Bethlehem Transfer Station Committee

Bethlehem, NH

Minutes of the Meeting

September 15, 2020

Note: Virtual via “Zoom”

Committee members participating: Nancy Strand (host), Chris Jensen, Andrea Bryant, Julie Seely, Katherine Darges. Barry Zitser did not attend this meeting but sent contributions to be read into the minutes.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30. The minutes of the August 18, 2020 meeting were approved.

Julie Seely reported that there is no news on Casella’s Stage VI Expansion Plan for the North Country Environmental Systems (NCES) landfill in Bethlehem. She said that September 18, 2020 is the deadline for the comment period with Department of Environmental Services (DES). The DES will review comments and other information and make its determination after that. The earliest that DES can issue a decision is October 18. The latest is November 3.

Nancy Strand noted that the Transfer Station Committee (TSC) is in a bit of a “holding pattern” until we know what the timeframe will be with the landfill.

Julie also reported that there was some interesting correspondence between the DES and Casella, saying that Casella reported the remaining capacity for the landfill but gave no substantiation for the claim . DES gave Casella until September 16 to provide the information needed. Separately, there was a question about the survey numbers for the elevation of the landfill currently, and how high it is allowed to be at the end of Stage V.

Julie further reported that the Bethlehem Select Board has requested that the Town attorney look into the legality of Casella using Douglas Lane in Bethlehem as access to a landfill in Dalton. Bethlehem’s agreement with Casella would seem to prohibit that.

The Select Board has approved the signs that the TSC chose for use at the (eventual) transfer station. Chris Jensen filled the form and sent it to New Hampshire the Beautiful (NHB), who is providing the signs at no charge. Chris said that he may be able to pick up the signs on a trip that will take him to Concord in a few days.

From Barry Zitser’s report from the second North Country Council Roundtable: Brian Patnoe stated that the Littleton Transfer Station currently allows 15 other TSs to use its recycling facility. Barry asked whether there is a contract for such use. Mr. Patnoe that there currently isn’t one, but he is developing a template for such a standardized contract. Barry asked for a copy of the template when developed.

Barry has extensive email exchanges with the on the Northeast Recovery Resource Association (NRRA) on the issue of plastics recycling, including costs and procedures. NRRA can arrange for pickup of mingled plastics. It is preferable for a participant to have a baker for this program. Barry was told that Littleton does not participate in this program, because it gets more money from its own plastics program. At this point Barry’s sense is that competitive bidding might produce a more cost-efficient program than the Plastics 1-7 program, but that NRRA should be part of this bidding.

Barry suggested that some members of the TSC should search the files in Town Hall and the Town garage for the “2009 application for a temporary transfer station.” It may be useful in the future. Julie said that she would check at the DES website (not the most user-friendly site) to see if it is there. Jeanne Robillard may have it.

The group discussed ways to increase membership on the TSC. We can post a notice on the bulletin board in the Post Office and put it on the Town Facebook page. We do not need more members immediately and may not need them for a while if the landfill expansion goes through. We should wait until the decision comes from DES.

Because we plan to have educational programs regarding recycling, composting, and other subjects related to the landfill and the transfer station, it could be helpful to have a teacher on the committee. We need to educate folks in the town so that they will be ready to make changes to the way we collect trash and do recycling.

Andrea Bryant talked with Tim at Meadowstone Farm coming to a TSC meeting. He would be happy to come to discuss composting and explain how he can help the town. Andrea says that Tim will help us select containers that will work for him and us, and he will pick up the containers.

The next meeting will be on November 10 or 17, depending upon Tim’s availability.

The meeting was adjourned at 7 PM.