



MINUTES

Sustainability Working Group Minutes 4/16/24.

Attending: Camille, Ben, Sharon, Brian, Chris, Ralph

Guests: Talya Bent and Chris McHale from Casella

Discussion:

Casella

The company is moving toward automation for reasons of safety, efficiency, and manpower issues. Automated trucks cost about \$600,000 for a dual capacity collection truck (i.e. both trash and recycle) and it takes 18 months to two years to source a truck. The Auburn route would require 2 to 3 trucks. Typical company contract is 5 to 7 years during which most of the startup and acquisition costs are recovered. It is only incrementally cheaper to buy a trash only automated vehicle, (i.e. approximately \$550,000). They predict that a collection contract utilizing automated vehicles will be cheaper than a non-automated approach, which will require 2 to 3 employees per truck.

Automation requires the purchase of approximately 9,900 new 65-gallon carts with RFID chips. Cost of purchase can be born directly by city or by Casella and rolled into contract. Separate charge for cart management (e.g. cart distribution, repair, replacement). Casella trucks do not have RFID readers. Carts are manufactured in the US by multiple vendors and some are made from recycled materials.

Currently Auburn's recyclables are taken to Casella's MRF plant in Lewiston and undergo periodic auditing. Audits indicate that the

material has a low contamination rate. Although Auburn is officially excluding metal and glass from curbside recycling, Casella does not consider such materials to count as contamination.

Casella removes non-recyclables discovered at the MRF from the recycle stream and trucks them to a distant incinerator. Casella attendees were not sure why Casella does not bring the contaminated recyclables to Maine Waste to Energy.

Casella's MRF charges both a processing fee and a tipping fee. Processing fee is a set amount, whereas the tipping fee gets reset monthly, based upon the values of the commodities market. Increases in the value of recycled commodities translates into a lower tipping fee charge, through use of the ACR formula.

Tayla promised to pull together and furnish us with copies of the monthly reports it sends to the city.

Actions:

1. Approved minutes of April 2, 2024 meeting.
2. We will continue gathering data and conducting interviews.
3. Interview meeting with Jeff Demers of Biddeford DPW.
4. Next meeting April 30, 10AM, Rm 204.