



Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance

210 South Street, Suite 6

Bennington, VT 05201

(802) 442-0713 x302

Draft Meeting Minutes

Wednesday Sept. 04, 2024; 4:00 to 5:30 PM

Arlington Town Hall, 3828 Route 7A, Arlington, VT 05250 with Remote Option

Town Representatives Present: Nancy Bushika, Town of Stamford; Rob Gaiotti, Town of Dorset; Stu Hurd, Town of Bennington; Scott Murphy, Town of Manchester; Linda Schmidt, Town of Sandgate; Tom Shuey, Town of Pownal; Wayne Wood, Town of Searsburg; Nick Zaic, Town of Arlington; Dixie Zens, Town of Sunderland.

BCSWA Staff: Scott Grimm-Lyon, Paula Kamperman

- 1. Call to Order, Approval of Minutes, and Ratification of Actions:** Dixie Zens called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM. Stu Hurd made a motion to approve the minutes of the 06/13/24 BCSWA board meeting with a correction under "Outreach and Events Update" in paragraph 9. The remark regarding battery collection was corrected to attribute it to Tom Shuey instead of Paula Kamperman. The motion was seconded by Nancy Bushika and unanimously approved.
- 2. FY24 Budget Report:** Scott Grimm-Lyon reported that the cost of operations for BCSWA in Q4 of Fiscal Year 2024 was \$67,924.92 and that the total spending for the Fiscal Year of 2024 for the period of July 1st 2023 to June 30th 2024 was \$228,330.72; which was 6% above the annual budgeted amount of \$214,675.00. A detailed discussion followed related to spending and income projections. It was noted that grant income was approximately \$1,100 lower than expected due to billing misclassifications tied to pesticide-related reimbursements. Additionally, household hazardous waste program expenses were below what was expected for spending and management costs were higher than anticipated.
- 3. Proposal for Compost Committee** – Grimm-Lyon presented a proposal to establish a formal Compost Committee under BCSWA. This committee would formalize a group under the BCSWA umbrella that is preexisting. The existing group has been active for 7 years and has organized volunteers for Bennington Garlic Festival and hosted a Compost Fair in June of 2024. The committee's purpose would be to promote district-wide composting, support efforts such as expanding composting education, and work with event organizers to adopt zero-waste policies at events in the region. The committee's affiliation with BCSWA would allow them to make formal agreements with event organizers, and to seek grant funding to support their efforts. Two current community leaders, Marsh Knapp and Jennie Jenkins, were identified as key drivers



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of this initiative, and both expressed a commitment to work to expand the community to expand membership to the Northshore. A discussion followed about a draft MOU with Southwestern Vermont Chamber of Commerce Concerns about turning Garlic Festival into a Zero Waste Event in 2025. Concerns were raised about the potential financial impact on event vendors required to use compostable materials

After discussing the benefits and potential challenges, a motion to create the Compost Committee was made by Herd, seconded by Bushika, and approved unanimously.

- 4. USDA Grant Application:** Grimm-Lyon went over a grant opportunity from the USDA Composting and Food Waste Reduction Cooperative Agreements program. He proposed an application requesting \$100,000 to fund event waste collection receptacles, update town permitting processes, and organize a volunteer "Green Team" to assist with waste management at public events. Bennington County Conservation Committee would be a co-applicant on the grant with their efforts focusing on supporting composting at schools and enhancing composting at local farms. The grant requires a 25% local match, equating to \$25,000 for the BCSWA portion, which would be distributed among member towns based on existing per capita cost-sharing agreements. The grant would support additional hours for the BCSWA Outreach Manager over a period of 2 years to complete these efforts; with a project start date of March 1, 2025. and a project end date of April 30, 2027. A brief discussion followed related to how the timeline of the grant would impact future budgeting efforts by individual Towns.

A motion to pursue the grant was made by Shuey seconded and by Bushika. The motion passed with Bushika, Gaiotti, Hurd, Murphy, Schmidt, Shuey, and Wood voting in favor of the motion, and Nick Zaic abstaining.

- 5. Household Hazardous Waste Facility:** Updates on the household hazardous waste (HHW) facility highlighted that attendance was lower than anticipated during the summer months, and that a recent inspection revealed minor issues, such as insufficient clearance for storage barrels, and that inspection records were not being kept on site. A new safety log has been implemented to meet compliance standards, and operational changes are underway to address the findings. The discussion followed acknowledging these updates and Zens suggested changing advertising strategies to boost attendance during slower months.
- 6. Legislative Updates:** Grimm-Lyon led a discussion on Vermont's new Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) law for household hazardous waste (HHW). The law introduces a reimbursement program for the disposal of a series of products that will be funded by fees that will be collected at the time of product purchase, and that the program is expected to be



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implementation in 2026. The exact framework for reimbursements has yet to be determined, as the state is currently seeking to finalize a contract with a management organization. Grimm-Lyon said that he will follow the situation and report on any impacts related to management of the HHW facility, and contracts with waste collection vendors.

7. **Outreach & Events Update:** Paula Kamperman provided a comprehensive overview of recent and upcoming outreach activities. Fix-It Fun Day is scheduled for November 9, 2024, at the Bennington Free Library, and volunteers with repair skills are being actively recruited. Over the summer, outreach efforts included attending farmers' markets, hosting educational events, and working with schools to promote composting and waste reduction. Notably, presentations were made to the Oak Hill Children's Center and the Bennington Rotary Club. BCSWA also helped create segment about composting for local public access television that featured a tour of the newly opened Dorset Compost facility. Social media campaigns during the summer have focused on recycling education and the promotion of the household hazardous waste facility.
8. **Public Comments:** Matthew Granger, a local business owner asked for some additional information related the state EPR law. Grimm-Lyon explained that the EPR law will charge a fee at time of purchase on certain products, that the state the state will reimburse entities like BCSWA for disposal costs, and that his business will only be affected if it purchases products designated as household hazardous waste by the law.
9. **Next Meeting/Adjournment:** The next meeting will be Dec. 11th, 2024, at 4PM.

A motion to adjourn was made by Hurd, seconded by Shuey, and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:07 PM.