

Town of Northport  
Select Board Meeting  
January 8, 2024 @ 6:15 pm

Chair: Jeanine Tucker  
Vice Chair: Breanna Pinkham Bebb-Approved Absence  
Municipal Officer: Molly Schaufler  
Town Administrator: James Kossuth

Finance Director: Vicki Eugley  
Town Clerk: Amy Eldridge  
Road Commissioner: Amon Morse  
NVC Representative: Not present

**Present:** Jeanine Tucker, Molly Schaufler, James Kossuth, Vicki Eugley, Amy Eldridge, Amon Morse, Karen Gleeson, Tinsley Morrison, Shelley Fein, Marnie Reeve.

**Citizen Concerns:** None at this time.

**Recycling Committee:** Marnie Reeve, Recycling Committee Chair, reported to the Board on findings by the Recycling Committee. Reeve reviewed the Recycling Committee's mission, which is to research options to reduce or offset the cost of recycling while continuing to recycle responsibly. The Committee addressed two questions: "why reduce?" and "what is responsible?"(see Appendix A). She also provided the Board with the Committee's recommendations (see Appendix C).

The Committee suggested providing the "Eco Tips" on the Transfer Station web page and printing a trifold brochure that could be provided to Northport residents. The Committee also recommended that the Town continue to recycle glass, despite its weight, because it does get ground up and used in roads.

The Committee also researched recycling practices in other towns and compared pricing to make sure that the Town is appropriately charging for trash at the Transfer Station.

The Committee talked to the supervisor at the Belfast Transfer Station about Northport residents recycling in Belfast and was informed that residents of Northport should not be using the Belfast Transfer Station. The Committee also stated it might be beneficial for Belfast and Northport to have an agreement to combine recycling for economies of scale. The Board stated there is no harm in drafting a plan and presenting it to Belfast to get their input but no action was taken.

Reeve provided an update on the recycling programs planned at Municipal Review Committee (MRC), Municipal Waste Systems (MWS) & Garbage Recycling and Clean Energy (GRACE) (formally none as PERC).

The Committee stated that there is currently a great deal of uncertainty surrounding recycling, and it will be best for the Town to review its options again later in 2024. The Committee also recommended further research on having electricity run down the Nebraska Road to the Transfer Station for adding a compactor. The Committee provided the Board with research completed on compacting (see Appendix C). The Recycling Committee will pause its work for now, but will keep an eye out for opportunities as Maine's Recycling Landscape evolves.

Tucker thanked the Recycling Committee for all of their work and research and appreciates all of the information they have provided to the Board.

**Northport Village Corporation (NVC):** Nothing to report at this time.

**Road Commissioner:** Morse reported on the need for a trailer that would be able to haul the new speed feedback sign. Tucker mentioned contacting the State surplus website to see if there is any trailer for sale. Morse stated having out-riggers on the trailer would be helpful, and he has checked at Harbor Freight. The Board agreed that if a trailer is found, Morse should purchase it for a reasonable cost.

Morse stated he is preparing for the wet snow and high winds forecast for Wednesday the 10<sup>th</sup> by lining up workers to help if needed.

**Town Administrator:**

**Draft RFPs for assessing services, demo debris, metals, and heating fuel:** Kossuth provided the Board with RFPs for the upcoming contracts. The Board reviewed the documents and provided Kossuth with suggestions and requests. Tucker asked about the Town's current arrangement for freon disposal. Kossuth stated that a separate company handles freon for the Town, which is why freon is not part of the Metals or Demo Debris specs. Kossuth will revise the RFPs with suggestions the Board provided for the upcoming 2024 contracts.

**Butters Cottage (9 North Ave) next steps:** Kossuth reported that the front porch and half of the back porch has been removed from the Butters Cottage (9 North Ave), but the two chimneys are still there. Rick Fischer has submitted an application for access to Village property to complete the removal of the chimneys and back porch. Kossuth stated that Code Enforcement Officer Toupie Rooney plans to have the cottage demolished if the two chimneys are still on the house as of Monday, January 15, 2024. A Special Town Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 11, to appropriate funds to pay for the demolition.

**Northport Community Church status:** Kossuth reported that he had heard that Judy Simpson would like to gift that Northport Community Church to the Town. The 1864 deed for the church property requires that the church be used as a meetinghouse "forever." Tucker suggested talking to Simpson about the gift, and contacting Bill Kelly, Town Attorney, to provide advice on the Town's possible acquisition of the church property.

**Intern, Maine Service Fellow, Island Institute Fellow Discussion:** Kossuth asked the Board whether the Board would support having an intern work for the Town this summer. Kossuth provided details on various internship options, including through the Margaret Chase Smith Center, The Maine Service Fellow program, and The Island Institute. The Board agreed that a Margaret Chase Smith Center intern would be the best option for the Town and instructed Kossuth to proceed.

**Town Clerk:** Eldridge provided the Board with further information about recent tax foreclosures. Kossuth reported he spoke with the attorney for Eric Meklin, owner of R08-50-ON-8, who requested that the Board aggregate all outstanding "ON" debts and settle them all together. The Board discussed the merits of the request and declined.

