

SWAT meeting minutes - November 15, 2023

Present: Julianne deRivera, Norma Chanis, Duane Henry, Ann Ramminger, Jennifer Warren-Dymment (Town Administrator)

Absent: Kristina Pedone

Chanis calls the meeting to order at 12:01 pm.

Ramminger motions to approve minutes from SWAT's last meeting October 6, 2023. Henry seconds. Vote is unanimous to accept minutes.

Chanis motions to approve SWAT's Annual Report for FY '23 as written subject to adding the date of the Select Board's meeting with Republic (December 1, 2021). Ramminger seconds. Vote passed unanimously.

De Rivera clarifies SWAT's spreadsheet noting that the bag revenue is an estimate based on previous years rather than the actual number of PAYT bags sold in WB for FY'23. Chanis will try to obtain the number of PAYT bags sold from Waste Zero monthly reports. Henry motions to approve spreadsheet subject to bag number clarification. Chanis seconds.

Chanis notes that she is still waiting for a call from Casella concerning possible tour dates available to any SWAT members to attend.

SWAT's presentation on textile diversion from the trash stream was given at the Beaman Library November 4th by de Rivera and Ramminger. Ramminger showed the powerpoint presentation used. Warren-Dymment agreed to put it on WB's Facebook page and the town website.

Next we discussed holding 3 textile drives a year coinciding with the town's Fall-fest, Earth Day Clean-up, and a post-holiday time during January. Chanis will contact Helpsy for information on how to access their textile collection services for these drives. Chanis also mentioned avoiding any conflict in timing with the textile drives already held at the elementary and middle-high schools in town. Ramminger wondered if it would be possible to hold a monthly textile drive alongside the monthly Boy Scouts bottle and can drive. Ramminger motions to approve having 3 textile drives a year. Henry seconds.

Next up was a discussion on the bag fee for PAYT bags. Warren-Dymment explained that the 1991 Prop 2½ override for the cost of trash applied that money to reduce trash costs for that year only. The money generated in subsequent years goes into the general fund and is not necessarily flagged for trash disposal.

De Rivera explained that Irene Congdon (from Mass DEP), recommended that the real estate taxes cover the collection costs while the PAYT bags should cover the disposal cost.

Ramminger presented the proposal that she and de Rivera worked on. Because there is a clear inverse correlation between PAYT bag fees and the amount of trash generated, and because WB has the lowest fee for their PAYT bags of any of the 300 PAYT communities in MA, we recommend an increase in the bag fee as soon as possible. Data reviewed included the price of surrounding towns' bag fees of anywhere from \$1 to \$2.50 for the 15-gallon bags and \$1.75 to \$4 for the 33-gallon bags. Calculations were generated for increased revenue for 50%, 75%, and 100% rates. It was agreed that a 75% increase would be a middle of the road compromise. Any further bag fee increase would be re-evaluated in 3 years time. Henry motions to approve. Warrant-Dymont seconds. Ramminger and de Rivera will plan on presenting to the SelectBoard this December 6th.

Chanis and Ramminger both noted that by diverting textiles and other items from the trash, residents would need fewer PAYT bags. Chanis noted that the WWRRC gets over 600 tons of stuff a year. Chanis noted that our contract Waste Zero ends in June '24; at that time WB may find a less expensive supplier. Until then however, de Rivera wondered whether more recycling information could be added to the yellow paper insert found in the PAYT bag rolls; Chanis will find out how to do this (eg., adding a link to WWRRC, adding the dates of the town's textile drives).

Chanis proposes changing our meeting times to after the work day. All agree to meet next on December 7, 2023 at 5:00 PM.

Chanis moves to adjourn the meeting; Ramminger seconds. Meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm

Submitted by
Julianne de Rivera, SWAT Clerk