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BELMONT, MA

DATE: July 24, 2023  
TIME: 9:14 AM

**Belmont Solid Waste and Recycling Committee**  
2023.01.20

<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Committee Members Not Present</b>
Mahesh Jayakumar, chair	
Doug Koplow, vice chair	
Jason Ketola, secretary	
Terri Goldberg	
Julie Wu	
Jay Marcotte (ex officio), Director of Public Works	
Kevin Bouck (ex officio), Recycling Coordinator	

The meeting was called to order at 8:09am. The meeting was held via Zoom.

### **Updates**

- Doug has been trying to get the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to share more data from the Materials Recovery Facilities (MRF). Data from the MRFs could help towns to do recycling planning, including assessing recycling performance, throughput, capacity, and also to audit claims the MRFs are making. Representative State Rogers is advocating for a MRF data transparency bill.
- Doug and Terri will contact Will Brownsberger about the above bill, and they will circulate the bill to the group.
- Terri said there are other bills up for consideration: an expansion of the bottle bill and an extended producer responsibility bill for packaging.

### **Textile collection**

- Jay and Kevin met with Helpsy and CMRK, which is affiliated with Big Brothers Big Sisters. They shared information about the vendors.
- There were a number of service approaches both vendors would provide:
  - Curbside or call-in textile pickup.
  - Assist the town with advertising and publicity to residents, particularly when the new collection program is launched.

- Have a pre-set day for Belmont pickups, which would be done at no charge to the town.
- Provide a monthly summary to the town on the number of pickups and amount of textiles collected.
- Provide public donation bins. Currently we have a Red Cross bin near Pequossette (PQ) park on town property. Planet Aid and some other bins are around town on private land. The town would provide space for the bins and they would do pickups weekly.
- Some CMRK highlights:
  - They will also take luggage, shoes, books, and small appliances.
  - Compensation to the town of \$0.07/pound for usable textiles collected from bins (no payment for curbside collected materials). In contrast, the compensation from Helpsy would be \$0.02/pound for all textiles collected.
- Through its partnerships with charities, CMRK has already been active in Belmont, including ~1500 pickups from households during 2022. It has also worked with three towns neighboring Belmont, diverting 42,660 pounds in 2022.
- Both Helpsy and CMRK would want to be exclusive vendors for the town. They do not have any concern with the bins that are already around town.
- CMRK provided a more polished presentation compared to Helpsy.
- Helpsy and CMRK say they try to reuse what's donated as much as possible. They both claim that they throw away nothing.
- Doug asked about how well the organizations do with diverting textiles for various kinds of uses but was unable to get clear data from either vendor.
- CMRK would pick up items that are left surrounding bins and would dispose of items that are not supposed to be donated. They will also repair bins within a week of receiving notice.
- Jay thought we could put bins near Claflin Street, Waverley Square, Belmont Center, Town Hall, and PQ park parking lots. He thought six bins around town would make sense.
- Doug asked if Kevin and Jay could summarize the findings in a table for both of the organizations to share with the group. Jay said Kevin will share the materials that they have collected.
- Terri asked what the decision making process is for choosing a vendor. Jay said the Select Board does not need to be involved since the town is not paying for this. Jay can sign off on the vendor. Jay asked the committee to make a recommendation.
- Mahesh asked if we should charge for textile pickup. Jay suggested we talk about it in connection with a bulky waste pickup discussion.

### **Bulky waste pickup**

- The Select Board has not been interested in charging a fee for bulky waste pickup. Jay thinks they might change their mind this year.
- The town's cost for taking mattresses is \$45 and the town does not charge residents a fee. Surrounding towns charge for pickup. Watertown charges \$60. Newburyport

charges different amounts based on the size of mattresses picked up. The town pays about \$80k for the ~3,000 bulky items picked up each year. Fewer than 50 people are using the bulky pickup per week.

- Jay believes the town is getting mattresses recycled from people in neighboring towns.
- Doug asked how often people make calls and ultimately don't put anything out. Doug also wonders how many of the bulky pickups are mattresses.
- Waste Management said Salem just implemented a bulky pickup fee.
- Doug is interested in knowing how often specific people are using the service.
- Julie suggested we try to figure out what surrounding towns are and see if we can achieve a middle ground among them.
- Terri suggested looking into a company called UTEC for mattress recycling.
- Terri wondered if illegal dumping has increased in communities that are charging.

### **Composting in the schools**

- Jay said composting started at Chenery Middle School. A rat near the compost bit an employee. A concern was raised to the facilities director about composting being started without prior notice.
- Jay said we should continue to talk about composting and suggested that Julie and Kevin visit each of the schools.

### **Next meeting**

- Jay will organize the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:07am.