Minutes from informational meeting held on 21 April, 2014

**Call to order at 7:50PM by moderator, Terry Tatro**

**Present:** *Alton Bruso, Guy Palardy, Bernard Savage, Steve Aubin and Donna Bohannon*

**Guests:** *Angela Prefontaine, Amy Erno Mashtare, Ed Bousquet, Beth Savage, Cheryl Dunn, Larraine Bruso Shana Aubin, Moe Theoret, Peggy Theoret, Jennifer Theoret, Jim Honsinger JR, Doug DiSabito, Patty Savage, Carlene Regimbal, George Boutah, Rich Ballard, Peter Machia, George Hakey, Janet Rothschild, Rene “Skip” Prairie, Michael Savage, John Goodrich, Paul Fortin, Ezra Pickup Jr, George Tulissi, Kathy Tulissi, Ed Fisette, Nancy Fisette, Darlene McGrath, John Leddy and Pam Bolster, representative from the Northwest Solid Waste Management District.*

**Article for discussion/questions –** *Should the town withdraw from the Northwest Solid Waste Management District?*

**Michael Savage** – What services does the District supply.

**Terry Tatro** – They are not voters of the town but if the board doesn’t object we have representatives from Northwest Solid Waste Management District here so they can answer questions. – *No objections*

**John Leddy – (Director of NWSWD)** – Talked about the structure of the District and gave a brief history of why the District was formed, how and when Alburgh became a member and followed with some of the services offered (education services to schools, organic waste management, assists in the management of types of waste {hazardous, paints, combustibles etc} enforcement officer for illegal burns and dumping). He then talked about having a five year plan in place. Vermont is making it mandatory for all municipalities to have an ordinance in place for “pay as you throw”. (The more waste you throw away the more it will cost.) He also explained that with the five year plan we have to have a plan for compostable waste. The service that they provide the most is planning. (Such as the five year plan that is mandatory for Vermont.)

*Some discussion took place about the fees and what they cover and what they don’t cover.*

**Guy Palardy** – Does Alburgh get charged the $22 per ton on anything but waste? Do we pay that fee for recycling or just trash? Where will NWSWD get their funds for operation when Vermont moves to a “no trash” state?

**John Leddy** – Alburgh only gets charged the $22 per ton fee on solid waste. It is only trash not any other forms of waste. (Recycling, compost etc.) Not sure where the District will get their funds but he doesn’t see a drastic decrease in landfill in the next five years.

**Terry Tatro –** Will the $22 per ton fee that we pay now increase in the near future?

**John Leddy –** No.

**Terry Tatro –** How many tons did Alburgh ship last fiscal year?

**Pam Bolster** – From July 1st, 2012 thru June 30th, 2013 Alburgh shipped 480 tons for a cost of $12,569.00. This all came from just the transfer station, none of it was generated by individual haulers that picked up for individuals in Alburgh.

**Rich Ballard –** Can someone give us the reason WHY we are voting on this?

**Steve Aubin –** We are already doing everything they offer so it doesn’t seem right to pay for services we don’t use. Our solid waste is taken to NY and we pay $50 per ton “tipping fee” there as opposed to $100 “tipping fee” here in Vermont and we have a four or five year contract with NY so we can continue to bring our waste there.

**Rich Ballard -** If we leave the district what costs are we going to incur?

**Steve Aubin –** Buildings are going to need to be built, possibly more labor hours but we will need to do these thing whether we get out of the district or not. Act 148 changes will have to happen whether or not we are a member of the District. A building for hazardous waste will probably be the first thing we will need to build.

**Terry Tatro –** If we get out of the district we will need to have at least one full time employee which will mean paying more wages and benefits for that employee.

**Amy Erno Mashtare –** We will need to do that either way.

**Amy Erno Mashtare –** Will NWSWD provide funds for the buildings that we will need for our facility?

**John Leddy –** If we ask for help they will help us with what they can.

**Terry Tatro –** Pointed out that the state of Vermont recommends that all towns join a District because of Act 148.

**Rene “Skip” Prairie –** Where would we send our hazardous waste if we were to get out of the district?

**Amy Erno Mashtare –** We don’t collect a lot of hazardous waste but there is a facility in Burlington that will take it.

**Rene “Skip” Prairie –** Where does our hazardous waste go now?

**Amy Erno Mashtare –** NWSWD but we have to pay extra for it.

**Rene “Skip” Prairie –** Are there any other fees we pay to NWSWD other than the $22- per ton and hazardous waste fees?

**John Leddy** – The one dollar per capita fee.

**Peter Machia –** What will we gain by getting out of the district? Can you show that Alburgh can support itself?

**Steve Aubin –** We should get out because of the cost involved.

**Guy Palardy -** Does NWSWD cover any insurance costs?

**John Leddy –** No. Insurance is a town responsibility.

**Amy Erno Mashtare** – Can Alburgh handle everything that needs to be taken care of with two part time employees or is the town going to need more people?

**John Leddy –** Alburgh does well handling this on their own but with the new laws that Vermont is trying to mandate we may need to have at least on e full time employee.

*Some discussion took place about recyclables and the income that they can generate.*

**Amy Erno Mashtare –** Would we get paid for recyclables if we stay in the district?

**John Leddy** - No but we would not have to pay the extra cost of processing it.

We wouldn’t have to pay for sorting it or bailing it etc.

**Amy Erno Mashtare –** Won’t we still have to sort it whether we are in the District or not?

**John Leddy –** Right now they do all in one recycling where everything goes in together and a machine sorts it when it gets to its destination. The District does this and so does Casella’s.

