



Nashua Region Solid Waste Management District (NRSWMD)



DRAFT Meeting Minutes December 20, 2023

Attendees:	Towns:	Staff:	
Joan Cudworth	Hollis	Jay Minkarah, Executive Director	NRPC
Mike Fimbel	Mont Vernon	Emma Rearick, Environmental Planner III	NRPC
Eric Slosek	Amherst	Kathy Kirby, Administrative Assistant	NRPC
Rhonda Whittier, Treasurer	Pelham	Cassie Cashin, Regional Planner III	NRPC
Jay Twardosky	Hudson		
Leo Lessard	Milford		
Meghan Theriault (Virtual)	Gilford		
Cindy Heath (Virtual)	NH Network Plastics Working Group		
Louis Triano (Virtual)	Foam Cycle		

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m. by Whittier.

2. Approval of June 21, 2023 minutes and September 20, 2023 minutes (action item)

There were no comments/edits. Motion to accept the June minutes.

Eric Slosek moved, with a second from Jay Twardosky:

THAT the Nashua Region Solid Waste Management District approves the June 2023 meeting minutes.

The motion carried. Mike Fimbel abstained.

September 2023 meeting minutes - there were no comments/edits. Motion to accept the September minutes.

Joan Cudworth moved, with a second from Mike Fimbel.

THAT the Nashua Region Solid Waste Management District approves the September 2023 meeting minutes.

The motion carried. Leo Lessard and Jay Twardosky abstained.

3. Foam Recycling - Meghan Theriault, Director of Public Works, Town of Gilford made a presentation of the foam collection/acceptance process (SPOKE). Presently, they accept from 13 communities.

SPOKE #1 - Collection events – typically hosted twice a year. Events can be hosted anywhere. Sometimes there is a need to rent a trailer to haul collected foam back to Gilford. During collection events, donations can be collected to offset the cost of renting the trailer. Gilford is the only NH public collection site. Collection events are being held in Plymouth and Lebanon right now. They would be good contacts for understanding how many volunteers are needed at the collection events.

SPOKE #2 – Collection bins. Alton is considering this collection option. The Plymouth Rotary is considering purchasing the bins. There are grants available, and collection bins can be placed

anywhere. \$3,000 per bin which includes the cost of transportation to your site. Food collection foam is accepted so a sticker will be placed over the graphic on the bin. Gilford has bins at their transfer station and a separate DPW location. Recommends putting the bins so that people must go a bit out of their way, so the collection matter is not contaminated. Typically, there has been very little contamination in the process. Posters can be provided to educate residents.

SPOKE #3 – Collection bags. Plymouth has been using bags (bins are on order). The Plymouth Rotary covers 3 to 4 towns in their area. Moultonborough is collecting in their transfer station in one of their windows and brings ten bags once a week to Gilford in their trailer. Theriault recommends coordinating with the local transfer station to provide a one-stop shop for residents. Does not take a huge effort on the part of a DPW as the bagged materials are lightweight. Plymouth uses the Rotary to deliver to Gilford and Moultonborough uses their DPW staff.

Spoke #4 – Mobile Collection – this option lends itself to purchase by a region and could be used to collect foam at household hazardous waste collection events. Provides lots of flexibility – can be used by community groups to hold several collection events. The drawback is it is expensive (estimated at \$18,000) and capacity is constrained by the size of the trailer.

Gilford processes every Wednesday for 2 to 4 hours. In one example shared, Lebanon dropped off about 30 to 40 bags which will take all day to process. It only takes one DPW employee and typically has volunteers from Rotary to help load the machine too. The bags are Tyvek (light) and reusable, available for purchase from Amazon. There are larger bags (1.8 cubic yards) available too. Gilford purchased 100 bags and has loaned them out for the community's use. The bags are highly recommended as they make things easy to collect, load, and unload. Volunteers should look for materials that are hard and can snap. If the material is flexible or bendable, reject it. The collected foam is made into ingots that are stacked and wrapped on pallets and shipped "north." Gilford made just over \$4,000 on the foam they processed and shipped up. Gilford obtained several grants for proper storage, including a \$50,000 grant from the Foam Recycling Coalition and a \$54,000 grant from the Northern Borders Regional Commission, and the grant funds will pay for the unit in full and an enclosed trailer for drop-offs.

