MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
AUGUST 4, 2021
7:00 P.M.
HYBRID MEETING
Town Hall Meeting Room, 83 Mountain Road, Suffield CT
And
Via Zoom Teleconference

RECEIVED AND FILED
TOWN OF SUFFIELD
AUG 20 2021
SUFFIELD TOWN CLERK

Selectmen present: Melissa M. Mack, Kathleen Harrington, Peter Hill and Tim Reynolds

Selectmen absent: Jerry Mahoney

Present in person or via Zoom teleconference: Deb Cerrato Director of Finance, Frank Antonacci, Chief Operating Officer, April Regan, Outreach Specialist and Eric Frederickson, Director of Operations at USA Hauling and Recycling

First Selectman Mack called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and asked everyone to join her in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

None

Discussion and approval of amended Municipal Solid Waste Hauling and Recycling Agreement with USA Hauling and Recycling

First Selectman Mack invited Frank M. Antonacci, Chief Operating Officer of USA Hauling and Recycling to address the board on the most recent Municipal Solid Waste Hauling and Recycling Agreement and to consider reopening the contract prior to its expiration due to extraordinary increases over the last several years. Mr. Antonacci provided an overview of what they are experiencing as an industry and how it pertains to the municipalities throughout the state; as well as why a renewal and extension of our existing Hauling, Disposal and Recycling Processing Agreement would be beneficial to the town. The following topics were discussed:

Failing MIRA (Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority)

- MIRA is a quasi-state agency that provides disposal by incineration as well as recycling processing for 51 communities in Connecticut
- MIRA's future and the future of other regional disposal options are in question, creating volatility in the regional disposal market due to:
    - Tired, aged facility; maintenance and repair costs rising; no publicly owned ash landfill; retention issues; risk management costs and insurance availability; performance reliability penalties;
    - Capital reinvestment absent since 2008;
    - Energy Revenue at historical lows;
    - Actual net cost of Municipal disposal is approximately $16 per ton higher than the posted tipping fee and these subsidies expire in July of 2022. Forecasts are for a tip fee of $123/ton in FY 2023.

Disposal Crisis

- Review of MIRA Trash Disposal Rates under Suffield Contract ($5.00 less than MIRA rate)
    - Tier 1 Short Term Rate by Year for MSW (Trash) Disposal for FY 2017 through FY 2022
        - FY 2017 $66/ton
        - FY 2022 $107/ton (62% increase from 2017)
- Future Projections presented to MIRA Member Towns in March reflect
        - FY 2023 $123/ton
        - FY 2024 $135/ton

    - FY 2025 $145/ton
- With MIRA'S future in question and the closing of the incineration facility, 51 communities as well as MIRA itself, are now left looking for recycling and disposal options.
- At the same time as MIRA's closure, the entire region is experiencing contraction of disposal space:
    - Chicopee's facility is closed
    - Springfield's incineration facility is in bankruptcy and may no longer be available for volumes
    - Remaining in-state incineration facilities cannot absorb the additional volumes
    - Remaining incineration facilities are all 25+ years old and experience reliability issues

Solution

- The five year extension of agreement with Suffield and USA Hauling & Recycling will limit market risk by nearly 100% during a time of great volatility. This will be achieved by securing disposal space now at fixed prices with manageable and budgetable increases similar to how they have managed collections costs in the past.
- Suffield's exposure will be limited to a very small fraction of the total costs associated with the actual value of the commodities received in the single stream; creating a long-term solution where Suffield secures reliable responsible collection and disposal services at a highly predictable and normalized cost and great savings compared to the greater market.
- The costs associated with these services goes from 100% uncertainly (with MIRA benchmarking) to 96% certainty with new agreement.
- USA Hauling & Recycling has a proven track record of saving Suffield money
- By renewing the contract for collection and disposal Suffield will see immediate savings of $30,000 for FY 2022 with potential for more.
- Over the new contracted term, projected saving for Suffield equals $750,000.

2022 Proposal

Mr. Antonacci provided a thorough overview of the 2022 Proposal with a comparison of Current FY 2022, Revised FY 2022 and Proposed FY 2023 – FY 2027. Discussion ensued and Mr. Antonacci fielded questions from the selectmen.

Selectman Reynolds motioned to approve the amended Municipal Solid Waste Hauling and Recycling Agreement with USA Hauling and Recycling as presented by Frank M. Antonacci. Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of the minutes from February 10, 2021 Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Selectman Harrington motioned to table the minutes from February 10, 2021 Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of the minutes from June 16, 2021 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Selectman Harrington motioned to approve the minutes from June 16, 2021 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of the minutes from July 7, 2021 Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Selectman Harrington motioned to approve of the minutes from July 7, 2021 Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of 53 week Payroll issue relating to salaried employees

First Selectman Mack explained that this issue has proven to be a little more complex than originally anticipated. After running numbers and contacting our auditors, the town was directed to contact Labor Counsel for further guidance and clarity. First Selectman Mack plans to meet next week with Finance Director Deb Cerrato, Town Labor Counsel, Human Resource Director Karin Ziemba, members of the Board of Finance and others to continue working on the issue and

arriving at the appropriate resolution. The goal is to do what is right and what is legal, while ensuring that we are compensating our employees as we have represented that we would. The last time the town faced this scenario was in 2014 prior to First Selectman Mack's being in office so this is a new issue to her. Updates will be provided when available.

