Transfer Station, reflected on the widespread abuse she has witnessed at the Transfer Station. This Program would alleviate the unfairness and abuse and result in a more equitable solution as well as encourage people to recycle and/or donate items. The amount of waste produced can be decreased dramatically through the reuse and recycling of everything from bottles, cans, and paper to textiles, including those articles of clothing or shoes that are tattered or torn or the one shoe. She encouraged the residents to embrace the change and give the Program an opportunity to succeed. She also proposed the option of purchasing a trash compacter, which would allow people to fit more items into one bag.

Mark Bishop, 130 Derry Hill Road, inquired as to how to improve upon the disposal of diapers as his grandson fills two 13-gallon bags per week with diapers alone.

Response: Though diapers do need to be disposed of as household garbage, one positive note is that his grandson will only be in diapers for a limited amount of time. WasteZero conducted a study that showed that the average generation of garbage for diapers was less than one 13-gallon bag for two children.

Mr. Bishop also stated that he fills his recycling bin within the first four days and inquired as to whether the Town would provide additional bins or if there would be additional fees.

Response: The possibility of providing additional bins has not been discussed, but residents may visit the Transfer Station to deposit their recycling free of charge. There is no additional fee for recycling.

Councilor Joseph Jaskiewicz, 89 Park Avenue, questioned whether there is no longer a minimum tonnage requirement and towns are no longer obligated to produce a certain amount of waste.

Response: It was confirmed that there is no longer a minimum tonnage requirement.

Frank Majewski, 103 Gallivan Lane, questioned the revenue produced through recyclables.

Response: The Town's contract with Willimantic Waste is such that for every ton of recyclables, the town receives a rebate based on its commodity value. In addition, the Transfer Station dismantles various items for recyclables, including copper and aluminum, which also generates additional revenue.

Mr. Majewski commented that, in speaking with those he knew in Tiverton, Rhode Island who have instituted the Program, he has learned that low-income wage earners are able to receive an unlimited amount of bags free of charge.

Response: In some communities, a stipend is offered, and, generally, that is not offered.

Councilor Rogulski, who has a family of six, stated that he takes extra steps to minimize the amount of space items take in either his recycling bin or household garbage. He works with a number of Stonington residents who have related the difficulty in adjusting to the Program, but, following the initial transitional period, were able to change their habits. He added that should the tipping fees rise from \$70.00 to \$100.00, the additional costs would be transferred to the residents through their taxes. By adopting the Program, residents would be able to control their costs based upon the amount of trash they generate.

Jeremy Bills, 14 Hale Haven Court, questioned the benefit to Montville by adopting the Program.

Response: There would be a cost savings as the amount of trash that is generated would decrease the cost of the tipping (disposal) fees, which are paid for by the residents. The tipping fees in the region have been the lowest in the State over the past 15 years due to the subsidies it

is receiving through SCRRRA. By adopting the Program, the residents would produce less trash, thereby extending the life of the receipt of the subsidy.

Mr. Bills questioned whether the tipping fees would be adjusted for those who are involved with the Program.

Response: Currently, the tipping fees are not adjusted for those who are involved with the Program and any changes to the contract is decided annually by its Board of Directors, which includes members from each of the 12 communities. While he understands his concern, Chairman McNally stated that the Town is already receiving a reduced tipping fee due to the subsidy and, by adopting the Program, the Town would see a reduction in their Transfer Station costs which would, in turn, be passed on to the residents.

A member of the community questioned how the Program would work during spring cleaning periods, home renovation projects, or other similar occasions where a large amount of garbage would be generated.

Response: Chairman McNally stated that there would be no change and the punch card would still be in effect for bulky items. The Program concerns only household trash.

A member of the community questioned the possible increase in dumpster rental costs.

Response: Though unknown, Councilors McNally and Rogulski felt that dumpster rental costs would remain the same should the Program be instituted. There is no intention to raise the cost of the Transfer Station sticker fees.

Heather Wierzbicki, 75 Lynch Hill Road, questioned whether residents would be able to receive a choice in the size of the bag they receive.

Response: Based upon a brief conversation this morning, it is likely that a choice in the size of the bags would be offered.

