

A special meeting of the Board of Aldermen was held Tuesday, March 12, 2019, at 6:30 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

President Lori Wilshire presided; City Clerk Patricia Piecuch recorded.

Prayer was offered by City Clerk Patricia Piecuch; Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr. led in the Pledge to the Flag.

The roll call was taken with 12 members of the Board of Aldermen present; Alderman Gidge and Alderwoman Kelly were recorded absent.

His Honor, Mayor James W. Donchess and Corporation Counsel Steven A. Bolton were also in attendance.

COMMUNICATIONS

From: Lori Wilshire, President, Board of Aldermen

Re: Special Board of Aldermen Meeting

There being no objection, President Wilshire accepted the communication and placed it on file.

President Wilshire

Alderman Gidge and Alderman Kelly will not be here this evening. Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja should be here momentarily. So tonight we have with us Lisa Fauteux, Director of Public Works to give us a presentation on the recycling program. Lisa would you care to join us. Bring whomever you have. Sally you can sit in this last desk over here. For the record Alderman Laws has joined us.

RECYCLING PRESENTATION

Lisa Fauteux, Director of Public Works

Good evening my name is Lisa Fauteux; I am the Director of Public Works for those of you who don't know me. Good evening, thank you President Wilshire, members of the Board of Aldermen for adding to your very full agenda this evening. With me tonight is Superintendent Jeff Lafleur, he is the Superintendent of Solid Waste and Recycling Coordinator Sally Hyland who is handing out some do's and don'ts for recycling at the moment. We are here to discuss Resolution R-19-115 which is before you tonight and also update the Board on the current state of single stream recycling.

Thank you to Mayor Donchess and Alderman Jette for sponsoring the resolution. The future of single stream recycling is really in a transitional stage right now. Most recyclables were going to China. China effectively shut down the world market which has really created some limited markets for recyclables at the current time. As a result the cost of single stream recycling has really skyrocketed as we will present later on. In Fiscal year 19 we appropriated about \$400,000.00 for single stream recycling. We anticipate that we will expend that appropriation by the end of March, unfortunately.

The Board of Public Works established a recycling committee to discuss some of the challenges surrounding single stream and other recyclables that we are receiving at the Four Hills Land Fill. That recycling committee consists of all of the members of the Board of Public Works, all of the Commissioners, as well as the Mayor and Alderman Jette, myself, Jeff Lafleur and Sally Hyland. I think we have had 3 or 4 meetings. The Recycling Committee and a quorum of the Board of Public Works voted not unanimously, but they did vote to request a supplemental appropriation of \$120,000.00 from the Board of Alderman to pay for single stream recycling through the end of this Fiscal Year 19, which would be April, May and June.

And at this point, I would like to turn it over to Jeff and Sally to provide a presentation on the current state of recycling here in Nashua.

Jeff Lafleur, Superintendent Solid Waste

Thank you very much for having us here. This will be a really brief presentation for you guys just to get you up to speed on how the City works at the Solid Waste Department. So a brief history, 1970's for the first time tires were separated from the trash. So we started recycling those. In 1988 Nashua Recycling Center had opened, we started taking in newspaper, metal cans, OCC and glass. Those were all separated, you can see in the picture up there, the bunkers that were separated, everyone would come in and just separate everything. In 1989 our first recycling coordinator was hired and curbside collection pilot program began with 1,000 homes in two neighborhoods. 2003 automated program begin, recycling bins were given to all the residents that have weekly trash pickup by the City and we collected them every other week. 2008 single stream recycling program begins, single stream meaning that instead of separating everything, everything went into one bin. 2009 we started buying the large recycling bins, they were sold to residents for more capacity, it made it easier for residents to bring their recycling out to the curbside.

As I said single stream makes recycling easier for the residents and participation went up, we gained about 20% to 23% more recycling when we switched over to single stream. It makes it easier for the solid waste department sending out trucks, we only had to send out trucks that collected everything at once and shipping it out made it very easy, just loading tractor trailers with the product.

