

Meeting to discuss regional solutions for waste management and recycling

January 6, 2020

Cook Memorial Library, Tamworth NH

Meeting called to order: 10:00 am

Attendees:

Adam Tasker (Wolfeboro Public Works Operations Manager)
Barb Bloomberg (Tamworth Recycling Project – TRP member)
Beth McCarthy (TRP member)
Bonnie Bethune (Northeast Resource Recovery Association – NRRRA)
Carol Sullivan (Center Harbor Energy Committee)
Clay Gallagher (Tuftonboro Transfer Station Manager)
Dave Downs (Madison Solid Waste Advisory)
David Babson (Carroll County Commissioner)
Deb Maille (TRP member)
Denise Roy-Palmer (Wentworth Economic Development Corp – WEDCO member)
Ellen Farnum (TRP member)
Janina Lamb (Sandwich Planning Board and Sandwich Business Group)
Jean Beadle (Moultonborough Selectboard)
Jon Greenwalt (Sandwich Business Group)
Kelly Goodson (TRP member)
Kit Morgan (TRP member)
Maud Anderson (TRP member)
Maureen Diamond (TRP member)
Michael Cahalane (Effingham Selectboard)
Paige Wilson (Lakes Region Planning Commission - LRPC)
Pat Farley (Economic Development Council, Mt. Washington Valley Economic Council, LRPC)
Paul Degliangeli (Conway Public Works)
Tino Fernandes (Madison Solid Waste Advisory)
William Farnum (Tamworth Selectboard)

Brief overview/introduction:

Paige Wilson from Lakes Region Planning Commission (LRPC) – an organization dedicated to helping local governments work together to plan effectively for a sustainable environment

- Brief overview of the current recycling dilemma – markets for recyclable materials have crashed and communities are struggling to cost-effectively recycle materials
- Outlined the goals for the meeting: to identify and discuss possible strategies for handling recycling in the area

Bonnie Bethune represents Northeast Resource Recovery Association (NRRRA) where she has worked as an operator since 1981. NRRRA works with 400 members/municipalities – they are a broker of recyclables in the larger New England area and can help move material along.

- Spoke on the importance of collaboration between municipalities in order to pool resources, knowledge, and expertise to face the challenges associated with solid waste management

Dave Babson, Carrol County Commissioner, also supported the idea of collaborating regionally.

Group discussion on current problems:

- Recycling requires specialized, expensive equipment. Currently, each town must purchase its own equipment.
- Small communities cannot afford balers or storage facilities. They may not have the space to handle recyclables. This puts them at an economic disadvantage.
- Hard to get mill-ready bales of material
- Transportation of recyclables and solid waste is one of the largest expenses.
- NRRRA has information available (for members) on best market prices for recycled goods, but smaller towns with fewer employees are often challenged to find time to access info.
- Distance to major sites that handle waste is difficult – local waste processing facilities are limited
- Markets for recycled products are disappearing: they need to be developed in the US.
- Overall recycling rates are stuck around 35%.
 - What can we do legislatively, or collaboratively to increase recycling?
- Landfills are reaching capacity in many NH towns. Citizens need to reduce the amount of plastic and other trash they purchase and discard.
- 50% of the waste stream is generated by out of state citizens.
 - Should there be changes in legislation to limit out-of-state dumping? Or place a tax on out-of-state waste? Could we request that the governor restrict out-of-state waste imports?
 - Would this reduce our revenue stream and therefore be counterproductive? (Tipping fees pay for landfills)
- Contracts vary widely from town to town, even when the same company is used. Each individual town should approach renewing contracts with caution. For example, some contracts will renew automatically; this is usually advantageous to the companies hauling waste, not the town.
- Bonnie (NRRRA) mentioned that new challenges are arising in single stream recycling because all the materials are comingled and hard to sell. Single stream contracts are going to get much more complicated.
 - Attendees promoted the idea of towns changing to a dual stream recycling system (able to sell materials through available markets)

Group discussion on ideas and strategies/questions moving forward:

- Communicate with economic councils such as Mount Washington Valley Economic Council (MWVEC) and the Wentworth Economic Development Corporation (WEDCO). Include state legislators in the loop because there may be a need for legislation to expedite regional work.
- Inform other regional planning commissions about our work and gain their support.
- Look at what services NRRRA and LRPC currently has to offer member towns
- Could we develop a local, regional clearinghouse for the region? If we had centralized info specifically dedicated to our smaller Northern towns, it could be helpful. (Note: NRRRA website has information for larger New England region)

