

Draft Minutes, Norwich Solid Waste Committee, monthly meeting 4/8/2021

Committee met via town Zoom site per published agenda, convening at 7 pm.

Jack Cushman, chair, along with members Andrew Scherer and Alex Thorngren. Claudette Brochu attended as Select Board liaison. Public members Neil Fulton of Upper Valley Solid Waste Management District and Carolyn Frye attended.

Meeting called to order with quorum of three; any decisions by unanimous consensus.

Minutes of two previous meetings approved unanimously, after noting that the minutes of the first (organizational) meeting on March 11 were missing the name of the member who seconded a motion to approve the agenda for the meeting. That motion, according to Cushman's contemporaneous notes, was made by Cushman and seconded by Thorngren. With this understanding, a motion to approve minutes, made by Thorngren and seconded by Scherer, for March 11 and for the special meeting on March 18, was approved unanimously.

Cushman noted an email from town manager Herb Durfee that the extension of the service agreement with the Casella contractor was in the final stages of preparation. [Since this committee meeting was held Durfee has informed the Select Board that the extension is completed.] Cushman said this would be reviewed at the May monthly meeting.

The committee reviewed the need to add members, including a youth member, as previously discussed. We agreed to continue efforts to contact Hanover High School environmental club mentor and possibly other student groups, to send a note from Cushman to the town listserve reminding people of these openings, and to spread the word informally of our interest.

The committee reviewed again the Select Board's charge in order to move toward setting priorities for the coming months. We discussed, with input from Fulton, the characteristics of local and regional solid waste plans, discussed their elements and where they are accessible to the committee, and talked in general terms about priority setting.

The committee intends to focus on assembling the numbers for waste volume, costs, and revenues in a coherent accounting for members and the public, and had a general discussion of the extent to which costs are covered by fees, how this can be measured and tracked, and the role of fees, for example to encourage recycling and to cover costs, and how these may be balanced against each other.

Scherer remarked that "solid numbers may be a good place to start" and Thorngren agreed that we should "figure out what we need to count," both comments showing the preliminary nature of the conversations; the committee seeks public input and intends a period of outreach and consultation.

Fulton advised the committee that an upcoming item of business on the near horizon involves certification by the state of Vermont's Department of ANR (solid waste division) of town operations, part of a normal regional review, and that formal review would commence shortly with the expected notification of the town manager. The committee thanked Fulton for the heads up and will monitor developments.

Frye made a suggestion that the committee look into the possibility of special collection days where particular products could be handed in as a way to reduce some of the confusion around best practices for handling items like batteries, paints, hazardous materials and the like -- as well as textiles and, always in popular demand, shredding services. The committee will look into this, and continues to seek additional public input.

Motion to adjourn (Thorngren, second Scherer) unanimously approved at 8:05 pm.

In submitting these draft minutes, Cushman notes that because of his inadvertent oversight they were not made available to the public within the required five business days of our meeting. The committee will take note of this at our next monthly meeting and will take steps to make sure that its notices and paperwork are handled promptly.

Respectfully submitted,

John Cushman
Chair