

TOWN OF ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS
ADAMS TOWN HALL BUILDING, 1st FLOOR, ADAMS, MA 01220

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES APRIL 24, 2019

On the above date the Board of Selectmen held a Workshop Meeting. The meeting was called to order by *Chairman Duval* at 6:00 p.m. In attendance were *Vice Chairman Nowak*, *Members Blanchard*, *Hoyt* and *Bush*, as well as *Town Administrator Green*.

CALL TO ORDER

Member Blanchard requested moving the Discussion on the Transfer Station up on the order of the agenda due to his veteran status. ***Consensus was reached by Board Members.***

ANNOUNCEMENTS: *Town Administrator Green* announced he met with Ray Gargan, George Le Maître and Eugene Michalenko regarding an initiative to call attention to the town's history with five permanent on-ground banners. The banners would have a QR Code at the bottom to allow an audio narration of relevant information that is on the banner. The banners would be mounted at different venues across town. An example was shown to the Board Members and it was explained that they can be expanded upon as years go forward. The expense for the banners was raised by independent funds, and supported by Pro Adams and the Historical Society. Town contacts for this initiative are Community Development Director Cesan and Building Commissioner Garner.

Discussion on the Transfer Station: *Town Administrator Green* advised that it was time to look at Transfer Station fee structures. An overview was given on the Transfer Station, and it was noted that the Town must think collectively about the permit fees for Fiscal Year 2020. *Senior Planner Towle* advised he collected the data and reported a Break Even Analysis, based on data up until the end of March. He outlined the revenue for stickers and bag tags and gave the number needed to be sold to break even. He advised the Town is not expected to sell any more because of the nearing end of the fiscal year. He noted that so far the Town has made \$25,000. He reviewed a profit and loss statement and advised the Town needs to look at methods of control and raising fees to address a structural deficit. He advised the Board that it is important to weigh the desire to provide service with the costs. It was clarified that the money coming in from metal and tires is not included in the metrics, but basically just stickers and bag tags as there is not substantial funds received on tires. *Treasurer Rice* advised that there is not much income from scrap metal, and the Town is charged to take tires so it is a break-even amount for these items. It was explained that 689 sticker sales, at \$100 each would be needed to cover estimated costs to break even, but the data on the matrix provided was just stickers and bags. *Senior Planner Towle* broke down expenses by vendor and noted that the main expenses are from TAM, but also does not include grant funding which would make a difference. Number discrepancies on the report were explained as being the result of updated versions of the report. It was noted it employees costs were embedded in expenses and included total salaries, insurance, trash removal and rentals. Total revenue numbers were reviewed and it was pointed out that funds go into a revolving fund. *Senior Planner Towle* estimated that removal and engineering costs over the next sixty days would likely be over \$99,000 and include the compactor and removal of solid waste. It was clarified that TAM is recycling. The NBSWMD assessment fee for the Porta Potty is \$24,000. *Member Bush* explained that NBSWMD educates the public, provides grant writing on behalf of the Town, does maintenance and upkeep of the transfer station, paints the sheds, puts out bids for TAM, provides joint purchasing power and provides the Town a reduction of costs. He explained that Adams is one of three towns doing bulky waste removals. *Senior Planner Towle* advised that printing costs would have to be verified, and some of the costs may have been a setup fee, the annual review to be in compliance with the permit, and Tighe & Bond is paid out of this amount. An investigation is being done regarding where landfill receipts are going.

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The reason for overtime was explained and it was noted that the DPW is staffing the Transfer Station currently. It was noted that staffing is covered in Fiscal Year 2019 for staffing to add the Thursdays for nine additional days. A deficit number does not mean a budgetary transfer, as it is a revolving fund and the budget and funds are there to cover it. An inquiry was made about the plan for making the Transfer Station sustainable. It was pointed out that the facility is very clean, and it was recently inspected. The problem of collected brush was detailed. The Town is emptying brush weekly and stockpiling it and is now limited in how it can be disposed of. It was explained that it will cost \$15,000 for a mobile chipper to come in to chip it. The question of whether or not to continue to accept brush or reduce the amount of time to accept brush for 30 days in both spring and fall was posed. It was noted that if the Town charges to drop off brush there would be an enforcement challenge, plus the Attendant does not deal with cash. Options for the Board to review will need to be put together and it was noted that there should be no commercial activity at the transfer station at all. It was recalled that last year when word went out that the Town might not take brush people were very upset. Two years' worth of collected brush costs the \$15,000 amount to chip. A suggestion was made to possibly split the cost with North Adams on a chipper. Composting was noted as taking a long time. Contracting with a pellet company to take the brush was also suggested, and it was proposed that it might work out with North Adams as a community effort. It was pointed out that the product may not be in demand after a while. It was also noted that the Town has to figure out what to do with plastics. Concern was expressed about the Attendant not taking money, and the potential for people without stickers just throwing in their trash. It was noted that this is an enforcement issue, as was bag size. A previous solution was to stage inbound cars and only let a couple cars in at a time while the attendant enforces compliance, but it was reported that on Saturdays cars were backed up to East Road. It was expressed that having a second person would be useful. Strategy on how to do this was discussed and labor costs were considered. It was suggested that a DPW Seasonal Laborer might be able to be used. Enforcement issues were discussed and it was agreed that it is a tough job for one person. It was noted that cans are being saved at the Transfer Station for the Boy Scouts by the NBSWMD. It was agreed the permit is required to use the facility and the bag tag to throw in the trash. The current cost is \$50 for the annual sticker, which is competitive. An inquiry was made about Transfer Station electric costs and it was explained that the compactor is not operating at full level, causing more trips and the bins being less full. It was pointed out that in the past brush was burned at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, Mass DEP advises this can no longer be done. *Treasurer Rice* advised that a lot of people appreciate service and do not find the price bothersome. She explained that occasionally having a police officer there for an hour or two to enforce the use of bag tags and stickers would help, as citizens don't listen to staff members. It was expressed that if staff is assertive people will obey the rules and that license plate numbers should be taken down for those in violation. It was pointed out that it is not clear what the Police role would be, such as sending a ticket in the mail requiring payment. *Treasurer Rice* advised the Board that she personally purchases some tags to cover people who arrive at the Transfer Station and honestly forget their tags. She explained that money cannot be accepted on site because the Attendant is not bonded. It was expressed that when the full-time person is hired they will have to have the right personality and wear proper clothing. *Treasurer Rice* proposed adding a \$10 fee for a replacement sticker, like most local communities. It was pointed out that if the sticker is not stuck in the window it is not valid because people can borrow each other's stickers. It was suggested that the Attendant have a listing of sticker numbers to check when cars come in. It was pointed out that contaminants in bags need to be disposed of properly or the Town is held responsible.