- Should the state regionalize solid waste, and own and operate landfills? This would mean that the state would set fees for disposal and tipping cost: it would be the same for each town.
- Could we develop a regional, centralized site in Carroll County so towns may bring material for shipping?
- How can we encourage citizens to use less plastic? ...Legislation? Education? Use our consumer power to reduce the waste stream!
- Have NRRA and LRPC help us regionally negotiate contracts with Waste Management, Casella, and other companies.
 - Towns farther away from the disposal facility may need to pay more because of the hauling cost. But, if we had more towns on the same contract, we may get better deals. (There is currently a wide variance in tipping fees between towns, even when comparing costs issued by the same company).
 - Recently, efforts by LRPC to regionalize electricity have demonstrated the power of towns working together to lower costs.
- Apply for grants through *NH the Beautiful*: utilize the help of NRRA and LRPC to write grants for needed equipment such as balers, skid steers, and storage units.
- Visit the BCEP (Barnstead, Chichester, Epsom, Pittsfield) Regional Solid Waste District
 - Paige (LRPC) is organizing a visit and discussion with Lisa Stevens (BCEP director)
 - Look at other towns structured in a regional model – Candia and Lee have formed an alliance. Keene is also an important site to focus on – they are shipping full containers.
- Explore the possibility of using several local transfer stations as recycling hubs for certain materials. For example, NRRA is working with Meredith to collect clean glass and ship it to Canada. Could a different town take on plastics as a commodity? Aluminum? Paper?
 - Need to investigate restrictions with facility Permit-by-Notification permits with NHDES
- Consider introducing a special revenue fund that can be used ONLY for specific projects such as airports and solid waste facilities per **RSA 31:95**
(<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/III/31/31-95-b.htm>)
- Request that towns share their waste hauling and disposal contracts for transparency of terms, clauses, and language
- Consider asking for legislation that would require the NH DOT to use a higher percentage of Processed Glass Aggregate (PGA) on road projects.
- Continue to follow and support recommendations made in **HB 617 Report**
(<http://gencourt.state.nh.us/statstudcomm/committees/1476/default.html>)
- Utilize the Carroll County land and/or vacant NH DOT buildings as recycling storage facilities
- Continue to explore ways that the Carroll County Commissioners can help us with regional recycling/waste management issue
 - Ask selectboard members to contact their county commissioners/representatives and encourage them to support efforts toward regionalized waste management practices
- Explore capped landfills as sites for solar projects

Next steps/goals determined by the group:

1. **Connect with other regional planning commissions** – notify about efforts, increase support
2. **Develop a standardize waste contract or resource** – “**Contracts 101**”
3. **Collect town contracts and post them online** – to increase transparency about terms, clauses and language
4. Involve NHDES
 - a. The state secures salt and gravel contracts – why can’t we have **tipping contracts**? Have price brackets depending on distance from a certain landfill or processing facility.
5. **Develop legislative requests** for what we want to ask for (i.e. – waste districts, import tax, etc.)
6. **Create a list of present bills** in the Senate related to recycling and solid waste – what’s currently happening?
7. Host a series of **roundtable discussions** (LRPC/NRRA) to get stakeholders together and exchange ideas and data (transfer station staff, selectboard members, EDC’s, legislators, citizens)
 - a. NRRA conference (May 2020) – Bonnie is considering adding a workshop about writing and negotiating contracts
8. Collect and share info for **future planning and improvements** for support to buy compacters, balers.
 - a. Research the costs and savings (economics) to bring as evidence
 - b. Vertical baler is \$15,000 + electricity, installation, infrastructure, etc. – what are the long-term savings?
9. **Research grant/funding opportunities:**
 - a. Some economic development grants can provide up to 50% of funding
 - i. Northern Border Regional Commission (<http://www.nbrc.gov/>)
 - ii. U.S Department of Agriculture
 - iii. Others?

Potential regional options:

1. Start new and develop a centralized location for communities to bring their material for further transporting - use *NH the Beautiful* funding for equipment to bale/package material
2. Utilize vacant NH DOT buildings for consolidating materials
 - a. Is this feasible? Who do we contact to propose this idea?
3. Work with NHDES and facility permit-by-notifications to have towns manage select materials
4. Encourage communities to write their own contracts and/or develop joint-disposal contracts

Meeting adjourned: 12:15 pm