Discussion and approval of tax abatement for Felix Barros due to overpayment in the amount of $2,593.16

Selectman Reynolds motioned to approve tax abatement for Felix Barros due to overpayment in the amount of $2,593.16. Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and approval of tax abatement for Robert Tobiasz due to overpayment in the amount of $3,557.52

Selectman Reynolds motioned to approve tax abatement for Robert Tobiasz due to overpayment in the amount of $3,557.52. Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Selectmen Updates

CLESP Compliance

Per Police Chief Brown on July 19th:

"We have once again been CLESP certified by POST for this year thanks to the diligent efforts of Captain Canon. The audit and certification was completed remotely through POWERDMS. As you remember, this was the software we purchased to assist us in accreditation. POST selected the Suffield Police Department because we had the software. It served as a nice scaled example and training for what can be accomplished with this new system."

First Selectman Mack offered kudos to the Suffield Police Department, noting that an investment in technology is always to our benefit.

COVID and Delta variant

Emergency Management Director Spencer and First Selectman Mack were in contact while they were both out of the office on vacations over the last two weeks in order to maintain the most up-to-date information on the Delta variant and its impact on Suffield. They sent out a message regarding the current status in Suffield. First Selectman Mack noted that some municipalities have gone back to requiring masks indoors in municipal buildings, however, those towns have more cases per thousand than Suffield. To avoid being alarmist, Chief Spencer and First Selectman Mack recommend holding off at this point, asking people to use their discretion and be diligent, however, they will be closely monitoring Suffield and our surrounding towns and will act accordingly.

The CDC has recommended all individuals, regardless of vaccination status, resume wearing masks while indoors in any area that is seeing a substantial level of transmission. The CDC recently labeled all of Connecticut's counties as areas of "Substantial Transmission." The State has not put any new mask mandates in place but has urged everyone to use common sense and follow CDC guidance. Any questions let me know.

COVID Cases Data as of 8/3/21:

- Total Cases 1618
    - Increase of 18 cases over the last 2 weeks of July
    - Largest increase in cases since May
    - Based on data we can access and reports from local health district these are all cases in the community and not congregate settings
        - 0 Patients at Suffield House

- 7 Symptomatic Inmates presently housed at MacDougall Medical Unit
- 0 Asymptomatic prisoners at MacDougall-Walker

Vaccination Data as of 7/28/21:

- 62.4% of our estimated town population that are eligible to receive the vaccine have received at least 1 dose
  - 98.6% of 65+ is fully vaccinated
  - 71.36% of 45-64 is fully vaccinated
  - 50.87% of 16-44 is fully vaccinated
  - 45% of 12-16 is fully vaccinated

Donation by Eagle Rivet

First Selectman Mack expressed the Town's sincere appreciation for the donation of the beautiful eagle weathervane perched atop the Town Hall from resident Art Dias's company Eagle Rivet Roof Service Corporation. It's truly the cherry on top of this successful project and we appreciate the support of this local Suffield business!

Public Comment

Kristina Hallett, 1211 Newgate Road – Ms. Hallett wanted to make a point of clarification about the meeting this evening as it had not been advertised as a Hybrid meeting. She also asked if it would be a policy that all board and commission meetings will be available through hybrid.

First Selectman Mack apologized for the oversight on the agenda and expressed that she was glad that people were able to attend remotely. She further explained that the Board of Selectmen recommended that meetings be held in a hybrid format to allow those who felt more comfortable participating remotely to be able to do so. Currently, it is not mandated by the town or by the state. Training has been offered to all board/commission recording secretaries and department heads on the new meeting room technology and most are trained. If there are any commissioners who would like to come in and be trained, we would be more than happy to do so. We are being very flexible with the use of the new Town Hall Meeting Room and trying to accommodate all boards who what to use the space. If there is a dramatic change with the Delta variant we may see a return to Zoom meetings versus hybrid, but as of right now, that is not the case.

Dave Gauthier, 3219 Phelps Road – Mr. Gauthier noted his disappointment at not being aware of the Hybrid status for this evenings meeting. He also addressed concerns with the charge being placed on those residents who do not use curbside pick-up; he would like this practice to stop. One additional concern pertained to USA Hauling and Recycling's handling of used motor oil which Mr. Gauthier claims to have filed complaints with the town siting DEEP violations.

Mr. Gauthier extended his sincere thanks to First Selectman Mack and Facilities Manager Chris Matejek for their prompt action in addressing concerns and fixing issues, such as cracks in the mortar joints, at the Memorial Statue on the North Green as soon as Mr. Gauthier had brought it to their attention. He feels this monument is just as important as the monument in Veterans Memorial Park and encourages the town to give it the proper respect it deserves.

Selectman Hill motioned to adjourn at 8:00 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristen O. Lambert
Recording Secretary