Kossuth also reported that he spoke to Evan Coleman and his lawyer about R08-50-ON-9. This property is listed under NV Trust LLC/Evan Coleman, and includes 28 cabins that he bought that are part of the foreclosures. Coleman hasn't paid the taxes as of January 8, 2024, but has submitted an abatement request for a separate property. The Board discussed the property of R08-50-ON-9 and provided Eldridge and Kossuth with next steps for the Town.

**Finance Director:** Eugley provided the Payroll & Accounts Payable warrants to the Board for review and approval. The Board approved the Payroll & Accounts Payable warrants.

**Old Business:** None at this time.

**New Business:**

**Curbside Pick-up of trash and recycling-** Tucker reported she had spoken with a member of the Thorndike Select Board about their curbside trash pick-up. Thorndike provided Tucker with their contract for reference in case the Town decided to provide curbside trash pick-up. The Board reviewed the contract for a future possible option.

Kossuth asked the Board for any updates needed for the on the Town website. The Board suggested providing a helpful links page on the Town's website.

**Adjourn: *Tucker motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 pm, seconded by Schauffler. Board voted 2-0, motion passed.***

Respectfully submitted by,

Amy Eldridge

## Appendix A

### NORTHPORT RECYCLING COMMITTEE

Purpose: To reduce and/or offset the cost of recycling in Northport

### REPORT TO THE SELECT BOARD

#### **Mission**

To research options to reduce or offset the cost of recycling while continuing to recycle responsibly.

- Why reduce cost?

Recycling cost is increasing rapidly and is higher than not recycling (sending to landfill):

Recycling cost, Fiscal Year 2022 – 2023	\$48,080
Projected recycling cost, FY 2023 – 2024	\$74,150
Estimated cost to landfill recyclables as trash, FY 2023 – 2024	\$40,050
(Costs do not include fuel surcharge)	

- What is responsible?

Act in accordance with the vote to recycle at the Northport annual town meeting.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. This relates to management of all types of waste, thus all transfer station functions (eg diverting reusable items from trash, recycling electronics, etc.) (see Trash Flowchart and Addendum #3)

Maintain recycling habits in anticipation of payments to the municipality under Maine's EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) program, to begin in 2027. (See Addendum #1)

Reject options that are unnecessary or untenable, such as charging for recyclables (no other towns do this), swap shop (too much labor), etc. (See Addendum #2)

#### Attachments:

- Addendum
- Flow Chart of items managed at the transfer station
- Eco Tips
- Photos of compactor at Monroe transfer station
- Compactor Comparison Summary

## COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND QUESTIONS

### Short Term

- 1) Recommended -- Update the transfer station web page to include additional information, such as what items are accepted, where they go, and fees.
- 2) Recommended -- Include educational "eco-tips" that encourage reducing, reusing, and diverting trash on the transfer station web page. The tips are currently being published weekly in the Republican Journal "Town News" and monthly in the e-mailed "Northport News." (See Eco Tips)
- 3) Recommended -- Should educational "eco-tips" be printed as a brochure for distribution from the town office and/or the transfer station? (See Eco Tips)
- 4) Recommended -- Continue to accept glass for recycling despite the expense due to its weight. There would still be some cost to dispose of it as waste, and recycled glass is used for roadbed construction. (see Addendum #3, use of recyclables)
- 5) Question -- Should the committee formally approach Belfast about contracting to use their recycling facility or combining recycling efforts? This would require Northport residents to sort recyclables and take them to Belfast. It is unknown whether Belfast might consider this.
- 6) Question -- Should the committee compile a chart of fees charged for waste disposal in nearby towns? The list could serve as a reference for the select board when considering new contracts. The committee suggests including disposal fees for all categories of trash accepted at the transfer station, including household trash, metals, and demolition debris.

### Long Term

- 1) Recommended -- Continue to monitor the progress of trash and recycling management technologies that are likely to become available in the next few years:
  - a. Municipal Waste Systems (MSW) intends to reopen the former Fiberight plant in Hampden in early 2025, processing mixed trash and recyclables to produce bio-gas, plastic fuel bricks, and other marketable products. Contracting directly with the facility will be an option.
  - b. Membership in the MRC (Municipal Review Committee) provides a small discount at the MSW Hampden plant in addition to other benefits. This requires a 10-year contract.
  - c. The PERC (Penobscot Energy Recovery Company) trash to energy plant plans to reopen soon as GRACE (Garbage Recycling And Clean Energy). They intend to integrate new technology to make full use of all trash and recyclables.
- 2) Recommended -- Continue to assess the cost/benefits of a compactor for recyclables and/or trash to reduce hauling cost. The Climate Resilience Committee is investigating options that might provide the needed power to the transfer station. (See Compacting Comparison & Photos)
- 3) Recommended -- Research grants to fund electrical upgrades and compactor purchase and installation at the transfer station.

**ADDENDUM**

**1. EPR (EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY PROGRAM FOR PACKAGING)**

Summary of effect on municipalities from Resource Recycling, Inc., published 11-2-'23 (edited)  
<https://resource-recycling.com/recycling/2023/11/02/details-on-maine-epr-program-start-to-emerge/>

The Maine EPR program is slated to begin in 2026, with the first municipal reimbursements going out in 2027.

