



City of Watertown

Solid Waste and Recycling Advisory Committee

Date: October 15, 2025
Location: 124 Orchard Street or virtual
Subject: Solid Waste Recycling Advisory Committee (SWARC) Meeting October 14, 2025

In Attendance:

Matt Bacon
Andrew Thompson
Eileen Ryan
Lise Paul (Teams)
Russ Arico
Martin Solomon
Lisa Zankman (guest on Teams)
Lisa Feltner—City Council (guest on Teams)

Meeting commenced at 4:32 pm

- I. Minutes approved without amendment

- III. DPW updates
 - Republic Strike
 - Republic Strike ended on September 19 after 3 months. There is a new 5-year labor contract.
 - Watertown's DPW maintained trash pickup better than any of the other affected 14 municipalities. Rather than performing his normal duties, Matt Bacon acted as dispatch for non-union workers coming in from Colorado, Texas and other states. Watertown also hired third party crews to work on Saturdays.
 - The City is in the process of billing and litigation with Republic to ensure that the taxpayers do not pay for extra costs incurred during the strike.

 - Other DPW Updates
 - i. Recycling Event for Styrofoam, textiles and electronics. Haven't had one since Earth Day. Matt will try to do so by the end of the calendar year.

- ii. Pumpkin Smash – This is a proposed community event with Black Earth to compost pumpkins. Matt is trying to schedule this for early November.
 - iii. Swap Shop – Enormously successful. If 4 volunteers sign up for either November 1 or 8 (2 per shift of 2 hours), then we can open it one more time. If not, the Swap Shop will start up again in May.
- IV. Committee member updates
 - Alana Solomon has just been approved and appointed. This will complete the membership of the committee.
- V. Compost Program
 - 150 additional sign-ups during the Strike. City has around 3,300 households. Matt will report on the exact number at next meeting. We are still short of the goal of 4,000 for the year.
 - Matt will send out a mailing to all households in the first week of November
 - The City will consider a billboard advertisement on Main Street or Coolidge Square on Mount Auburn Street, or both next year.
 - Discussion on whether the City should look at data to determine locations where there are less sign ups in order to do a targeted awareness program. No decision was made to do this study.
- VI. Separate Mixed paper bin at Recycling Center
 - Matt will study the economics of providing a separate mixed paper bin at the Recycling Center. He mentioned that recycled cardboard has a much higher market value than recycled mixed paper, and there would be an additional fee for the hauler at the recycling center if we were to add another bin.
- VII. Refrigerants discussion deferred to next meeting.
- VIII. Open bid for waste hauling contract for the City of Watertown when contract ends in 2028.
 - Discussion about the role of the committee in advising the City on the waste hauler contract. It was agreed that monetary negotiations should not involve the committee. Matt suggested that committee members might advise on updating provisions of the contract by contacting the City Manager or the City Council. Lise said that the committee has an advisory role to ensure that hauler contract terms in the 2028 contract are updated to reflect Mass DEP Solid Waste regulations and to facilitate compliance with the Massachusetts 2030 Solid Waste Master Plan.
- IX. Matt let the committee know that since other haulers are in the 4th year of a 5-year union contract, the City was reluctant to take the risk of getting involved in another work stoppage.
- X. Solid Waste metrics included in the 2022 Climate and Energy Plan was deferred to the next meeting.
- XI. Open Discussion
 - Eillean feels strongly that we should get away from single stream recycling. Matt explained that since nearly all communities in the State do single stream, nearly all companies that handle recycling are single stream processors. There are only a few that are set up for source separated and they are more expensive due in

part to low volume and resulting loss of economies of scale. However, Matt will keep looking at this issue. Lise noted that tipping fees are \$87 per ton and should be part of the equation if contaminated recycled materials are diverted to the incinerator.

- Lisa Feltner, District B counselor spoke about the Food and Beverage Single-Use “Skip the Stuff” ordinance that came before the Ordinance Committee on October 7th. Many other communities have passed similar ordinances and have successfully implemented the change following an education program. She believes it will be presented and adopted by the full Council in November with implementation in about six months to allow for education.
- The committee agreed to meet next on Wednesday November 5th and on the first Wednesday of the month thereafter. Matt requested that future meetings be virtual, if possible, for the next six months or so. This will be discussed and decided at the next meeting.

XII. The meeting adjourned at 5:32pm

Minutes submitted by Lise Paul