Where we stand today; solid waste is collecting recycling at 24,000 residents citywide, bi-weekly, every other week, 5,000 tons of recycling is approximately collected annually and shipped out. We've sold over 8,500 bins right now, those green recycling cards to the residents and we are shipping out about 6 loads per week. I am going to turn it over to Sally to speak to a few of these changing market slides.

Sally Hyland, Recycling Coordinator

Ok thank you, I appreciate the opportunity to be here today. I am the first and still first recycling coordinator in the City. So this has been going on for about 30 years in terms of curbside recycling. Back in 2003 when we automated the trash collection, we gave out the additional bin as Jeff said and we went to a dual stream so paper in one bin; containers in another. By 2008 we were ready to automation of recycling because we had available single stream technology which makes it much easier for the vendor to separate material. It is a high tech process with conveyor belts and magnets and all of that sort of stuff. So we are able to send it down to the single stream, they sort it into the different materials and then ship it out to end users. We could not, however, automate the recycling completely because at that time as you may remember the economy tanked. So we just went on and did the single stream, collecting it at curbside, selling the carts to residents who were interested and continued that way and it went well. We were involved with two different vendors at that time.

The United States though at that time started shipping out a lot of material overseas instead of handling it more locally. Paper mills closed around here, it was cheaper to send it to China, the markets were there. So a lot of material went over there, a lot of contamination went along with the recyclable materials and finally China with concern for pollution and its own public health started restricting the recyclables coming in by means of really intense inspection. They had a program called Green Fence that was instituted in 2013. So a lot of companies that sent the recyclables were concerned about the reduced allowable contamination rates that would conceivably cost them a lot of money if a load, if a container load was rejected. So that was the initial phase of their restrictions.

Finally last year they instituted what they call a National Sword Policy which reduced contamination levels allowable rates to one-half per cent, far lower than any US company could meet. So in effect and in fact they banned certain materials. They banned some plastics and mixed paper so that just put everything into disarray

in this country. Companies were scrambling to find places to send their materials, obviously it was a buyer's market so the costs were increasing for companies and that has been passed on to the communities as well.

So that is where we are, we are seeing some improvements in terms of markets and our particular vendor, Casella, is proud to at least be able to ship the materials and get them used. But some of the things are problematic, contamination in and we will go to the challenges page now because this is what we are trying to work on. Challenges being contamination, we are still seeing people put plastic bags in recycling containers. It has never been allowed. Down at the plant, what happens with those bags is that they get caught up in rollers on conveyor belts, they have to stop the operation to extract that, so it is very costly and time consuming. They already have to slow down their rates of processing just so that they catch more stuff and they are not shipping contaminated goods. So that is a problem that we see here at the local level that we are working on.

One of the things that was passed out to you was a flier that our PR Person, Lauren Byers put together, it is very colorful, hopefully it is very clear, hopefully it is not going to have to change too much again, but we are passing those out to everyone. We take the time to talk to people and let them know what they can and can't do, but we still see things like clothing, kids toys in recycling. Things that are not allowed, some things could be brought to the recycling center, but they are certainly are not allowed in single stream. So those are some of our challenges. And what we've been doing in addition to the flier is and talking with people is we've got a cover put over the recycling area and the impact of that is to reduce the amount of moisture in the material which of course makes it difficult to use and it also makes it less marketable for the vendor. So that has helped tremendously, even in the short period of time that we've done that, they've taken some measures and compared to last year, we have seen reduction in the weights just because there is less moisture, especially in the winter months and with all the rain we seem to be having these days.

