

SWAT meeting minutes - March 14, 2024

Present: Julianne deRivera, Norma Chanis, Duane Henry, Ann Ramminger, Jennifer Warren-Dymont (Town Administrator), Tom Degnan (DPW Director)

Absent: Kristina Pedone

Visiting town residents: Paula and Joe Menendez

Chanis calls the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

Chanis motions to approve minutes from SWAT's last meeting February 8, 2024. Henry seconds. Vote is unanimous to accept minutes.

Chanis wonders what the status of Wachusett Farm's debt to the town of approximately \$7,000 was; Warren-Dymont stated that they had paid in full. It remains unclear as to whether they will be allowed to resume selling PAYT bags.

Next we discussed updates on WB's town wide Clean-up Day. Registration and post clean up activities will be at the town hall. Pedone had sent a memo stating that 14 people have signed up so far, one company team, along with a PTA team from the middle school. She will also leave publicity flyers at the library and the senior center. Announcements planned for the town's Facebook page and WB Neighbor's website. Degnan confirmed the dumpster from Republic will arrive at the DPW's parking lot by April 25th. Bins from Helpsy will be in the town hall all of the week before WB's Clean Up Day, and the day of April 27th from 8am to 3pm. Chanis will also work on the other information to be posted on the town's Facebook page on the town's website regarding textile recycling and general recycling questions.

Lastly, SWAT discussed the upcoming trash contract due on July 1, 2025. Henry has and will review the town's contract with Republic from 2020. Both Warren-Dymont and Degnan have heard from representatives from Republic that they will not service towns without toters (carts) which allow for automation, use of fewer workers so less liability insurance costs, and with lower water weight of trash. It has yet to be determined whether WB could negotiate the size of the 2 bins needed per household, their cost to the residents, and collection frequency. Warren-Dymont states that WB is exempt from a mandatory RFP. In addition Warren-Dymont requests a clause in the contract specifying having a contract for up to 5 years. Both citizens present endorsed the reliability of Republic's services in the previous decade. It was agreed to invite representatives from Republic to meet with SWAT next month, along with our DEP advisor Irene Congdon. Republic needs a lead time of 18 to 24 months to order the necessary trash trucks. Apparently, it is more lucrative for Republic to service individual houses than a town; in Boylston there are 7 different haulers used for the town. Chanis wonders if there could be a 2 town solution with Boylston (greater bargaining power). Because larger toters encourage more trash, Warren-Dymont is hopeful to continue the PAYT bag program as well. This combination has been used in other towns as a camera in the truck monitors the bag color as it gets dumped; any incorrect color is tagged and a fine mailed to the offending house.

Warren-Dyment states that WB needs to pass an override at the next town meeting otherwise, trash may be taken from the town's budget or other programs could be closed like the library or senior center. WB has been running a deficit for years. Another option would be to run the trash program like an enterprise, as is done with the sewer and water departments.

Next meeting will be on April 11, 2024 at 12:00 pm.

Henry moves to adjourn the meeting; Ramminger seconds.

Meeting adjourned at 6:02 pm

Submitted by
Julianne de Rivera, SWAT Clerk