



Administrative Assistant to the Select Board

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Proposed Waste Disposal Budget 2024/25

The Select Board is opting to place the question of recycling to our town meeting voters next March. Our contracts with DM&J Waste and ecomaine expire in June, and recycling has become astronomically expensive on a per ton basis.

Here's how the cost per ton works out. The actual cost for recycling in FY 2022/23 was \$50,414.17. We recycled 72.08 tons in CY 2022 (I know we're mixing calendar and fiscal years, but it's going to be a close approximation). That works out to \$741.82/ton to recycle that waste. That only included the DM&J and ecomaine bills

Subtracting out the recycling costs, the rest of the solid waste budget is for MSW (Municipal Solid Waste). That was \$120,458.28 for FY 22/23 with the MSW total for CY 2022 was 617.30 tons. That works out to \$195.14/ton for MSW. From a purely economic standpoint, it makes no sense to recycle, and as one of the Select Board members observed, the amount of energy it takes to truck our recycling to Portland likely exceeds the carbon footprint from the waste reduction we get from recycling.

There are some things that could be done to make recycling a little more efficient, but it involves a significant capital cost – namely installing a compactor which would reduce the number of truck trips. This is not built into the budget.

The plan is to have two articles on waste disposal. One would be for recycling only, and one would be for MSW. In the event that the recycling budget is not funded, the Waste Disposal Budget will have to increase a bit to cover the extra tonnage being shipped to PERC (currently landfilled).

That brings up another issue. As you are probably aware, PERC is no longer in operation, and under a bypass agreement, the waste is being landfilled in Old Town. We met with our trash hauling company (Casella), and they operate that landfill. The meeting took place, ironically, the day PERC was auctioned off. The buyer has defaulted on buying PERC, so it's going to auction again. We have no idea what the future is going to be for MSW disposal. The former Fiberright plant that the Municipal Review Committee is hoping to bring back to life is one possibility, though we are no longer a member of the MRC. We could sign up and pay a slightly higher cost to ship everything there.

Here's a look at what's proposed for the waste disposal budget:

Labor – We have a new transfer station operator after Chris Meyer retired this fall. The budget for 23/24 will be adequate to fund the position for 24/25 if the hours work out the same. An hourly wage increase is also built in.

PERC – As mentioned, the MSW that we would send for incineration is now being landfilled because the PERC plant is not operating. Currently we're paying about

\$93/ton to PERC. The estimate is to increase to \$100/ton at 660-tons. We sent less than that to PERC last year and have a slight decrease in tonnage this year too. That's where the \$66,000 estimate comes from. If we increase that to 730 tons (adding back in the recycling that will no longer take place), this should increase to \$73,000.

Transportation – Our contract with Casella expired but was automatically renewed. A \$2,000 increase from the current budget is proposed. We may need more containers, which will increase the cost a bit. I think we can stick with \$55,000.

Maintenance – No change from the current \$1,400 budget is proposed.

Electricity – A \$40/year increase is proposed. That's based on the actual usage at the facility for FY 22/23.

Telephone – The cell phone costs about \$20/month. No change is proposed to this line.

Other – No change is proposed - \$200 for the year.

Hazardous Waste – The town participates in the Acadia Disposal District annual Household Hazardous Waste collection. The costs fluctuate a lot. No change is proposed to the \$1,700. We've not received this year's bill, but I suspect it'll be large as a lot of people got permits.

Demolition Debris – Occasionally someone illegally dumps large items on town property that needs proper disposal. The \$150 budget is unchanged.

DEP Permits – We have an operating license permit fee and an annual report permit fee to pay to the Maine DEP. No change from the \$600 is proposed. I'm not sure why this shows as a \$0 for FY 22/23, perhaps the billing was funky from the state.

Septic Sludge – We have an end user agreement with Haslam Septic as required by state law. No change is proposed to the price.

Recycling – Again, this will be broken out into a separate article. The proposed budget is the same as the current fiscal year, but that might be a daydream, too.

Dump Closing/Monitoring – We've had a significant change in this line as the Maine DEP required installation and monitoring of three PFAS filters in residences near the landfill. The good news is that they are supposed to pay 90% of the cost. Until things stabilize with that, the proposed budget will remain at \$6,500.

Here's an idea of how the articles could be drafted:

1. To see what sum the town will raise & appropriate for recycling. (The Select Board and Budget Committee recommend \$54,000 if the town wishes to continue the recycling program or \$0 if the town wishes to discontinue recycling).

2. To see what sum the town will raise & appropriate for waste disposal (excluding recycling). (The Select Board and Budget Committee recommend \$151,820 if funds are raised for recycling and \$165,820 if \$0 is raised for recycling)

The bottom line is, if recycling is fully funded, the budget would increase \$8,640 or 4.38%. If recycling is ended, the budget would be reduced by \$31,360, or nearly 16%.

Respectfully submitted,

Stu Marckoon, Adm. Asst. to the Select Board