

Solid Waste Advisory Committee

November 18, 2020

Draft Minutes

Prepared by Adam Clark, November 19, 2020

In attendance;

Members:

Chair: Councilor Keith Nyhan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Councilor Meredith Hatfield	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Councilor Gail Matson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Councilor Amanda Grady-Sexton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Councilor Robert Werner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Councilor Zandra Rice Hawkins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Arthur Aznev	<input type="checkbox"/>
Matt Cashman	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mike Russell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Eric Steinhauser	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Michael Nork	<input type="checkbox"/>

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 with Chairman Nyhan noting that a quorum was present. The chairman called the roll call, and moved into approval of the SWAC 10/8/19 Meeting minutes. Councilors Nyhan, Sexton, Werner, Rice Hawkins, and Mr. Steinhauser and Mr. Russell voting to approve with Councilors Hatfield and Mason abstaining as they were not present at that meeting.

Chairman Nyhan then asked staff for an overview of the Agenda. Adam Clark said the agenda tonight had two main items; first the City was made aware of an online petition to dissolve the PAYT system and following that would be a review of the Solid Waste Fund pro forma status. Mr. Clark suggested he would read each of 9 items the petition addresses and staff and SWAC membership could discuss each item.

Chairman Nyhan first provided a brief overview of the history of the PAYT program. Detailing the philosophy behind the user fee system and sharing with new SWAC membership the history of its implementation in Concord. He discussed that it puts residents in direct control of the amount they pay for solid waste services in the City by allowing for the free pickup of recyclables. Residents who do not recycle and produce more trash pay more in the system.

Mr. Clark then read aloud 9 items included in the petition.

1. Created an extra financial burden to the citizens of Concord NH.

2. Has created local trash dumps within the Citizens homes/porches due to extra cost of bags. Making the whole of Concord look like a dump.
3. Has people turning to local dumpsters/park trash cans to get rid of home trash due to the cost of using purple bags.
4. Quality of bags do not hold up for their price
5. When the purple bags were added the yearly one day "throw anything out at the curb" such as a mattress, or other large items have been removed. This increases the "in house dumps" around concord making the whole of concord look worst.
6. The elderly people (or anyone) on a limited income are also getting hit with the cost of these purple bags.
7. The purple bags have not limited the amount of trash that citizens create it has only kept that trash in their homes.
8. The recycling program with the limits it has does not lower the weekly cost for the bags.
9. With the fallout of the pandemic, it will take months if not years for some to be financially stable once again

General Services Director, Chip Chesley detailed the overall reduction in the aggregate costs for solid waste services in the City that is the result of the PAYT program, discussing the 40% decline in trash tonnage that the program has caused. Staff went on to discuss the petition points. The Department is not aware of trash "dumps" that is suggested to exist within homes due to a PAYT system. Discussion was had that residents who may need financial assistance should reach out to the City's Human Services Department for assistance with PAYT bags. Discussion on the quality of the bags centered on that the City can replace any bags to be found defective and there is a way to track it down to a lot number using a serial number on the bag itself to make sure there is not a large manufacturing issue. Chairman Nyhan discussed that there is a weight limit on bags and that in some ways they are designed to fail if they were to be overstuffed. Any issues with seams or bag ties should be reported to Mr. Clark. The conversation turned to early fears about illegal dumping, with Chairman Nyhan noting that initial fears about widespread dumping didn't materialize in practice with limited cases being seen. Mr. Russell did note he has seen some instances however.

Discussion was had that there is no institutional knowledge of a one day "throw anything out at the curb" collection. The conversation then returned to the PAYT system as a concept is one that the City has affirmed as a way to limit the impact to the General Fund and allow resident's direct control over their costs.

Councilor Rice Hawkins asked if residents can't afford the PAYT bags, what do they do. Chairman Nyhan said they should reach out to Human Services who will work with them. Councilor Rice Hawkins then

reiterated that residents who may need to purchase bags have options despite the challenges of the current Covid pandemic.

Councilor Hatfield spoke about the premise of waste reduction, pointing out the City does promote backyard composting and directed residents to reach out to Mr. Clark for more information.

Discussion then turned to Agenda Item #2. Director Chesley began by sharing the current Solid Waste Fund pro forma that was included in the 2021 Budget. The current budget calls for a 25% PAYT price increase in FY2022. A second budget pro forma was then shared that includes updated FY2020 actual numbers instead of the estimates that were included in the budget documents at the time they were put together. Director Chesley pointed to a 20% PAYT price increase for next fiscal year, instead of 25%, due to higher actual revenues and lower actual expenses incurred during the eight-week period PAYT was suspended during the onset of the Covid pandemic. He drew attention to the end of the pro forma horizon and shared the final pro forma shared that evening would “work” in the short term noting that it did not meet FPAC goals in the latter years of the proforma due to estimated upcoming contract price increases expected to begin in years FY25 and FY26 due to the expiration of the current contract. The City currently has what is likely the best solid waste contract in New England but there will be a big adjustment coming when the contract expires on both landfill tip fees and recycling costs.

Mr. Steinhauser pointed to his work in the solid waste field, sharing with the committee that he concurs with what Director Chesley has shared, noting it is appropriate to recognize those costs.

Director Chesley then shared a pro forma with no PAYT increase in FY22, drawing attention to the fund would not meet FPAC goals and become completely insolvent placing financial burdens on the general fund.

Finally, Director Chesley showed a pro forma that “works”; that is, meeting FPAC goals for the Solid Waste Fund through its full planning period. It includes a 20% PAYT price increase in FY22, as well as, a 16.67% PAYT price increase in FY26 as the City moves into year 2 of the new solid waste contract. The price of bags would increase to \$3.00 for the large bag and \$1.50 for the small bag in FY22 and \$3.50/\$1.75 in FY26. This is provided the contract adjustments are in the range of what is currently estimated. If not, the price adjustment in the out years may change.

This final pro forma wrapped up the presentation.

Discussion among the group then centered on protocol and where to go from here. Chairman Nyhan suggested that the committee having seen the pro formas, could decide to take a roll call vote to recommend the 20% price increase in PAYT prices for FY22 to FPAC. This would then be considered by FPAC and then the full Council as part of the normal budget process.

Chairman Nyhan asked if there was a motion. Councilor Warner moved to recommend to FPAC a 20 % across the board PAYT increase. The motion was seconded by Councilor Matson, and a roll call vote was made. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Nyhan requested staff if they could assess the impact to the pro forma should the proposed 20% PAYT increase for next fiscal year be delayed for one year. Staff made that adjustment to the pro forma, copy attached, and shared it with the committee during the meeting. This pro forma does not meet FPAC goals. Chairman Nyhan advised it would be good to share that information with FPAC.

Other business was next and Councilor Hatfield asked the roll of the committee in the contract renegotiation. Chairman Nyhan shared there would be a roll for the group as things proceeded.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20pm.