According to the 45 pages of rule drafts, a participating municipality must be reimbursed both for the cost of managing packaging material that is recycled and the cost of managing packaging material that is not “readily recyclable,” as defined in the draft rules. That includes labor cost, equipment cost, structure cost, energy cost and overhead paid. Profit for processors is also factored in.

The reimbursable cost is calculated by determining the cost per ton of managing each packaging material through annual reporting, consultations and audits.

For packaging material types that are not readily recyclable, municipalities will be reimbursed for their per-capita shares at the median per ton cost. The per capita share is determined by dividing the statewide total tons of packaging material that are not readily recyclable by the state’s population and multiplying that figure by the municipal population.

(Rule-making is an ongoing process.)

**2. IDEAS THAT WERE REJECTED**

1. Collect returnables for redemption. -Clynk at Hannaford easy to use.
2. Use Unity recycling facility. -Relies on volunteer labor and we are unable to transport to the facility.
3. Charging a fee for recycling. -No towns do this.
4. Separating valuable recyclables (cardboard, #2 plastic). -This would increase the tipping fee.
5. Textile/GoodWill collection box on site. -GoodWill is nearby.
6. Building an additional shed to sort recycling, house a swap shop, etc. -Current covered space is adequate.
7. Collecting old paint, other items that could be diverted from trash. -Use existing nearby resources. Include in educational eco-tips.
8. Swap shop. Requires a lot of labor and space. -Current practices (informal at transfer station and “free” on roadside) are adequate.
9. Recycling mattresses. -No practical method found.

**3. USE OF RECYCLABLES SENT TO ECOMAINE**

Cardboard – Baled and sold directly

Mixed Paper – Baled and sold directly

Glass -- Ground and stockpiled until volume is adequate to attract a buyer for road construction

Metals – Sold directly

Plastics

- #2 (HDPE, high-density polyethylene), milk jugs, detergent bottles, etc. – Baled and sold directly.
- Mixed Plastics – Baled and sold to EFS, a company in Canada that turns it into PCR (Post-Consumer Recycled) pellets for manufacture of other plastic items, primarily packaging.
- (film plastic and Styrofoam are not accepted by EcoMaine)

## Appendix C

### NORTHPORT RECYCLABLES/TRASH COMPACTING COMPARISONS

- 1) Note that these are estimates based on the best information currently available. Where conflicting information is available, best guesses have been used. These numbers should be further researched for accuracy.
- 2) Compactor lifetime should be roughly 20 years.
- 3) COST COMPARISONS:
  - a. RECYCLING: The container used with compacted recyclables holds on average 6 tons v 1 ton for our current containers. Thus compacting would cut our hauling cost (currently about 60% of our cost to recycle) by 6. Container rental would be reduced (fewer needed) and tipping fees would be unchanged.
  - b. TRASH: A container for compacted trash holds on average 13 tons. Currently approx. .65-ton containers are combined with other towns for hauling, so comparisons are difficult and inexact. Tipping fees are lower than recyclables. Container rental would be reduced and hauling cost is unknown.

Cost of recycling, FY 2022 – 2023	\$48,080
Estimated cost of recycling, FY 2023 – 2024	\$74,150 (less volume, higher rates than 2022)
Estimated cost of recycling, FY 2023 – 2024, compacted	
Compactor rental not included	\$45,483 (includes estimated electricity)
Including compactor loan pmt (5 years)	\$53,823
Estimated cost, household trash, FY 2023 – 2024	\$52,970
Estimated cost, household trash, FY '23-'24, compacted	
Compactor rental & power not included	\$40,750
Compactor loan pmt & power included	\$50,000

#### COMPACTOR SETUP AND OPERATING COSTS:

- 4) Purchase price = approx. \$41,500 or a down payment of \$5,000 plus \$695/month for 5 years.
- 5) Infrastructure:
  - a) Included in purchase price: Consultation, site design, single- to 3-phase power converter, freight, installation, and training.
  - b) To be paid by the town: Electrical supply and setup, groundwork, concrete pad, steel support plates, new or modified heated building or space.
- 6) Operating costs:
  - a) Electricity for recycling is estimated at approx. \$728/year (assumes run time of 2.25 hours/week + standby power at current \$ rate)
  - b) Professional compactor maintenance is located out-of-state, but maintenance is likely to be minimal. Monroe has had one maintenance visit (mouse chewed wire) in 13 years.
  - c) It might be necessary to have 2 attendants on duty at the transfer station.
- 7) Power: A compactor requires reliable power to run plus a constant power supply in winter to warm the hydraulics and the controller. Researching a power supply is beyond the expertise and purpose of the Recycling Committee.

#### FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS:

- 8) Compacting reduces the volume for transportation. This is likely to be a continuing benefit.
- 9) The Municipal Waste Systems plant in Hampden and/or Garbage Recycling and Clean Energy in Orrington might be options within a year or two and would reduce hauling distances. Recyclables are currently hauled to Winterport, then to Portland. Household waste is hauled to Old Town (or Norridgewock).