**Cheryl Dunn** – How much are we currently making on recycling? Do we take in enough to make a profit from recyclables?

**Steve Aubin –** We are not making a profit yet because we are paying off some of the equipment that we needed in order to take recycling in. We are actually still spending money for some of the equipment. We pretty much broke even last year but we are trying to make it profitable. We are looking at bigger containers so that we can send more each time the truck takes a load over so trucking costs would be less.

**Rich Ballard** – Can we bring in recycling from other towns and make a profit on it with what we have for equipment?

**Guy Palardy –** We do now. There are people from other towns that bring recyclables to us.

**Jennifer Theoret –** Where does our hazardous waste go now?

**Amy Erno Mashtare –** Green Mountain Battery takes our batteries and “All Clean and Green” takes the Freon from appliances and they do it for nothing. This makes it so that we don’t have to charge eight dollars per unit. The rest of the hazardous waste goes to NWSWD.

**Peter Machia** – We may save $12,000 by getting out of the District but what other costs are we going to incur down the road?

**Guy Palardy –** If the District reinvests in equipment or property or anything down the road, what happens to Alburghs portion of the debt? Will Alburghs portion of the District’s financial obligations go up?

**John Leddy –** The voters of the town will have a chance to vote before any new debts are incurred that would raise Alburghs obligations. Any major purchases would have to be voted on by our town representative and if Alburgh voted no on an issue but it passed anyway, Alburgh would then have a chance to withdraw from the District. Alburgh would not have to commit to that debt.

**Guy Palardy** – If we stay in the district and there are no more investments made, how long before Alburgh will have their portion of the debt paid off?

**John Leddy –** 20 years.

**Paul Fortin –** Would like to see figures pertaining to cost and expenses.

**Guy Palardy** – Stated that savings could be shown but that the future cannot be predicted. There are going to be costs for the town whether we are in or out of the District.

**Paul Fortin** – Asking if Alburgh had the expertise to keep up with the changes that are inevitably going to happen.

**Guy Palardy –** Stated that the state will help us with those changes.

**Paul Fortin –** Stated that there seems to be a lack of communication between Alburgh and the District.

**Guy Palardy –** Agreed that there is a lack of communication and stated that he has never once seen a member from the district at one of our board meetings.

**John Leddy –** The District didn’t feel they needed to come to our meeting but if we want them to come to one and talk to the board they will we just need to invite them. Alburgh is always welcome to go to one of their meetings and it is encouraged that we have our representative at their meetings.

**Ed Fisette –** Was asking of the District if we withdraw from the district do we have to pay the entire debt at once or is it something that can be paid off over time.

**John Leddy –** It would have to be presented to the board and they would have to make a decision so it might be possible. They probably wouldn’t approve it to be spread out over a twenty year period but they may consider something.

**Ed Fisette –** If it is less expensive for us to ship our waste to New York why doesn’t the District send theirs over there and save money?

**John Leddy –** Trucking would be too expensive because most of the towns are too far away to make it feasible.

**Paul Fortin –** If Alburgh withdraws from the District but decides in the future that they want to get back in, what would it cost to do that?

**John Leddy –** Unless the District incurred new debt, it would only cost the per capita fee and tonnage. The district would have to vote to allow Alburgh to re-join.

**Rich Ballard –** Inquiring if this is the best time to withdraw from the district with all the new laws that Vermont is going to be implementing.

**Steve Aubin –** There has been talk about this and at the moment the biggest thing that they will have to worry about immediately is composting.

**John Leddy** – There are different levels of composting to think about each on a different time frame.

**Amy Erno Mashtare** – If we ship compost out who is going to pay for it? Is that something Alburgh pays for or does the District pays for? Will the district pay for a chipper and shipping the compost out?

**John Leddy** – No, Alburgh will still have to pay for those things. If they pay for things like that for Alburgh they would have to do it for other towns too.

**Guy Palardy –** Alburgh has a good program in place already for a lot of the things that need to be done.

**Ezra Pickup –** Stated that he would like to see a free or reduced dump day again.

**Darlene McGrath –** Inquired as to whether or not there are grants that Alburgh can apply for to help with some of the costs of a transfer station.

**John Leddy –** There is a hazardous waste building grant that the town can apply for through the sate but it is based on per capita. For Alburgh that would only amount to about $2,000.00. It was also stated that in order to obtain the grant the town needs to be current on all laws and regulations.

**Angela Prefontaine** – What is the five year plan that was mentioned? Does Alburgh have a five year plan?

**Steve Aubin –** That is the plan that the state needs in order for Alburgh to be recertified and ours is done except for the composting component and Steve and Amy are working on getting that finished.

**John Leddy** – If Alburgh remains in the District They won’t have to write their own plan, the District will do that for the town.

**Paul Fortin** – How do you plan on voting? (Question for all board members).

**Bernard Savage –** Stay

**Alton Bruso –** Uncertain

**Steve Aubin –** Go

**Guy Palardy –** Go

**Ed Fisette –** Do we take construction debris and if not where can it go?

**John Leddy –** Construction debris can go to Casella’s.

**Angela Prefontaine** – This is a global issue, we need access to people like the Northwest Solid Waste Management District.

**Terry Tatro –** If there are no other comments or question I will ask for a motion to adjourn.

**Cheryl Dunn -** motioned to adjourn at 9:25PM seconded by **Nancy Fisette**. – *Motion carried*

Respectfully submitted,

Donna L. Bohannon

Alburgh Town Clerk

Please note the above minutes HAVE NOT been approved. Approval or changes to the minutes will be addressed at the next meeting, currently scheduled for April 9th, 2014.