

TOWN OF ASHLAND
WASTE TO ENERGY COMMITTEE (WTE)
COMMITTEE FORMATION AND MINUTES
FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 2024 5:00 PM
UTILITY CONFERENCE ROOM 6 COLLINS STREET

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Alan Cilley called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm. In attendance were Alan Cilley, Selectman Charlie Bozzello, Craig Moore, Mike Myshrall, Will Hess and Bonnie Bethune; Harry Gallien was excused; 17 residents were in attendance.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- a) **MOTION:** Alan Cilley made a motion to accept minutes from 1/17/24 WTE Committee meeting as written.
SECOND: Mike Myshrall
VOTE: Motion passed 6-0

III. OLD BUSINESS:

- a) Tour of Wheelabrator Waste-To-Energy Facility in Concord, NH – Haylee Silver told Bonnie Bethune they are still not scheduling tours – will continue to check for tour availability (this facility was built in 1987).
- b) Voluntarily pursuit of NH-SEC (Site Evaluation Committee) filing status is ongoing <https://www.nhsec.nh.gov/>
- c) Charlie Bozzello compiling, with help of Committee, information for the next public session on 1/31/24. Format will be a packet and a slide show.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

Mike Myshrall suggested to Craig Moore that we show residents the waste-to-energy video that explains how this type of facility works. Highlights include:

- 1 ton of waste = 550 – 700 kilowatt hours
- Closed loop system – “a type of waste management that aims to reduce, reuse, and recycle the materials and energy generated by your plant's processes. By designing a closed-loop system, you can improve your plant's efficiency, sustainability, and environmental impact.”
- 90% reduction of material by volume
- Ferrous and non-ferrous metals removed for recycling

Alan Cilley invited questions from residents.

Q #1: Is there a maximum bond allowance of \$45M as a Town project?

A. Charlie Bozzello:

- \$135M to build it; revenue bond Town is pursuing similar to a mortgage. The facilities operation covers the loan; bond is a separate entity owned & controlled by Town so does not fall under the \$45M government bond.
- \$ will not come from taxpayers/no burden on taxpayers
- w/o revenue bond, project will not happen
- If Town votes to approve, Town will go to bond marker and investors will deem project worthy (or not), and at what interest rate and what bond rating
- Lenders of the bond are the decision makers to move this project forward

Q#2: Is the WTE Committee aware of the conversation on Facebook and other social media?

A. Charlie Bozzello: questions/concerns will be addressed at next informational meeting.

Q#3: When will the next informational meeting be?

A. Wednesday, January 31, 2024 at 5pm – location TBD.

Q#4: Has the Town spent \$50K on this project already?

A. Charlie Bozzello: There is a line item in the Electric Dept. budget that allowed Town/Selectboard to forward \$50K to Waldron. Much work was done by Waldron prior to any funding and they are still working down the \$50K.

Q#5: Will this project be its own legal entity? Who is responsible if anything goes wrong?

A. Charlie Bozzello and Craig Moore: The legal entity is not the Town – the project stands on its own and will have its own legal representation which is financially accounted for in the \$135M.

Q#6: Has there been any conversations yet with other Towns?

A. Yes, that conversation has begun.

Q#7: Has the Pemi-Baker Solid Waste District (SWD) interest been confirmed?

A. Craig Moore: As representative of Ashland to the Pemi-Baker SWD, confirmed the 19 towns' (most north of Ashland) interest in this project. Currently, Pemi-Baker SWD towns (including Ashland) pay \$70/ton tipping fee through contract with Casella landfill in Bethlehem, NH. This contract is up in 2027.

Q#8: If an entity on its own, will Electric Dept. be separate or connected to facility?

- A. Charlie Bozzello: Separate. The Ashland Power Station will be its own entity and will be town-owned and operated.

Q#9: What would happen to ownership of plant if plant defaults on bond?

- A. Charlie Bozzello: Town not responsible; Town would lose management of plant; investors gain control.

Q#10: Can you confirm the size of this plant – how many megawatts?

- A. Bonnie Bethune: This will be a 12-megawatt plant. A megawatt (MW) is one million watts and a kilowatt (kW) is one thousand watts for reference.

Q#11: What adverse consequences to Town if bond holders took over facility?

- A. Charlie Bozzello: Bond holders would control \$ in excess of expenses until expenses are paid off.

Q#12: What % of trucks will be coming into Town off Exit 24?

- A. Craig Moore: We will not know until we sign contracts as to where trucks will be from. Ashland, Meredith Moultonborough trucks travel through Town now to get on 93N to get to landfill currently. Many trucks use Rt. 104 to 93N rather than traveling through small towns. WTE Committee could look at making the use of the highway and Exit 24 part of contract conditions. With 250 tons/day needed at full capacity, and estimating 10-ton loads, that would be 25 trucks per day. Bonnie Bethune noted that many MSW (municipal solid waste) trucks weigh more than that.

Q#13: Where will the facility be located?

- A. Alan Cilley: Facility will not be accessed via Cedar Lane but at the most level location just after the onramp to 93S heading north on Rt. 3 (over the railroad). The WTE Committee will provide detailed maps at next informational session. The building of the road is part of the \$135M budget.

