**Bethlehem Transfer Station Committee
February 21, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

Present: Chris Jensen, Katherine Darges, Nancy Strand, Barry Zitser, Julie Seely, and Andrea Bryant. Margaret Gale attended by video.

Meeting started at 6:40 PM in Town Hall.

There was no public input.

**Approval of Just Be Greener Feb 2023 Edition**
Julie and Andrea suggested adding that lithium batteries should not be put into the trash. With this addition, a motion was made to approve the edition, duly seconded, and unanimously adopted.

**Selection of Topic for Next Edition of Just Be Greener**
There was agreement to have the next edition address two subjects: composting and the community facilities grant being pursued from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for a modern transfer station. Andrea suggested that the description of the potential grant not be too technical, so that it can clearly be understood by residents.

**Work Session on the USDA Grant Application**Chris updated the Committee on the Route 116 site visit last Friday by Aries Engineering and the Turner Group. They believe we have enough room on the site for a modern transfer station, but there was some concern expressed over the continued use of the site as a police shooting range.

Barry noted that the Narrative and Supplemental Environmental Report, previously forwarded to the Committee members for today's meeting, were drafts for discussion purposes only. Nancy commented that they were good starts.

There was some discussion on the 2011 Stevenson letter that questioned whether the landscaping of the Route 116 site was properly landscaped. However, the site was ~~actually~~ used without apparent problem for five-and-one-half months subsequent to this letter, which has also been provided to Aries Engineering.

In the discussion on the Narrative, Nancy asked whether it would help, in obtaining the USDA grant, to emphasize the Town's large number of seasonal homeowners. Chris suggested that it wouldn't, and that grant preference is usually given to small rural communities. Nancy then suggested some constructive word changes for the Narrative.

Chris suggested that the Narrative should note that every time residents were requested to approve warrants for increases in the transfer station capital reserve fund, the warrants passed. He also suggested some minor word changes to the possible use of a portion of the Town's contingency fund to cover some of the non-grant financing needs.

In the discussion on the draft Supplemental Environmental Report, it was suggested that it be shared with the Conservation Commission and with Bruce Caplain of the Sustainability Working Group for their input about each of these groups. Barry will forward the draft Report to them for input. Nancy suggested that we delete the reference to the Commission's statute, which was confusing. Where the Report refers to the environmental priorities of the USDA and the Biden Administration, it was suggested that the reference just be to the USDA. Nancy suggested that we spell out greenhouse gases, in the two times it is used, instead of using “GHGs”. Nancy also suggested that the Draft refer to the Community Garden operated by the Bethlehem Elementary School, and add that all of the School's food scraps are collected and go to Meadowstone Farm. She further suggested adding that the food scraps from the free dinners provided by Bethlehem Community Dinner are also taken to Meadowstone Farm. There was general agreement that all of these suggestions should be incorporated in the draft.

Chris suggested that we ask whether Meadowstone Farm might pick up the food scraps that will be brought to the Route 116 station.

Barry noted that the Town will need to complete an intergovernmental review for the USDA application. Ms. Rena Peck, the USDA representative providing the Town with grant application guidance, suggested that if we need help in putting the intergovernmental review together to contact Wendy Gilman at the NH Office of Strategy Initiatives at 603-271-2155. Chris volunteered to make the contact, and did not believe that such a review will be overly difficult.

Barry noted that the USDA representative also recommended submitting a projected operating budget for the transfer station as part of the grant application. The USDA representative suggested that we could either ask our engineering firm to project a budget or take the old budget from the Route 116 station when it operated in 2011-2012, and revise it to reflect the post construction budget needs of a modern transfer station. Barry volunteered to prepare a draft operating budget for a review by the Committee and the engineering firm, based on past operating data from the 2009-2012 period, as well as looking at the operating budgets and revenues of some of our neighboring transfer stations.

Chris stated that he would contact the NH Department of Transportation about what would be involved in renewing the driveway permit of the Route 116 site.

Barry noted that Mary Moritz has become the point person for both Aries and contact with the USDA representative, and that any potential communications to them should go through her.

Barry volunteered to be the representative to the Sustainability Working Group, and the Committee unanimously approved his offer.

**Discussion on Exploring Other Grant/Funding Opportunities**Barry noted that he had previously been in contact with Scott Maslansky, Director of Clean Energy Finance for the Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA), about the possibility of providing some funding, perhaps for the energy needs of the transfer station. He noted that CDFA has assisted New Hampshire communities for more than 35 years. It was established as an instrumentality of the State by the New Hampshire legislature in 1983. In its website, CDFA notes its long and unique history of providing technical assistance and creative financing to support community economic development initiatives throughout the Granite State. The website also notes that CDFA has a NH Nonprofit Response Fund, funded in part by contributions from the business community, that might provide assistance for working capital, equipment purchases and programming expenses. With the Committee's approval, Barry volunteered to renew his contact with CDFA.

Julie volunteered to contact the NH Department of Environmental Services to see if that agency has any funding that might be made available for the transfer station project.

**Minutes**The Committee approved the minutes of the January 14, 2023 meeting, with Andrea and Katherine abstaining since they did not attend the meeting.

**Other Business**The Committee approved the minutes of the January 17, 2023 meeting, with one word change. Katherine abstained since she did not attend that meeting. Barry suggested that once minutes are approved, the person who prepared the minutes should forward them to Nicole to make sure she has all copies for preservation.

The Committee unanimously approved a motion to recommend to the Select Board that Chris Jensen be appointed as a member of the Transfer Committee when his term as a Select Board member expires in mid-March.

Barry noted that the last entry for the appeal of the landfill extension before the Waste Management Council was the Conservation Law Foundation's December 9, 2022 Objection to NCES' Motion for Rehearing. Julie volunteered to see whether she can find any further information on the status of this appeal.

There was a discussion on meeting with the Select Board when Aries develops some cost estimates, likely in mid-March, to discuss the scope of the project and its financing for the USDA application. Chris will see whether the Select Board could facilitate such a discussion at a March 20th meeting.

The Committee voted to set the next meeting date for March 7th, and Chris volunteered to take the minutes of that meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8PM.