

Hopkinton-Webster Refuse Disposal Committee Meeting at the Transfer Station

October 11, 2021

Draft Minutes

Present: Rich Houston, Bonnie Christie (Hopkinton); Chris Schadler, Sally Embley, Barbara Corliss (Webster); Jolene Cochrane, Transfer Station Manager

Rich related that the Hopkinton Select Board had reviewed the draft revision of the Refuse Disposal Ordinance, No. 05-06, which the HWRDC had submitted to them in July. The goal of the proposed revision is to separate the fee schedule currently included in the Ordinance to enable it to be updated as needed without having to revise the entire Ordinance. The Select Board had asked clarifying questions including where the authority lies to set fees, and what the plan would be for timing and frequency on updating the fee schedule. Then Town Administrator Neal Cass had added more revisions and sent it back to the Committee to finalize. This was the business before us.

It was discussed that the authority for setting fees apparently lies with the HWRDC, under supervision from the town Selectboards, according to the Hopkinton-Webster Refuse Disposal Agreement, originally adopted in 1975, and amended by vote of both Town Meetings in March 1989. Section 2 of that Agreement states:

“The Refuse disposal Committee shall, subject to the joint supervision of the Selectmen of the towns who are parties to this agreement have the power and duty to plan, develop, manage and operate the refuse disposal facilities (amended 3/1989)”

The Committee then worked on the fee schedule, with Jolene filling in numbers as appropriate. These will be attached to the letter sent to the Select Board as indicated at the end of these minutes.

We discussed how often the fees should be reviewed and revised. Jolene suggested annually, because she gets updated market prices in December and the updated fee schedule can be posted in January.

Jolene asked if we will be charging \$1.00 for dump stickers, which we have not been doing. It was noted that the Ordinance says the Towns “may charge” \$1.00 for stickers, but are not required to do so.

The question of fees for septage came up, and whether this should be added to the fee schedule. Currently, we charge \$50/1000 gallons. A member of the Select Board had

suggested that we might increase our fees to more closely reflect what other towns, such as Concord, charge. Jolene recommended that we keep the fee as is, and that we may need to increase it because DES is reviewing how we manage our septage pits and may require different procedures that would cost us more to implement.

Voted: Bonnie made a motion to keep the septage fee at \$50/1000 gallons. Seconded by Chris. Approved unanimously.

Voted: Bonnie moved that the Committee approve the fee schedule as adjusted in this meeting. Chris suggested amending to the motion to include approval of the Ordinance with separated fee schedule as adjusted in this meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion ensued about the changes to the Ordinance submitted by Neal Cass, Town Administrator, which includes some wordsmithing and language updating (such as replacing the term "Selectmen" with "Select Board"), in addition to separating the fees from the Ordinance.

Voted: Bonnie made a motion to approve changes to the ordinance including the revisions suggested by Town Administrator Neal Cass, with separation of the fee schedule. Sally seconded the motion and it passed with five members voting in the affirmative. Barbara abstained.

Voted: There was more discussion of how and when to update the fees in the future. Chris made a motion to recommend to the Select Boards that the fee schedule be updated annually, and for the Hopkinton-Webster Refuse Disposal Committee to meet to discuss fees annually, no later than the first of March, and to present updates to the Select Boards. Barbara seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Bonnie agreed to write a letter on behalf of the HWRDC to submit these recommendations to the Webster and Hopkinton Select Boards.

The meeting adjourned.