So that is one thing that has had a tremendous impact on our materials. We are continuing to do things that we've been doing for a long time, we work with the kids at the school, and this year's theme for the recycling calendar and I have copies of that if you'd like is Recycle Right to try to get that message out to students and therefore taken home to parents and families. So we are continuing that. We are working with the garden club once again for more than 20 years now, to sell compost bins and that helps to get stuff out of the landfill, certainly food waste. But it also helps because now shredded paper is one of those items that is no longer allowed to be shipped in recycling. It unfortunately falls through screens, becomes trash, they have to pay for that and that increases costs. But shredded paper can be put in with backyard composting bins to help to provide a carbon source.

So those are some of the things that we are doing, Lauren does a lot of work with Social Media and does a great job in getting the message out there. We do Channel 16 messages and Press Releases and we are just constantly monitoring – the driver's on the road are leaving, we've told them to leave carts or bins if they see plastic bags for instance. And they do that and then residents call us and we are able to engage them at that point in an educational process.

The other things that are being done to help with the markets in our country, there is some reinvigoration going on right now. There are new products coming out. This is one product, we have a sample of its use at the landfill, it uses the lowest grade plastic and there is a company called, I think it's Echo Global, and they are trying to get a plant built in Middlebury, Vermont and they will take all the low grade plastics; plastic bags, things like those kid's toys, and they will be able to make this kind of plastic mat that can be used in ecologically sensitive areas where they need to use heavy machinery for instance or other kinds of products too. We still have things going on just to, it's not all doom and gloom. Foss Manufacturing here in NH over in Hampton uses about 12 million single use water bottles a week in the manufacturing of non-woven fabrics for use in carpeting, in fabric on sneakers and so forth. We have companies in NH that take that same kind of plastic and make what they call a fabric, it is used to make fleece jackets, and that is a use of 100% recycled material.

So Trex makes something like this for use in decking, and uses different kinds of plastics I'm sure but none-the-less they employ 10,000 people down in Virginia, so there are things going on. There is more going on as a

really ironic thing, a company in China has bought two paper mills in the United States and has vowed to, of course at a lower price I'm sure, but and has vowed to invest money in making them operable and efficient. So things like that are happening. New glass plants are cropping up in both Canada and Cape Cod. So we are working on that kind of thing at an industry level and just locally we are just trying to get to the residents who divert stuff because of course we still have a landfill. And even though we've restricted the number of materials or some types of things that can go in there; the stuff that can be kept out, leaves space there to allow it to last longer.

So those are the things we are doing and hopefully there won't be too many more changes. But residents have been very responsive when we are able to talk to them so that is really encouraging. Thank you.

Mr. Lafleur

So to get to the cost of our recycling this slide really tells a lot of what happened, this is Fiscal Year 18 and 19 respectively so the first quarter in Fiscal year 18 we spent \$3,515.00. The first quarter Fiscal Year 19, \$130,000.00. And then if you just look down through 18 second quarter is \$51,000.00 FY 19 is \$114,000.00; 3rd quarter was \$81; 75 for Fiscal Year 19 and that's only through February we still haven't got our March bills yet. So that's going to show you that we spent \$321,000.00 so far this Fiscal year out of the \$400,000.00 that we had appropriated.

As Sally also mentioned we put a cover over there to help reduce the weights and we are seeing a lot of reduction there but still with the price of recycling being shipped out, it is phenomenal. So on my last slide here there's a couple of options to do. We could continue to recycle until the funding is depleted and then landfill the recycling until June 30th which is not the right thing to do. Or we could appropriate \$120,000.00 to continue to ship recycling through the end of the year. The Board of Public Works this is voted favorably to recommend this option.

Some of the reasons why we should appropriate the money just on our behalf is operationally it would be difficult to stop recycling for 3 months and then start up again. The residents would just have a hard time understanding that. The City should remain committed to the recycling, I mean we've already sold 8,000 carts to residents, they are committed to it, they love doing it, we are shipping out this recycling and we are saving the air space in the landfill. And it would also be difficult for us to relay the message to all these residents that we are temporarily going to landfill this material and then it just sends the wrong message environmentally.

So with that, that's the end of our presentation here. We would be happy to take any questions.