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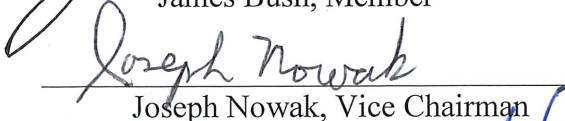
Member Blanchard recused himself, noting this program could benefit him in the future. He left the meeting at 6:49 p.m.

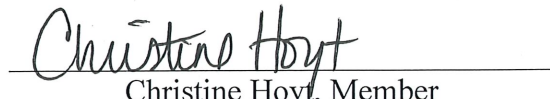
Veterans Tax Work-Off Program: Town Administrator Green explained that this is an exploratory conversation and the program would be similar to the current Senior Tax Work-Off Program. It was explained that Mr. Bianchi had put together a synopsis of what the program would look like. The Veteran program would require an age of sixty years old as a qualification but instead would require discharge paperwork to qualify. The person would have to be a veteran of United States Armed Forces, own and occupy property in Adams, be current with taxes, and have workable skills. Other proposed qualifications were reviewed and it was noted that this is very cursory research and much of it already required by Massachusetts law. The program would be for 82.5 hours of service annually. Participants would receive an abatement for that amount and anything accumulated cannot be used against taxes. The maximum earnings would be \$990 per year. There is a possibility that these positions could augment the DPW and the Transfer Station Attendant, which would be a good fit for these participants. They would have timesheets and duties spelled out. Research has to be done with the Assessor and Town Counsel, including whether it needs to go before Town Meeting. Clarification is needed to determine whether it would be one tax credit per family per calendar year and have to be either the Senior Tax or Veterans Services Tax Work-Off Program. Clarification was also needed on whether the individual may be eligible for either one or the other. If allowed into the program, the Town would choose where they work. It was explained that the DPW may be a good place for candidates for landscaping duties. It was noted that there are two or three estimated candidates possible and the Town would bring them in to match them with the needs at the Town level. It was not clear how many seniors utilize the current Senior Tax Work-Off Program. In the past five or six seniors total under the Council on Aging were estimated as utilizing the program and the Town can set the limit. Job descriptions can be created. Accountability for worked hours was discussed, and it was noted that the DPW good fit because the Operations Supervisor would oversee them. It was clarified that the recipient would be taxed on the funds, as it is considered income. The reduction of the total amount earned due to income taxes and the number of veterans who are homeowners was discussed. If this program ends and there are two or three people at the Transfer Station it will cost the Town money in the Tax Work-Off Program and the Town would have to absorb the funds from another source. It was explained that if it needs to go before Town Meeting, it would likely be at a Fall Town Meeting.

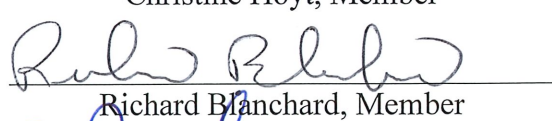
ADJOURNMENT: *Motion made by Member Nowak to adjourn the meeting, second by Member Bush. Vote: Unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.*

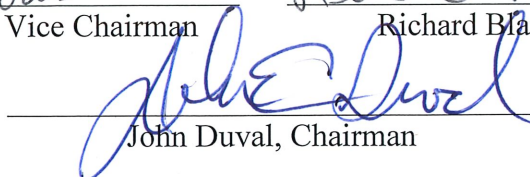
Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,
Recording Secretary


James Bush, Member


Joseph Nowak, Vice Chairman


Christine Hoyt, Member


Richard Blanchard, Member


John Duval, Chairman