Each of the four collection methods is successful. Louis Troiano, owner of Foam Cycle who helped Gilford run their pilot program, and Cindy Heath, NH Network Plastics Working Group, are on the phone and they have been working with the Gilford DPW since the start of their foam collection process. The savings to a collection and processing community are in the hauling costs. For example, Gilford has reduced the foam that is put in the MSW trailers, and then as a hub location, Gilford hopes to make \$5,000 per year. Communities do not do this to make money. It is cost offsetting. Communities that undertake the foam collection and processing to reduce their landfill load. Also, the residents love the foam collection and view it as a positive community action. Fimbel asked about containers at facilities – what is the procedure to pick them up and haul them? Theriault confirmed that you have a large Tyvek collection bag inside the container bin. The collection bag comes out of the collection bin. It is the same size as the bins that collect clothing (41"x 41"). The bags are at least 4' tall. Just open the door and you can take them out. Fimbel also added, about Spoke #4 – that it would be nice if ultimately, we can get to that point - if it could be cost-effective. Fimbel asked if Gilford would come and pick up the trailer. Theriault stated that Gilford does not pick up any of the foam anywhere. Gilford accepts foam from communities. But the collecting communities' DPW staff or volunteers from communities hosting a drive (or having placed collection bins) drive the collected foam to Gilford for processing. She suggested that districts could cost-share a trailer and communities/community groups within that region could use

it to host collection events. Fimbel asked if any other towns are interested in becoming another processing site besides Gilford. Theriault said the goal is to have a northern and southern site in NH in addition to Gilford which is the only hub accepting foam from other NH communities for processing. Nashua and Salem have expressed interest; perhaps Keene has expressed interest. Theriault stated that the bags she ordered from Amazon come in different quantities. Theriault bought one hundred bags directly from the bag manufacturer. You can buy a small amount (5 to 10 bags). Bags are swapped out with Gilford.

Twardosky asked what temperature the densifier runs at. To answer the question, Theriault deferred to Troiano, who has been in the recycling business for 20 years and got into the business after a community requested the technology. There are thirty locations with this patented system. The temperature the machine runs at is 150 degrees. The machine operates with truly little maintenance over 10 years with easily changed components if needed. The Foam Coalition gave Gilford \$50,000 off the cost of their machine and she got it because she put forth the idea of a Spoke & Hub Collection system. Troiano urged Nashua to get a machine instead of collecting foam. Nashua would qualify for a grant and has a population of 91,000. Troiano offered zero charges for the system for a 6-month trial, and if the municipality didn't like it, Foam Cycle would come to pick it up. Twardosky asked if the temperature could be changed. Troiano said you have to start at 150 degrees. It is just enough to get the 2% polystyrene extruded. The extruded material is commanding prices of six to seven dollars per ton. The ROI increases if the town owns the landfill – we have the metrics on the cost saving of removing one ton of foam from the landfill and processing it. We would probably apply the same metrics when one ton of foam is moved offsite vs. processing it on-site. There is a 20-minute wait for the machine to heat up. Cold weather does not affect the machine. There is a cool-down period when you shut it down. There is a one-year warranty with an extended warranty available which we don't feel is necessary. We have ten contacts for reference. Theriault stated Gilford has had minimal issues with it. When they started they had to learn which types of foam NOT to put in the machine. The larger the cells, the lighter the material, and it comes out more popcorn-like. If you put in food service foam trays with cells you cannot see, then it comes out softer, like taffy. You need a combination of large and small cell materials. 15,000 pounds of foam have been processed by Gilford thus far.