Peggy Kelley, 39 Connecticut Blvd., questioned the cost of changing the curbside recycling to a weekly rather than bi-weekly pick-up.

Response: In his recollection, Councilor Jaskiewicz felt that the cost savings between a bi-weekly and weekly pick-up was significant, adding that there are other cost ramifications that could occur as the result of the Program. CT DEEP Supervisor Nelson proposed the possibility of providing an additional recycling bin, by request. Councilor Rogulski also proposed the possibility of going to the Transfer Station to deposit their recycling with proof of residency, free of charge.

Florence Turner, 204 Route 163, stated that those who are filling their recycling bins are not the problem; the problem lies with those who do not recycle. She also informed the public of an Ordinance regarding the \$10.00 per item fine per non-recycling item in their garbage that has never been enforced. In addition, torn and tattered or stained clothing can also be placed in the clothing bins for recycling/reuse, which does not cost the consumers. She added that the employees at the Transfer Station cut and separate the metals, selling them for scrap for the best price of the day. The air conditioners are dismantled, free of charge, by the prisoners and radiators and motors are also handled accordingly. All of the revenue generated from these items is deposited into the Town's General Fund.

A member of the public inquired about the total amount of funds that is generated from the recycling of scrap metals.

Response: Councilor Rogulski stated that he would inquire with the Finance Director the amount of funds generated from the recycling of scrap metals.

A member of the public inquired about when the Program would be adopted.

Response: No date has been set as to if/when the Town would adopt the Program.

A member of the public expressed his concerns regarding the possible increase of dumping of trash on the road

Response: WasteZero Vice President and CT DEEP Consultant Brown stated that, based upon their studies, communities do not see an increase in illegal dumping as the result of the Program. Through their research, they have found that those who litter do so with or without the Program in place.

A member of the public informed the public that, in accordance to CT State Law, those caught illegally dumping their trash could have their vehicles seized.

A member of the public proposed the possibility of allowing households to purchase more than one pass per year for those who might require additional bags and inquired about the subsidized tipping fee.

Response: SCRRA Executive Director Aldrige stated that the rates are determined by SCRRA and Covanta Energy, the Waste Management Facility. The rates for the haulers should remain the same and, while commercial fees might rise, residential fees would not.

A member of the public questioned the handling of those who piggyback their garbage.

Response: Councilor Rogulski stated that their main concern is with those who are grossly abusing the current system and it is hoped that the proposed Program would help alleviate these issues.

A member of the public questioned the cost of the bag(s).

Response: Chairman McNally stated that the pricing was determined by their expenses and revenue. There are no plans to increase the cost of the bags unless the current fees are raised.

A member of the public questioned the possibility of purchasing the bags in bulk for a discounted rate.

Response: The Town is not seeking this as way to earn any revenue and offering the bags at a discounted rate would be counterproductive to their overall goal of encouraging the generation of less waste and increased recycling. Chairman McNally stated that they have investigated a variety of options over the past several months and have found this to be the most equitable and cost effective manner. While agreeing that the Program might cause some inconvenience and would take some effort, Councilor Rogulski added that adopting the Program would be beneficial for not only the Town of Montville, but for the future of the world by decreasing our carbon footprint.

Discussion ensued regarding items that can and cannot be recycled. WasteZero Vice President and CT DEEP Consultant Brown stated that, once the Program is implemented, information regarding recyclable items, with links to CT DEEP's "What's In? What's Out?" Campaign, SCRRA website, and Transfer Station offerings, will be available. In addition, the RecycleCT.com provides recycling information; clothing and shoe bins are located throughout the community for donation, recycling, and reuse, and an educational program is offered by SCRRA as well as a "What Goes Where?" Program. An education presentation can also be scheduled for the residents.

6. Remarks from the Councilors and the Mayor – *none*

7. Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Rogulski to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 p.m. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by: Agnes Miyuki, Recording Secretary for the Town of Montville

**AN AUDIO RECORD OF THE MEETING CAN BE FOUND ON THE TOWN'S WEBSITE
LOCATED UNDER RESOURCES – FORM REPOSITORY – MEETING RECORDINGS**