President Wilshire

Thank you very much. Questions.

Alderman Tencza

Thank you so and I assume from the presentation you haven't made any changes yet, you are recycling as you always have.

Mr. Lafleur

Yes sir.

Alderman Tencza

And I remember from the Budget Hearings last year there was some talk about maybe taking glass out and landfilling the glass but then still recycling the plastic. Is that an option but not a good option?

Mr. Lafleur

It is an option to eliminate the glass, which glass is the heaviest part of recycling on our, bottles weigh a lot. We are just waiting to find out if there would be a recycling option for that to happen if you take it out of the stream and we landfill it, then it is gone. It would be difficult to say – Aw we made a mistake we are going to go back to recycling glass. So when we are ready to pull the trigger on that we want to make sure that it's the right thing to do and the right time to do it. There still may be markets that come out that'll help reduce the cost of recycling by them selling glass.

Alderman Klee

Just kind of on the idea of glass, Portsmouth has already eliminated glass correct? Just as an aside, would you know what the savings of that is? And don't get me wrong, I want to recycle as much of everything as we can but I am going to have another part to that question and that's going to be, do we know that these companies that are basically taking the recycling that they are being used in manufacturing and so on. They are not just going to another landfill so we are not just dumping our landfill to another one, we do know that? Now as far as the glass, how much is the savings on that and I'm not suggesting we go there, but I know that is going to be a question that is going to be asked.

Mr. Lafleur

Right, Sally may have a better number on that, I'm thinking 20% of the weight was glass.

Ms. Fauteux

Probably at least that, yeah.

Mr. Lafleur

Yeah 20% to 25% so a quarter of the weight is glass.

Alderman Klee

So we would cut it down by that but then we are going to have our landfill exponentially is going to be filling and that is going to be a cost in the end. So it is not really a true savings.

Mr. Lafleur

Exactly.

Alderman Klee

And again I am just bringing this up because I know these are going to be questions that are going to come forward. Thank you.

Alderman Dowd

When you had that number 24,000 households, does that include condominium associations?

Ms. Fauteux

No it does not no and it is an approximate number.

Alderman Dowd

Because we have Waste Management and they pick up the recycling and I am going to presume that they bring it to the landfill.

Mr. Lafleur

No they don't sir.

Ms. Fauteux

If it is separated they shouldn't be.

Mr. Lafleur

We don't take commercial, I shouldn't say that, we haven't seen any of those big vendors bring it to our landfill. They take it right to their plants it would be cheaper for them to bring it to their plants directly.

Ms. Fauteux

Waste Management has a plant in Billerica, a recycling plant.

Alderman Dowd

Alright, so are we recognizing any revenue whatsoever in recycling.

Mr. Lafleur

No.

Ms. Fauteux

Not from single stream no we get revenue from scrap metal at this time. That's separate.

Alderman Dowd

At some point we talked about grinding the glass and using it as we do roads as part of the fill, has that ever gone anywhere?

Ms. Fauteux

So we have talked about that yes the problem is we collect single stream and we don't have the ability to single out the glass but we have, we are working right now on a deal with Casella whereby they take our glass and then we take some glass back that has been crushed to put in our setback for our landfill. We need about 200,000 yards or so still to put in the setback for the landfill and that is an approved use so that would reduce the cost of our single stream recycling that would offset the cost by about \$15.00 a ton or so, so that would be helpful, will be helpful to us.

Alderman Dowd

Ok one last question, the \$120,000.00 is that something you are looking for out of the current budget or next year's budget?

Mr. Lafleur

We would be looking for it out of this current budget. Our revenue has for our cover material is far greater than we budgeted, so it would come out of that revenue that we have received.

Alderman Dowd

I guess I don't need the exact answer but I'm not sure we have that much left in contingency this year and if we don't and had to do a supplemental appropriation that's pretty hard with what some of the other divisions and departments are looking for so it is going to be down to a justification one versus the other I guess.

