

TOWN OF HAMILTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
NOVEMBER 28, 2011

Board of Selectmen met at Hamilton Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, November 28, 2011 with Jennifer Scuteri, Marc Johnson, David Carey, Jeff Stinson and Jeff Hubbard present.

SMART Trash Program discussion during BOS working session

Town officials revisited discussion on SMART trash program recently voted on by Board of Selectmen. Hamilton's recycling rate has dropped as low as 28%. Other communities have recycling rates as high as 50%, especially in communities such as Boxford and Manchester where there is a full-fledged Pay As You Throw program.

The cost of trash removal in Hamilton is going up (currently \$400,000 with \$127,000 for tipping fee for 1,950 tons of solid waste, paint and electronics annually). SMART program could save Hamilton \$100,000 a year. Composting program would have to become a Town-wide program to be sustainable. Trash removal is one area where Hamilton can try to cut costs to control spending.

Town Manager Michael Lombardo and Selectman Marc Johnson had presented the Board with a SMART program that produces savings, allows Town to continue composting program and prepares Town to comply with Department of Environmental Protection regulations.

Residents have contacted Town officials expressing concern about SMART program's every other week solid waste/trash disposal especially households disposing of diapers.

Board discussed expansion of existing SMART program considering a proposal from resident Matt Nevins to implement Pay As You Throw with exclusive blue bag purchase/usage on alternate week when Hamilton would not pick up free barrel of solid waste from residents. Board only reviewed proposal since a vote would not be taken during working session.

Discussion about \$100,000 savings from SMART program due in part from lower trash hauling cost. These funds could be used to keep expenses down in other

areas of Town budget but SMART program adoption is not designed to fund other programs. Additional blue bag revenue would be used to decrease cost of trash removal and tipping fees and could pay for increase in solid waste pickup costs if Town went to weekly schedule.

Discussion was about trash removal assumptions if Hamilton adopted a full-fledged PAYT. There would be an increase in revenue and savings for a total of \$300,000. This approach would not pay for all trash removal costs because there are collection costs including for recyclables and organics and there is a solid waste component at Town landfill with brush drop-off.

Figures used for assumptions are conservative and Board expects that with a full PAYT, recycling would increase dramatically although organic composting would not. With PAYT, residents pick up marginal costs when they purchase blue bags and Town's budget cost for this item would nearly drop the full amount. Households that recycle a lot would pay less for trash removal.

Johnson reiterated that with PAYT the Town's cost for trash removal would go down by \$300,000 and tax bills per household could be reduced by \$125 a year although yearly cost for blue bags is expected to be \$80.

Discussion about how Town officials are working toward finding savings throughout the Hamilton budget. The trash removal program is one area if the SMART program is implemented that would offset some of the increases that cannot be as easily controlled in other parts of Hamilton's budget (i.e., regional school contribution).

Johnson said Board has to push Town Manager Michael Lombardo to evaluate possible savings at every level to try and keep Town's tax rate stable.

Discussion was on cost of paying for compost bins (\$45,000 to \$75,000) and how long they would last; automating process for \$40,000 savings and every other week pick up savings of \$62,000 for a total proposed SMART program annual savings of \$75,000 to \$150,000 not including cost of recycling bins.

David Carey mentioned that cost/benefit analysis had been done on SMART program and impact on tax rate to substantiate pursuit of new trash program.

Jeff Hubbard thought process of adoption of program should have included a Town Meeting vote since there are many residents unhappy that there hasn't

been conversation as a community about rubbish removal service being modified. He suggested that weekly removal of solid waste, recyclables and organics be done as was adopted in Wenham.

Discussion about lesser benefit Hamilton would realize if it were to adopt the Wenham model, and that the Town officials need to educate public on SMART program. Also that Selectmen need to focus on other issues such as decision about local ECO and proposed regional dispatch center to be built in Middleton that Wenham has opted to join.

Selectmen responded to comments from residents including Duke Seaver, Matt Nevins, Bob Gray, Gretel Clark and Rick Mitchell. Discussion was focused on advantages of weekly recycling and organic pick up, reiteration of interest in full-fledged PAYT every other week, Town's fiduciary responsibility especially relative to trash pickup and that Hamilton had just received a composting grant.

Board agreed that it would be prepared to vote on whether or not to supplement SMART program at its next meeting on December 12.

Jennifer Scuteri entertained a motion to adjourn at 8:56 p.m. Jeff Stinson so moved. Johnson seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by Jane Dooley, Minutes Secretary

ATTEST: _____
Clerk