

Memo Re: Recycling

Many of you will be seeing a flyer in your tax bills regarding recycling. While this was meant to inform people on the current recycling contract, we were limited to one page to explain a 5-year contract with a multi-billion dollar company tied to a complex geopolitical market. This post is meant to answer some of the follow-on questions that have come up since the flyer was sent out.

-Why is glass not recyclable?

Glass is taken as recyclable by Waste Management. However, it is not “recycled” into more glass but repurposed. It is typically crushed and used as road fill material on the access roads around the landfill facility. Glass breaks in the single stream recycling bins and trucks and can contaminate the more valuable products, so it is not helping our overall recyclables value. Glass is extremely heavy, and the end use provides no monetary benefit to the contractor, so we are charged approximately \$75/ton to “recycle” glass. Because of this, we are looking at alternatives, such as having a glass dumpster that will be taken out of the sorting process and go directly into the grind and spread process, saving the town money.

-Why can't shredded paper be put in recycling?

Shredded paper cannot be recycled efficiently in a single stream system. When you dump your shredded paper into your bin, it goes everywhere. This is impossible to separate from bottles, cardboard, etc. that provide a value to the town and can result in a contamination charge. ***Nothing smaller than 2" square can be recycled with the processing equipment.*** Shredded paper can make an excellent bedding material for pets and livestock and can be composted but care should be used to avoid plastics and glossy paper.

-Why not use another company?

We requested bids from 6 solid waste and recycling companies. Of those, 4 declined to quote specifically citing lack of manpower or available equipment to service the town. Of the two quotes we received, Waste Management was 21% cheaper than the other bidder. This still was an 18% increase over the previous contract and that did not include fluctuations in commodity prices that our recycling contract is tied to. The Solid Waste and Recycling committee was specifically set up to create new and innovative solutions to deal with this issue. One of the chief goals is to be in a much better position in 4+ years when the contract goes out to bid again.

-Why are we even recycling anymore?

Based on recent commodity prices, it is more expensive to recycle than throw things in the landfill. People may not want to hear that, but it is the reality of the current market. Like everything tied to economics, it will change constantly and has been trending to be a net positive in recent months. Throwing everything away is not the solution. There are two landfills in NH and the closest one in Rochester is set to close by 2034. If everyone started throwing things out, it would be at capacity much sooner and prices to dump would be even higher. The town is contractually committed to the current arrangement for at least 4 more years and a decision will have to be made as to whether it makes sense to still recycle at that time. As shown in the handouts, if we recycle correctly, we can receive credit for products of value which bring down the total cost of disposal.

-The information I received previously was different-what should I follow?

The information in the flyer is the most up to date. There was a lot of conflicting information between the contract, past practices, and standardized handouts from waste management that did not

comply with the contract. While it should not be this complicated, it is. The Solid waste and recycling committee has been tasked with informing the public of what can be disposed of where. This is not an easy thing to answer, and we are working constantly to provide the correct, most efficient, and lowest cost solutions to the people of Kingston. We ask for patience as this group of volunteers works through these issues. Please email us at talkingtrash@kingstonnh.org or contact the Kingston Public Works Department @ 603.642.8042 with any questions you may have.

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