**Minutes of the February 6, 2024 Transfer Station Committee Meeting**

The meeting commenced at 6PM at Town Hall. Present were Nancy Strand, Andrea Bryant, Chris Jensen, and Barry Zitser. Paul Karpawich attended via telephone.

There was no public comment

**Update on Grant Applications**. Nancy stated that the Town was advised by Michele Moren-Grey, the Executive Director of the North Country Council, that Bethlehem is not eligible for a Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) grant during 2024. Town eligibility for an NBRC grant appears to be every other year, and the Town will likely be eligible to apply for a transfer station grant in 2025. The best hope for a large grant is through a Congressional earmark.

Barry updated the Committee on a possible grant from The Recycling Partnership (Partnership). While the Partnership is flexible on the amount of grants, grants are usually based on the number of household units, limited to recycling equipment and infrastructure, and with a priority to low-income communities. A reasonable expectation would be $15 to $16 per household unit. Barry represented that he, Paul, and Chris could prepare a draft application for Select Board review within the next month or two, and that the Partnership accepts application throughout the year.

Barry also represented that he would check with the regional office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture as to the current loan interest rates the Department provides for transfer station equipment and infrastructure.

Paul updated the Committee on a possible regional food waste project involving schools in the SAU 35 district, using funding that he has already received. Both Bethlehem Elementary School and Profile School have indicated interest, and he hopes to bring Lafayette School, along with the towns of Lisbon and Landaff, on board. He has already received confirmation from Tim Wennrich that Meadowstone Farm has up to 5 times the capacity to receive food waste over the amount it currently receives. Paul has already received a $57,000 grant for such a program, and, if successful, it could give Bethlehem a good track record for future grants.

There was a discussion on zero waste programs. Paul noted that the Town may want to get in touch with Lexington MA, which is a leader in promoting a circular economy. He also noted the Gilford NH program for recycling Styrofoam, and that Gilford got a $50,000 grant for its equipment. Barry noted that he is in touch with Brian Patnoe on developments with the Northeast Resource Recovery Association’s (NRRA’s) Consumer Recycling Education and Outreach grant. NRRA has received a start date of May from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and is currently looking for a Member Services Manager to help with the grant.  Community outreach will happen in the summer and the data collection, site visits, and starting work on brochures, videos, outreach will begin in October. Residential outreach will begin in April 2025.

Mr. Patnoe also noted that there will be a construction and demolition debris summit held in Lancaster on March 27th and would love to see someone from Bethlehem attend. Barry indicated that he will register for the summit.

There was a discussion on the next edition of Just Be Greener. Barry suggested that there be a plastics alert, in light of the recent finding that there are approximately a quarter of a million of micro-plastics in each liter of bottled water. It was agreed to have the edition provide an update on grants, along with the plastics alert. The grants update should note that the Mascoma application for a $40,000 grant is not contingent on the March 12th adoption of Warrant Article 23, which seeks voter approval for a $40,000 addition to the transfer station capital reserve fund. Given the need to get the edition out prior to the March 12th warrants votes, Chris made a motion, seconded and unanimously approved, to allow the final edition wording and layout to be approved by Nancy, Chris, and Barry.

Nancy suggested that we might want to do a survey of the recipients of the Town’s donated compost bins, tentatively for the spring, and suggested we put this down on the next Committee agenda.

The minutes of the January meeting were approved.

Nancy suggested that we also put down on our next agenda the possibility of a reduced transfer station for Phase I in the event the Town does not receive a large grant.

The next meeting date was tentatively set for March 5th.

The meeting was adjourned at 7 PM.