

Accepted Meeting Minutes – Recycling and Solid Waste Committee (RSWC) – April 9, 2019

Attendees: Meryl Ann Mandell (Chair), Gary Bernhard (Recycling Coordinator), Ron Essig, Liz Lacy, Steve Rice, Peg Ross, Susan Quigley, Marla Killough (Guest)

Absent: Gail Fleischaker

- 1) Meryl called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm and introduced guest Marla Killough
- 2) Minutes of April 18, 2018 meeting were approved
- 3) Trash Bag Distribution Schedule: Gary shared the latest schedule for final review. Sue Quigley is a potential backup if someone cannot reschedule their time slot. Gary will email the final version to RSWC members. Gary will post a reminder on NextDoor Shutesbury for residents to bring a tote bag to bring trash bags home since plastic grocery bags are no longer readily available. Gary plans to check the money box weekly.
- 4) Leverett Transfer Station Agreement: This is working well and is financially ahead of schedule. Gary will arrange for stickers for the year starting July 1, 2019 to sell during trash bag distribution. Gary reminded the group of the policy that the price of FY19 stickers will drop to \$10 from Annual Town Meeting through June 30, 2019.
- 5) Bulky Waste Day: This is scheduled for June 1, 2019. Gary put a call for volunteers in the next town newsletter. He will make arrangements with various haulers that day. No major changes are expected. Motion approved that minor changes to cost of items are approved in advance. Gary mentioned that there is a continuing problem with hazardous item ineligibility and packaging left in the copier room. Better signage there was recommended.
- 6) Alternative Recycling Performance and Regional Contracts: USA Recycle bought out Alternative Recycling. There appears to have been a seamless change with continuing good service. There are two more years in this contract.
- 7) Grant Status: Gary reported that the town is getting a \$500 small-scale non-competitive grant from Mass DEP. Motion approved to use this to buy as many compost bins as funds allow. The town is one point shy of eligibility for larger grants. There is potential for larger grants, however, for the elementary school, possibly for reinstating the food waste compost program. Gary will try to schedule a meeting with the principal. Liz is interested in helping with this.
- 8) Committee Changes: Karen Czerwonka has resigned. Marla Killough agreed to serve and her name will be brought forward for Selectboard approval. Meryl noted that she and Gary have been RSWC members since its inception 30 years ago.
- 9) Other: Gary noted that the town's recycling rate has been stagnant in recent years at 36-37 percent of total hauled weight. He suggested some kind of event, perhaps at Celebrate Shutesbury. An item with considerable support was a test of what items are recyclable that day with prizes. Gary stated that RSWC funds could be used for appropriate prizes. There was also interest for the Recycling IQ Kit. This overall topic will be featured at a late June RSWC meeting to be scheduled later. Meryl will start drafting a recycling test and a list of other potential actions prior to that meeting.

10) Future of Recycling: Gary highlighted major points from the Mass DEP materials he shared with the RSWC prior to the meeting. China is no longer buying most recyclables, so the cost of handling these is increasing. Instead of the town receiving money for recyclables at present, it may be charged for these in the future. More will be known when the western Massachusetts Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) receives bids on May 1 from recycling vendors. Our current contract with the MRF runs through 2020 and we have until December 31, 2019 to decide whether to continue with them. Meryl agreed to update the Finance Committee after the RSWC meeting adjourned (FinCom currently meeting upstairs in Town Hall) about the potential future cost to the town for disposal of recyclables. She said she would let them know that rather than the town receiving money for recyclables from the MRF, depending on the outcome of the May 1 MRF contract bid opening, the town may be charged to dispose of recyclables. She offered to also inform the Board of Selectmen.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20pm

Minutes submitted by Ron Essig