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Town of Ayer

Rate Review Committee Meeting Minutes For

October 12, 2021

Attendance: Jannice Livingston (Chair); Mark Smith (Fin Com Rep); Rick Skoczylas; Lisa Gabree (Finance Manager); Pam Martin (DPW Business Manager); Mark Wetzel (Special Projects Manager); Robert Pontbriand (Town Manager)

Absent: Dan Van Schalkwyk (DPW Director)

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by J. Livingston at 4pm.

J. Livingston read the following remote participation statement:

*Due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, in accordance with Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law (OML), public bodies otherwise governed by the OML are temporarily relieved from the requirement that meetings be held in public places, open and physically accessible to the public, so long as measures are taken to ensure public access to the bodies' deliberations "through adequate, alternative means." This meeting will be live on Zoom. The public may participate remotely by joining Zoom (**Meeting ID# 897 7861 2383**) or by calling **929-205-6099**. For additional information about remote participation, please contact Carly Antonellis, Assistant Town Manager at atm@ayer.ma.us or 978-772-8220 ext. 100 prior to the meeting.*

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

The Draft Meeting Minutes from May 25, 2021 were reviewed by the Committee.

MOTION: A motion was made by M. Smith and seconded by R. Skoczylas to approve the May 25, 2021 Meeting Minutes. **Motion passed 7-0** by Roll Call Vote: (J. Livingston, Y; M. Smith, Y; R. Skoczylas, Y; L. Gabree, Y; P. Martin, Y; M. Wetzel, Y; R. Pontbriand, Y)

Review/Discussion/Vote Recommendation on Proposed FY 2023 Solid Waste (Transfer Station) Rate(s):

J. Livingston stated that last year we did not raise the permit fees just the bag fees.

M. Wetzel presented a memo and overview of his proposed recommendation for the FY 2023 Solid Waste Fees based on his analysis. The prices of bags went up from the manufacturer this year and there was an approximate \$25,000 shortfall in the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund. Based on his analysis as set forth in his memo, he

would recommend that the Transfer Station Annual Permit be raised by \$5 from \$95 a year to \$100 a year.

J. Livingston stated that if you break down the costs of the annual increase it would be an increase of about \$8.33 a month.

M. Wetzel state that the sale of annual Transfer Station Permits are still going down. We are selling more Senior Permits than regular rate permits.

L. Gabree stated that the FY 2021 expenses for the Transfer Station exceeded revenues by \$1,000 and that this is too close. She agrees with M. Wetzel's recommendation.

R. Skoczylas asked for clarification that this proposed \$5 increase would not be for the Senior Citizen permits.

M. Wetzel stated that is correct. The \$5 increase would only be on the regular annual permit fee and not on the Senior Citizen fee.

J. Livingston asked how many second permits we are selling?

M. Wetzel stated that this year we sold 782 regular permits; 434 Senior Citizen permits; and 120 second permits.

M. Smith stated that he agrees with M. Wetzel's proposal to raise the regular annual permits by \$5. He has concerns about the rate trend. At some point the expenses of the Transfer Station will exceed the income and we are going to slowly run into a problem. He asked about a proposal that you must buy a sticker to have trash cans on the street and that cans can only be out there for 24 hours.

J. Livingston stated that COVID impacted the Transfer Station. We need to show the public the value of the Transfer Station. It seems the closer you live to the Transfer Station the more likely you are to use it.

M. Wetzel stated one of the issues is generational. Young parents do not want to bring their kids' dirty diapers in their cars up to the Transfer Station. They prefer the convenience of curbside.

J. Livingston stated that we need to get the younger crowd educated and involved with the Transfer Station.

M. Smith asked if ARPA funds could be used in the future for Transfer Station Equipment and/or improvements.

R. Pontbriand stated that would have to be investigated in terms of eligibility.

Motion: A motion was made by R. Skoczylas and seconded by M. Smith to recommend to the Select Board that they increase the Regular Annual Permit Fee for the Transfer Station by \$5 from \$95 to \$100. Motion passed 7-0 by Roll Call Vote

R. Pontbriand advised that the Public Hearing for this rate recommendation will take place as part of the Select Board Meeting scheduled for November 2, 2021 at 6pm on Zoom.

J. Livingston stated that she would like the presentation slides to clearly breakdown the cost of the increase per month.

M. Wetzel stated that he will put the presentation slides together.

New Business:

M. Wetzel brought up the issue of a future consideration about a potential special irrigation rate for the new Ayer Shirley Regional High School Fields which will be constructed in 2022.

L. Gabree asked if this would be a separate meter?

M. Wetzel stated yes.

M. Smith stated that he would like to see the numbers related to this proposal.

L. Gabree raised the issue of water/sewer liens on bills and lien notifications. Is there a process to notify people before the lien?

P. Martin stated that she issues a general social media warning/notification. I will ask I.T. to do an email blast to everyone before that has signed up.

Scheduling of Next Meeting: November 23, 2021, at 4pm on Zoom.

MOTION: A motion was made by R. Skoczylas and seconded by M. Smith to adjourn the meeting. **Motion passed 7-0** by Roll Call Vote: (J. Livingston, Y; M. Smith, Y; R. Skoczylas, Y; L. Gabree, Y; P. Martin, Y; M. Wetzel, Y; R. Pontbriand, Y)

The Rate Review Committee adjourned at 4:46pm.

Minutes recorded and submitted by R. Pontbriand, Town Manager.

Minutes reviewed and approved by the Rate Review Committee on: December 14, 2021

Signed:  12/14/2021
Robert A. Pontbriand, Town Manager