



CITY OF NEWTON
SOLID WASTE COMMISSION
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton Centre, MA 02459-1449
David B. Cohen, Mayor

Sydra Schnipper, Chairman, David DelPorto, Vice Chairman, Ann Dorfman, Steven Ferrey, Elaine Gentile, Barbara Herson, Nunzio Piselli, David Queenan, Robert Rooney, Ex-Officio
Advisory: Environmental Affairs Staff, Michael Rourke, David Turocy

Minutes
September 14, 2006

Tom DeMaio, Brookline Public Works Commissioner invited to discuss their in house solid waste program.

Background:

- Brookline has 6.5 sq. miles; 100 street miles
- Solid Waste Budget: \$3.0 million
- 24,000 dwelling units; Many more multi families than single homes
- Town collects 13,000 households; Most large apartments have private collection
- 14,000 T/yr; 45 -60 T/day average
- Approx 1.25 T per HH per year
- Owns 7 trucks, 2 are backup
- Owns own transfer station

Administrative:

- Brookline stays competitive in the bidding process and bids the contract every 3-5 years for a benchmark, uses as a tool with employees
- Last bid was \$140,000 under City cost.
- \$700,000 for capital annually; if no override there is a fight for the capital budget.
- Lease/purchase for 3 years at 2-2.5%. For example, lease on 2 packers costs \$135,000/year.
- Own for \$1.00 after 3 years. Municipal leasing is too costly.
- Life of a trash truck is 7-10 years, private companies allow 5 years.
- Cost is \$73/T for disposal. Using approx 40% benefits the collection costs is approx \$60-65 (unsure of this but it was \$55 fours years ago). Brookline's cost per ton for collection, transport, disposal is approx \$140
- Recycling is a separate contract due to volatility of the market. Material is brought to FCR.
- Yard waste is also contracted at \$350/50cy container.
- White goods, bulk items cost a flat rate of \$212/T.
- They have 2 contracts for receiving and hauling and with \$154,000 in revenue this year.
- Brookline is self-insured except for out-of-town vehicles.
- Transfer station capacity 140 ton a day.

Operations:

- Having in-house collection allows for extra labor help for other divisions as needed.
- Trash division also plows snow at night and man the trash trucks in the morning.
- The typical work day is 7-3:15 for all DPW employees.
- Approximately 2,000 pick ups/day; each packer drops 2x/day at the Brookline transfer station.

Operations cont'd:

- 7 routes; 2 men per truck: MTW = 4 trucks, Th & F=5 trucks.
- Sometimes only three trucks available and will have to finish a route the next day. No OT required except possibly during leaf collections and the 12 holidays.
- 2 mechanics on night duty from 11pm-7am and a working foreman. This service is also beneficial to the Police Dept. All parts are ordered during the day to ensure enough parts throughout the night.
- 3-11 shift, 3 people: road calls, wash every vehicle, 1 truck is completely washed every week.
- Trash trucks are garaged at all times. If left at the transfer station they are plugged in.

Personnel:

- Incentive program: Employees may go home for the day once all trash is collected although not written in contract. The average employee has 4 weeks vacation and with sick time this can be a problem. Must draw from the highway labor force. There are some seasonal people but uses these for highway.
- Sickness: A notice goes to anyone with 6 or more sick days per year.
- Hiring Issues: Keep younger employees as older employees may find collecting a physical challenge. Relatively low turnover rate. There is a 6 month probation. All new employees begin work in the Solid Waste Division before assignment to another position within the DPW divisions. All employees are required to have a CDL upon being hired. Average age of a trash employee is 42-43.
- Conducts monthly roundtable with union to keep current with issues that occur.
- There is a concern with overwork and tiredness and not able to perform to capacity after snow plowing.

Program:

- A \$165/yr/dwelling user fee has been established and includes all trash, white goods, freon items, only small C&D, etc. This fee offsets a percentage (approx \$2.0 million) of total costs. Payment is quarterly.
- The Town requires 1 week notice for a white good collection.
- Size of barrel is an issue and letters to residents recently for 45 gal containers and 3ml bags. There is no limit. Only 3ml bags are allowed.
- They employ 3 Inspectors dedicated to inspect routes daily. Fines for violations are given out after a first time warning. Each offence is \$25. Residents are also fined for trash earlier than 3PM.
- Some of the larger apartment buildings have gone to private collection.

Considerations:

- Automated collection: problem due to size of streets, parking overall congestion, overhead wires, tress, etc. Have considered semi-automated vehicles where the driver gets out and manually lifts container.
- PAYT was considered but defeated. Fairness was an issue between flat fee vs. pay per bag. The fee was not difficult to pass. The perspective of selling PAYT to residents is key in how successful the program will be. Education is key to effective changes.
- Increasing the annual collection fee.

Other Comments:

- Newton has a great contractual program.
- Commercial companies can get more from their workforce.
- There is a tremendous amount of administrative effort with an in-house program.
- Brookline is successful because it retained the in-house service. The cost to bring back a service is astronomical. They have managed capital outlay for equipment, have their own transfer station, and utilize the workforce for other projects as well as draws from the workforce as needed.

