

September 10, 2008

To: The Hopkinton & Webster Boards of Selectman

Hopkinton/Webster Landfill Committee Report on the Recycling Committee  
PAYT Implementation Plan

The Hopkinton/Webster Recycling Committee provided the Landfill Committee with an overview of their PAYT Implementation Plan on July 10th and completed the presentation on August 7th 2008. Each committee member received a draft of the proposed guidelines, including charts representing projected disposal costs through 2012 as well as projected net income and savings under the proposal. This information was thoroughly compared and contrasted with that provided by Asst. Public Works Superintendent Steve Clough.

The Landfill Committee submits this report as requested by the Hopkinton Board of Selectman. We have outlined some of our concerns with the proposed PAYT plan. When reading this report one should be mindful that the time limitation imposed by the BOS necessarily imposed some constraints.

The proposed PAYT program would financially benefit only those with high property tax values. Currently an averaged valued home pays between \$62 and \$70 in property taxes per year for their trash disposal. This same residential home would pay approximately \$240 in bag fees for their trash disposal if they do not recycle and about \$101 a year if they are very good recyclers. Also, this PAYT proposal would raise the trash disposal fees on the 75% of the residents of the town of Hopkinton who currently use private trash haulers to approximately \$160/ton when paying the \$1.50 a bag fee as compared to the current program which pays \$42.55/ton to dispose of the same trash. Unlike all other similar PAYT programs this proposal does not offer these residents the opportunity to avoid these charges by providing free recycling at the locations where the bags are required. The social impact of the proposed PAYT program as a regressive tax should be considered.

Under the proposed PAYT plan all trash can be brought in at a per ton fee, free or in some combination thereof - all at the discretion of the private haulers. This system leaves the question of how much will be paid into the system by that 75% of Hopkinton residents and business owners who employ haulers to the discretion of those same private trash haulers. To ensure fairness these decisions should be controlled by the Towns' governing bodies.

Approximately \$125,000 in revenues would be lost under the current PAYT plan. The only enforcement under this plan is to have the transfer station employees assess penalties and fees on trash haulers by visual observation. The Bureau of Weights & Measures expects licensed weigh masters to provide accurate data using scales measuring tonnage brought in by packer trucks. This proposal does

not provide guidelines as to how the fees and penalties should be assessed and what those penalties should be.

The proposed PAYT plan does not provide details as to how it would be implemented if one town should vote for the plan and the other town does not. There was no discussion as to the financial impact if one town should vote for PAYT and the other does not, there was no plan as to how commercial trash will be defined and assessed. Will housing developments be required to bring residents trash as a commercial enterprise or will residents within the development be required to use PAYT bags?

Since the proposed PAYT plan was developed by the Recycling Committee several factors have changed that would impact their cost and savings projections, some of which were simply extrapolations of historic data which may well not hold up in a rapidly changing industry. The Co-Op is moving forward with building a single stream recycling center and it has not been determined if Hopkinton and Webster will be held liable for costs associated with the new facility and it is difficult to know exactly how the fees will be impacted until the single stream regulations have been ironed out.

Dockham Trucking has recently announced that they would be providing recycling curbside pickup for their current clients for an additional \$2 a week. This convenience should increase recycling among clients who may not currently recycle.

The PAYT proposal mentions subsidizing Human Service Departments in both towns for residents who would qualify for assistance but there was no indication as to how this would be funded or what tax implications would be expected under this program.

A large volume of non-recyclable waste would be created by the use of plastic bags. The proposed PAYT plan does not consider the use of bins for recycling rather than plastic bags.

Conclusion: In view of all of the considerations enumerated above it is the finding of the Hopkinton/Webster Landfill Committee that the proposed PAYT program is neither cost effective nor practical to integrate into the transfer station procedures. The committee will continue to review all trash disposal options in a changing industry. Comparisons will be done for each option to reflect projected costs, revenues, increase in recycling and social impact. Reports will be presented to the Boards of Selectman for their review and discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Irwin, Acting Chairman

Louise Carr, Secretary

Steve Clough, Asst. Public Works Superintendent

Linda Hook, Webster Member

Bob Drown, Webster Member