Q#14: Does the Town own the land where facility will be?

- A. Yes – a huge advantage to this location access wise and financially.

Q#15: If Town owns facility, and it is a legal entity, can excess \$ be used for Town infrastructure?

- A. Charlie Bozzello: Yes – via a warrant article, townspeople can vote to use a lump sum or for a specific infrastructure project.
Note: Facility will be its own department; local employees hired.

Q#16: How much land will be used?

- A. Town owns a 12-acre parcel adjacent to Wastewater Treatment Plant where facility will be constructed.

Q#17: How are we going to protect the water?

- A. Craig Moore: Pump house is where Town water comes from. Facility will be located south of pump house just north of the Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- A. Will Hess: Road will be curved and lined to capture any spillage; trained staff will mitigate if any spills occur; catch basins will go through to Wastewater Treatment Plant to protect water.

Q.#18: Is this project revenue-driven to help with Ashland's budgeting concerns?

- A. Will Hess: Access to 93 and already part of the electric grid are huge assets.

Yes – revenue driven and, as mentioned by a resident in attendance, will help not only Ashland's long term waste management concerns but many surrounding towns' waste management concerns as well.

Q.#19 What if there was a fire at facility as happened at Wheelabrator – Concord in November 2023?

- A. Charlie Bozzello: If plant goes down, Town still gets paid for its capacity to put electricity into the grid.
- A. Bonnie Bethune: There is capacity on tipping floor to hold material.
- A. Craig Moore: Operations plan will include temporary, alternate sites in an emergency.

Q#20: Who will be hired to design/build road to facility?

- A. Will Hess: Sanborn, Head & Associates; site work/drainage is typically 10% of project but will be less due to current road already in place.

Q#21: If default on bond, will the bond holders begin to take the profit?

- A. Charlie Bozzello: Yes; revenue bond is raised by entity; entity owns plant and acreage plant is on. If default at entity level, bond holders would be on a \$0 land lease for a designated # of years i.e. 100-year land lease.

Q#22: Could bond holders buy facility from Town?

- A. TBD

Q#23: Has there been any environmental studies done yet?

- A. Mike Myshrall: Plant will be built to exceed state standards due to equipment chosen; methane from landfills produces more greenhouse gases than a new waste-to-energy facility. There will be 24-7, 365 days/year monitoring.

Q#24: Does WTE Committee think plant will increase pollution?

- A. By towns not landfilling waste, the waste to energy plant will lessen the amount of methane/greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

Q#25: Does the WTE Committee see serious financial upsides?

- A. Alan Cilley: Third year with contracts in place and at 100% capacity, excess revenues of \$3.4 million.

Q#26: What sparked the idea of a waste to energy facility?

- A. Craig Moore: With waste contract running out and Casella landfill closing, there needed to be an alternative. Also, ideal location in center of NH; revenue generation and land already owned.

Q#27: How is permitting paid for- is it all part of the design process?

- A. Charlie Bozzello: Bond will cover \$- that part of the \$ would be lost if permitting not issued.

Q#28: What advance funds will be needed from the Town to get the bond?

- A. Craig Moore: Anticipate just the \$50K that Waldron is still working through.

Q#29: Why Waldron if has not built a plant like this before?

- A. With past and ongoing projects, this NH owned company has the capacity and knowledge necessary for this project. WTE Committee reached out to Covanta and was told project too small for them to handle.

Q#30: Is the Warrant Article written and available to read?

- A. Charlie Bozzello: Yes.

Q#31: Is the Town in such a large financial predicament to warrant such a project?

- A. Charlie Bozzello: The Town has \$30-\$40M of infrastructure needs at this time.

Q#32: Has Town looked at other projects?

- A. Charlie Bozzello: The Town has dedicated itself to look at other projects such as internet, cell towers but Ashland is rated at the poorest town in NH with a population over 1,000.

This large infusion of \$ into the Town will make the town more desirable with lower tax rate, lower electrical rates, ability to improve infrastructure such as buildings and roads.

Q#33: Will this cause less recycling?

- A. Craig Moore: The Transfer Station will still be open and collecting recyclables.

Q#34: Is the revenue projection at the upper limit?

- A. Charlie Bozzello: No – at the mid-range anticipating 1.2 – 2M/year as worst-case scenario.

Q#35: Is it true that waste is going as far as NY?

- A. Bonnie Bethune (not mentioned at meeting – added here) There is waste going from the New England area to NY, Ohio and PA due to extremely low tipping fees in those areas and limited waste disposal capacity in this area.

Upcoming Meetings:

Next WTE Committee – Friday 1/24/24 at Utility Conference Room
6 Collins Street at 5:00 pm. (informational session prep)

Public Informational Meeting – Wednesday 1/31/24 at School Cafeteria
at 5:00 pm.

V. ADJOURNMENT: Chairman Alan Cilley proposed to adjourn.

MOTION: Craig Moore made motion to adjourn meeting.

SECOND: Will Hess seconded.

VOTE: Motion Passed 6-0; meeting adjourned at 6:18 pm.

WTE Committee Meeting Minutes 1/26/24