



Transfer Station Supervisor Reggie Roy shows off the new concrete structure that encloses the burn pile, which is now open. The stakes beyond the structure lay out a second burn-pile structure that will be added to allow for alternating between an accumulating pile and a burning pile. In the background you can see where the Road Agent's crew has cleared and leveled some previously un-used land in anticipation of possibly crushing gravel there next year. Photo: Charlie Darling

Co-op Tipping Fee Increases, SSR Facility Slowly Gets Closer

By Charlie Darling
Beacon staff

At a recent meeting on November 18, the Concord Regional Solid Waste/Resource Recovery Cooperative, of which Andover is a member, voted to increase the tipping fee it charges members for trash from last year's \$62.10 per ton to \$66.80. The increase reflects changes mandated by the contractual agreement with Wheelabrator, which owns and operates the facility, as well as a decrease in trash tonnage flowing into Penacook. The decrease in trash is due in part to the depressed economy and in part to increased recycling. With trash tonnage down, Co-op members need to pay more per ton to continue to cover the facility's fixed and variable expenses.

Last year, Andover sent 974 tons of trash to Penacook and paid just under \$60,000 in tipping fees. (In addition to the tipping fees to the Co-op, we also paid just over \$32,000 to haul the tonnage to Penacook.) Assuming we send about the same tonnage of trash to Penacook in the coming year, we'll pay over \$65,000 in tipping fees at the new rate. If we can reduce that trash tonnage by recycling more, that will reduce both

the tipping fees and the hauling fees that have to be raised by taxes.

Single Stream Recycling

Most of the towns in the Co-op are waiting eagerly for the Co-op to build its single stream recycling (SSR) facility, as offering SSR to residents is expected to significantly increase recycling and save each town money. The Co-op has commitments from member and non-member towns for enough SSR tonnage to justify building the facility, but because a few of these commitments are still just in the form of letters, the Co-op board did not vote at the recent meeting to begin the construction process. Instead, it is waiting until after the 2011 round of Town Meetings, at which it expects the remaining commitments to be made legal and official.

Mark Stetson, Andover's representative on the Co-op board, says that other than these final few commitments, everything is in place for the Co-op to move ahead with soliciting bids for the project. If all goes according to plan this spring, the Co-op should vote to get the project underway sometime in 2011.

For more information about the Co-op and its SSR plans, visit CRSWRRC.org.

Selectmen To Propose Full-Time "Expert Highway Agent"

By the Board of Selectmen

Voting on the budget is not always the most important part of Town Meeting for the Board of Selectmen. Yes, the budget is important, but Town Meeting Day is the only day of the year on which the whole town is asked to assemble, discuss, and vote on issues that help run the town. Those issues are in the form of warrant articles.

The Selectmen are presenting three warrant articles this year in hopes of making the Town run more efficiently and at lower cost. The first Warrant Article is to ask Town Meeting to change from an elected Road Agent (which we currently have) to an appointed "Expert Highway Agent" (the state's title, not ours). This would take effect in March of 2012, after the current elected Road Agent's term ends.

The second warrant article is to create a full-time highway department position, which the appointed Expert Highway Agent would fill. (The third warrant article, to purchase a backhoe/loader, is discussed on page 9.)

Appointed Expert Highway Agent

Under RSA 231:64, Town Meeting can vote to authorize the Selectmen to appoint an Expert Highway Agent. An expert agent has no fixed term of office, making the expert agent an employee (or contractor) hired by the Selectmen. The expert agent will be able to use his or her own equipment and employees.

The Selectmen recommend this warrant article, as it will allow the expert agent to be included within the Town's personnel policy and wage scale. Most importantly, there will be greater continuity over the years, without the possibility of a new road agent every two years, as we now have.

Full-time Expert Highway Agent

What do we hope to accomplish by changing from a part-time road agent to a full-time expert agent?

1) Coordination among departments (Highway Department, Transfer Station, Town property maintenance), with a focus on efficiency.

2) Focus on planning, both short-term and long-term, to help spend our money more wisely year after year.

3) Centralizing administrative responsibilities such as personnel management, equipment purchase, legal issues, etc., many of which must currently be handled by the road agent's administrative team.

This proposal is substantially different from previous proposals made in years past. It *does not* create an entire highway department, complete with a garage, the purchase of equipment, and hiring a labor crew. Instead, the Selectmen are proposing a new solution which is more affordable than previous proposals. It creates a position which would bring greater efficiency to the job *without* investing in buildings, a large

fleet of trucks, or a large crew of highway department personnel all at once.

Our proposal is to appoint a full-time person earning a salary (about \$45,000) with benefits (about \$19,000). Their duties would include:

- Supervision and hands-on work in the Highway Department
- Supervision and hands-on work at the Transfer Station
- Maintenance of Town property (Town Beach and Town Hall)
- Maintenance of Town-owned equipment
- Planning, bidding, and coordinating all projects
- Managing personnel
- Developing and managing a budget
- Working with the Board of Selectmen in developing long-term plans for road maintenance, highway department, and management of solid waste and recyclables.

All of this work is already in our budget, and much of it would simply be moved to come under the salary line of a full-time position. The Town would still be using local contractors and individuals to plow snow in the winter months, and would still use local trucking to haul material for road projects in the summer months. This gives the Town flexibility without having a fleet of equipment and a crew of laborers.

The Town currently owns a grader, and the Selectmen would like to purchase a backhoe/loader next year. (See the article on page 9.) Both of these pieces of equipment are built to be outside and don't require housing. We believe this proposal could take the town far into the future.

Impact on the Budget

Add salary of full-time expert agent:

\$45,000

Add benefits: \$19,600

Total Added: \$64,600

Reduce Winter Labor: \$14,000

Reduce Transfer Station (third man): \$5,200

Reduce Town property maintenance:

\$1,000

Reduce Summer Labor: \$30,000

Total Reduced: \$50,200

Net Cost Added: \$14,400

We believe there can be additional savings simply by having a more efficient way of doing business.

Open Discussions

This Board is looking "outside the box" to find solutions in difficult economic times that can bring future savings to the town. We would like to open up discussions about these articles now. We will be starting our Selectmen Meetings at 6:30 on Mondays, December 20, January 3, and January 17. The Board will invite questions and discussion from the public during these half-hour sessions. We will schedule more time in February if needed.



Carefree Living

**2 Bedrooms, 2 Baths, big deck,
quiet backyard.**

**Paved drive, garage, quiet spot,
little traffic.**

Perfect for one or two.



164 MAIN STREET

Your Neighborhood Experts
Art Urie and Associates
603-735-5444
urie@tds.net

Tilton Park

REDUCED

\$105,000