Ms. Fauteux

Well it would come out of the solid waste budget out of revenue that is above and beyond what we budgeted for, so it is a little bit easier, right, because it wouldn't have to come out of contingency.

Alderman O'Brien

I was going to pass but Alderman Dowd was thinking exactly like I am with the glass but he didn't go far enough. Could glass be a commodity for us insomuch I know we believe in encapsulation of the landfill and we do that I would imagine with some product whether it be dirt or some other project. And if it is the cost of having an additional bin for the people to eliminate glass from their recycling and we if we explain to them the particular reason and cost-savings and why we are doing it and then take the glass in addition with this, can we use it into our encapsulation or other ways that we use dirt at the dump and then with the proper dirt cover on top of it so you don't have the glass exposed.

Ms. Fauteux

I wouldn't be in favor of putting it in the landfill because now you are just filling the landfill with glass and it is something that could be used in a setback, so I wouldn't fill up the value of our air space is about \$65 a ton or so, so you wouldn't want to just put just free material in there. We'd be better off to take it from already crushed from Casella and put it in.

Alderman O'Brien

Follow up if I may.

Ms. Fauteux

Put it in the setback.

Alderman O'Brien

In looking at the wine bottle as the example or the coke bottle, but a wine bottle, I like wine, anyways, if you take the wine bottle, I mean that's a volume, that a solid state, but when it does come grounded down it may not be more than even a quarter cup or half a cup, so it loses its volume. So for many other large volume type of items such as your pickle jar and stuff like that, it would come down to miniscule in the volume department.

Mr. Lafleur

Absolutely and we have looked into that, I mean it would be great if we could separate out the glass out of our stream and then re-use it at the landfill but after we separate it out of our stream, we'd have to crush it, we'd

have to screen it to make it approved use inside the land fill. So right now anything, any glass that comes in has to be screened to a one inch screen and our vendor Casella is actually putting in all these screens at their facilities and they are talking millions of dollars just to put in these crushers and screeners. So the offset of cost just isn't there yet, I mean for us.

Alderman O'Brien

I tried.

Mr. Lafleur

Believe me we are trying in every direction that we can at this landfill.

Alderman Jette

In response to Alderman Dowd, I think Director Fauteux answered it, but just to clarify, the resolution calls for \$120,000.00 to be transferred from unanticipated revenue from the Solid Waste Fund into this account, so it is a transfer in the accounts. It wouldn't be, you know, we wouldn't be looking for additional money, they money is already there.

Alderman Dowd

Yes we know that but the general public didn't unless we brought it out. And this sort of off topic a little bit other than it addressed revenues, we have had discussions at times on the closed portions of the landfill, installing a solar farm where we can generate electricity to off-set City electricity costs. Of course, we have to rely on the State to change some of the rules or we can make more money. But have we looked into that at all? Because just south of here in Massachusetts their capped portions of their landfills are covered with solar panels.

Ms. Fauteux

Yes so we have looked at that. That might be something we can do in the future, unfortunately right now we don't have enough closed space to be able to do that because right now if you are familiar with the current landfill, Phase III that we will be constructing in the spring is behind Phase II, Phase IV will be filling in between the other landfills so when we do that we will need, we won't be able to have solar panels anywhere near that. So after that's all filled, then we would have a great area to put some solar panels. So that is an opportunity for the future, just not right now, there's just not enough flat space to be able to do it yet.

Alderman Schmidt

Thank you, so what you are saying is right now you are in the middle of a transition, you are looking at all of the options that are out there for the future and you don't want to do anything that might jeopardize having to take it back because it is very difficult to get everybody in the City to understand what comes out and what goes on, you don't want to do a flip flop.

Mr. Lafleur

Correct.

Alderman Schmidt

Thank you.

President Wilshire

Any other questions? Thank you all very much. We appreciate you coming.

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO ADJOURN
MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Attest: Patricia Piecuch, City Clerk