Fimbel asked about the benefit of using this machine for communities that use incinerators. Theriault stated there is an environmental benefit. There is also the cost savings in not hauling. We are making money by being a hub for communities. The "sell" is that it is another recycling outfit with cost offsetting. Our town wanted to make sure they would not lose money. Twardosky asked about any smells coming from the machine. Theriault stated they had not noticed any smells coming from the materials or the machine. Gilford and the towns they work with educate the public about the need to collect clean foam (rinse it). There is sometimes a small plastic smell. Troiano stated that they have an email from the NH DES saying the smell emitted by the machine falls well below the NH DES limits. The mode of collection makes a difference. With residents dropping off the foam, there is less of an issue with people dropping off dirty foam. Theriault said that the foam they get is very clean. Most are egg cartons and meat trays and they are rinsed. They (Gilford DPW employees) wear gloves, but there are far more contaminated materials Gilford employees see other than in foam processing. Theriault encouraged anyone to come up to Gilford on any Wednesday so that they could see the process to help them decide where to start. She urged them to start with a collection event and they will get a positive reaction from your town residents and that will build community support. Host an event on the same days as a household waste collection.

Twardosky asked with the volume Gilford processes, how long does it take to get a full trailer? Theriault stated that she gets a half trailer now twice a year (population 8,000 people with many summer-only residents), which is similar to aluminum. The process material is very dense – it takes 3 to 4 bags to make a 25-pound ingot. It compresses significantly. Troiano stated a NJ town made candy canes for the holiday with the processed material. Cindy Heath can give you information on collection events. Minkarah asked if they have had foam collection events at the same time they hold household hazardous waste materials collection events. Theriault stated no because Gilford processes daily, but that's a great idea. Heath stated that Lebanon held an event at a donated space to store the foam –two 26' U-hauls were used. They held the event separately from HHW collection events because the HHW collection events are held only twice a year and are extremely popular and there is a lack of storage.

4. **HHW Program Status Update** – Rearick stated the community report starts on Page 9. The regional events totaled over 1,700 households attending (more than last year). The October event was super busy with over 400 households. The switch back to 9 Stadium Drive increased traffic. The volume of waste was also up again. Refer to the p. 15 chart that shows how the number of pounds has increased since 2020. Eventually, the trend will impact our costs. The new contract is a flat rate for three years. But expect an increase after three years due to the increased volume. A good percentage of people stated that this was their first event – 45% of the people attending. We would like to see more first-time participants. The contract with Veolia ends December 31st and the new contract with the new vendor starts January 1. Rearick stated she will be communicating with them about how some things may be different and will be discussing things with them. At the March 20 meeting, we will review changes. Cudworth stated that the battery collection program is no longer free, and it will be very expensive. We need to keep an eye on that.
5. **Out-of-Region Fees** - Rearick stated that we don't advertise it, but we will accept people out of the region per DES request. We charge them the same fee as everyone else. Rearick stated that it is common to charge a higher rate for people from outside the region. Wolfboro does this and it has worked for them. Goffstown used to accept everyone and now they only take Goffstown residents. Fimbel stated that the higher fee is a good idea so that it is not detrimental to in-region towns. Rearick stated we would not promote it. Rearick stated she would look at other communities' out-of-region fees for some comparison and discuss it at our next meeting. Twardosky stated that we should at least double it and Rearick agreed.
6. **Financial Update** – Minkarah stated that we do not have an update at this time due to staffing turnover. However, we will distribute them shortly via email before the next quarterly meeting.
7. **9 Stadium Drive placards (action item)** – since the events have moved back to 9 Stadium Drive, we need placards that state the location. Permaline's quote is \$34/sign totaling \$401.72; NE Barricade's total cost would be \$475.09. Whittier requested a motion to purchase the signs.

Eric Slosek moved, with a second from Mike Fimbel:

THAT the Nashua Region Solid Waste Management District purchase the signs from Permaline for \$475.09.

The motion carried.

8. **2024 Quarterly Meeting Dates** – Rearick stated that if we continue with the same quarterly schedule pattern, the dates for 2024 quarterly meetings would be as follows: March 20, June 19, September 18, and December 18. Attendees affirmed that they will continue the same schedule. Rearick will send out invites for those dates.

9. **Other Business** – Rearick shared that Scott Perkins is doing well, taking the time he needs to recover, and should be back to work in January.

Motion to adjourn by Joan Cudworth at 11:06 a.m., with a second by Jay Twardosky.

The next meeting date is March 20, 2024.

Respectfully submitted by Kathy Kirby, Administrative Assistant