**Minutes of the April 30, 2024 Meeting of the Transfer Station Committee**

The meeting commenced at 6:01PM at the Town Library. Nancy Strand, Chris Jensen, Paul Karpawich, Julie Seely, and Barry Zitser were present.

There was no public input.

**Seminar Updates.** Chris provided handouts on his two-day seminar on municipal food scrap diversion, which included permitting, siting, operational, and quality requirements. Much of the seminar was devoted to the harm caused by food waste. Approximately 67% of food waste comes from households. A lot of seminar time was also devoted to composting. There is a composting school in Maine. Composting, if done right, is really complicated. Particular attention should be devoted to avoiding plastics. If you are selling compost, there should be periodic testing to ensure that the final product is not harmful. Chris has contacted Paige Wilson, a solid waste reduction and diversion planner in the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, about potential food waste grants, but has not yet heard back. Chris went on to note that large scale composting must confront a number of regulatory issues. Paul is also familiar with many of the experts on the composting issue, and noted there are a number of fine lines that attach to this issue. Julie stated that Meadowstone is no longer taking food waste from the Tri-Town Transfer Station because of its weight and lack of equipment to load it. The consensus expressed by Committee members was that at the beginning of the operation of a new Bethlehem transfer station there should not be on-site composting, unless the Town receives a sizeable grant for such purpose. Paul noted he is probably going to partner with Black Earth Compost in Gloucester, MA for his food waste grant. Black Earth got a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant of two million dollars. Black Earth wants to expand to New Hampshire and Rhode Island. Paul stated that Black Earth might be a good resource to look to if Bethlehem becomes active in composting. Finally, Chris mentioned that as of Feb. 2025 anyone generating more than a ton of food waste, with exceptions, will no longer be able to landfill this waste under a new New Hampshire statute - RSA 149-M:27.

Barry noted that Nicole had previously distributed his notes from the Construction and Demolition (C&D) conference to the Committee members. The conference, sponsored by the Northeast Resource Recovery Association (NRRA) was limited to 35 participants, many of whom were transfer station employees. The conference reinforced his view that the future transfer station should not accept commercial C&D, and that care should be taken to ensure that residential C&D is priced to cover its costs. For example, while the Success landfill accepts C&D, it is priced higher than regular residential solid waste. NRRA is looking into ways to lower transportation costs for those transfer stations that accept C&D,

Paul went to a New Hampshire leadership conference which was attended by representatives of Casella and NRRA. He stated that the conference was mostly information gathering.

Nancy complimented the efforts of the Transfer Station Committee, and noted that Mary Moritz has also complimented Committee members for our efforts and for compliance with rules and regulations, such as communications and the keeping of minutes.

**Grant Updates.** Nancy noted that Chris helped to set up a meeting between Mary and Michelle Moran-Grey, Executive Director of the North Country Council, to explore available money for communities where biomass plants are closing. Bethlehem has such a plant. Grants might be obtainable to ease the economic burden of losing such a plant. She also noted that we haven’t heard back from The Recycling Partnership concerning our grant application. Paul has emailed us some potential grant opportunities, like the greenhouse mitigation fund. Barry noted that there are often deadlines and minimum grants attending these funds that our town cannot meet. Finally, Nancy noted that we can reapply soon for grants from both the Mascoma Bank Foundation and the US Department of Agriculture community facilities program.

**Compost Bin Survey Update.** Nancy reached out to the recipients of the free compost bins provided by the town in order to get some feedback on their usage. She only got six responses, but all who responded generally had positive responses. Nancy was hoping for more responses, to better determine the extent of their usage.

**Other Business.** The draft of the next Just Be Greener edition had been previously sent to Committee members. It addresses the subject of wishcycling (ineligible items placed in single-stream bins in the mistaken hope that they will be recycled). The edition also notes the tremendous amount of textile tonnage that has been diverted from the landfill as a result of the textile bins behind Town Hall. Julie suggested consistency in the phrase of “wish-cycling” versus “wish cycling”. We decided to use one word – “wishcycling”. Paul suggested that our next edition, based on his communications with Carole Bays of Bethlehem Elementary School, address the efforts of our two schools on food waste diversion. Paul will prepare a draft. Barry made a double resolution to approve the wishcycling edition of Just Be Greener and to authorize Paul to prepare a draft, addressing our schools food waste diversion efforts, for the next edition. Chris seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

The draft minutes of the March 26, 2024 Committee meeting, prepared by Chris, were unanimously approved, and Chris stated he would forward them to Nicole..

**Working Session on Alternative Reduced Transfer Station Cost for Phase I .** A large portion of the meeting was devoted to a working session on how to reduce the Phase I costs of the proposed transfer station in the event that the town does not obtain an anchor grant of several hundred thousand dollars. Barry noted that the largest, single cost item for Phase I was the transfer station building, listed at a total cost of $428,773. It was unclear from Aries’ cost estimate how much savings would occur if the building were deferred, because some of the foundation and excavation expenses might still be necessary to incur. Nancy also wanted to inquire as to the cost of having a foundation with a ceiling for partial protection, in lieu of the full building for Phase I. While Barry raised the issue of whether we could have several large sheds (such as those shown off of Route 302 in Littleton) on a temporary basis, the consensus was that these sheds are too small. Julie questioned whether the estimated $40 per square foot for the building is too high, and she suggested that the town might want to price out other available buildings. It was determined that Nancy would ask Mary to inquire of Aries whether we could have a short conference as to how much would be saved if the building were deferred. If a building deferral could achieve temporary savings of $250,000 to $300,000, perhaps additional consideration could be given to this option. Chris thought that it might be beneficial to retain the building for Phase I and wondered whether we could defer the expenditure for the purchase of a compactor truck and use a private contractor on a temporary basis. Julie stated that Dalton currently uses a private contractor, and she will attempt to find out the contractor costs. Barry also suggested that we might want to inquire of the town Highway Department whether it has a forklift and a pallet jack that could be used on a temporary basis in lieu of purchase of new equipment. However, it might be difficult to transport such equipment to and from the Highway Garage. Barry finally noted that any temporary reduction in costs for Phase I would reduce the needed continency fund, and perhaps some of other costs, such as final engineering design and overhead.

The next meeting date was set for May 28th, and the meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.