

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Honorable Town Council Members

FROM: Karl F. Kilduff, Town Manager

DATE: August 19, 2020

Please find my report concerning various items of interest to the Town Council and community.

1. Council Business:

- a) DEEP-Municipal Waste Reduction Initiative: Attached to this report is an email from DEEP Commissioner Dykes outlining a partnership to discuss options to the State's solid waste management in light of the decision to ship waste out of state with the lack of investment in the Hartford waste-to-energy plant. Also included is the description of the Deep-Municipal Waste Reduction Initiative. It is my intention sign the Town of Clinton up as a member of the Initiative. It is to our benefit to be involved in the discussions to better understand the State's policy direction and how we will need to respond in the future.

- b) Revenue Collection: I noted previously the need to institute financial controls to assess the collection rate for real estate taxes. Collections have been monitored weekly to compare the rate and amount of collections for this fiscal year compared to the same time last fiscal year. Given the flat change in mill rate, it is easier to assess our relative position. Collections remain off as of this writing but are not off significantly. The trend line in July was troubling, but collections strengthened to close the gap. August will mark collections with individuals that are utilizing the low interest rate program.

2. Connecticut Conference of Municipalities:

- a) The CCM Legislative Committee did not meet in August.

3. River COG:

- a) The River COG did not meet in August. It is scheduled to meet again on September 23, 2020.

Karl Kilduff

From: Dykes, Katie <Katie.Dykes@ct.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 5:20 PM
To: knickerbockerm@bethel-ct.gov; Lfrancis@townofdurhamct.org
Subject: INVITATION to Join DEEP-Municipal Waste Reduction Initiative
Attachments: DEEP Municipal Waste Reduction Initiative - Sign-on Statement.pdf

Dear Municipal Leader,

We hope this finds you well in this challenging time. We are writing you today to invite your participation in a joint initiative of DEEP and municipal leaders throughout the state to make collective progress on improving Connecticut's waste management system through waste reduction strategies. We need your help to create an equitable, sustainable, affordable waste system, and your commitment to advancing innovative solutions and supporting critical services needed to achieve that goal. The initiative will be chaired by First Selectman Matt Knickerbocker of Bethel, First Selectman Laura Francis of Durham, and Katie Dykes, DEEP Commissioner.

Connecticut's waste management system is currently at a critical juncture – one that calls on us as state and municipal leaders to work together and scale up innovative programs and investments to reduce municipal solid waste tonnage. Municipalities who sign on to the initiative will collaborate together with DEEP between now and December 2020 to identify solutions that will:

- Make substantial progress towards reducing several hundred thousand tons of generated MSW statewide by 2027;
- Promote opportunities for innovation, investment, and employment in Connecticut;
- Provide for predictable and (long-term) cost-effective options;
- Seek to minimize and mitigate impacts of waste infrastructure on overburdened communities.

We will accomplish this with an online kickoff meeting in late August/early September to refine the scope of the initiative, followed by breaking into working groups to share experiences, lessons learned, and ways to scale effective waste reduction strategies, such as organics collection, recycling, unit-based pricing measures and more. We will invite public comment and community engagement to further awareness of the need for and benefits of waste reduction. We will also investigate opportunities to request concepts and proposals from developers, service providers, and others for innovative programs or projects that can advance our waste reduction objectives. Based on all this input, we will develop a menu of options that municipalities and the state can adopt that will help us collectively make progress towards our goal, including municipal programs, DEEP programs, and legislative proposals. Finally, by January 1, 2021, we will report on our progress and announce commitments to action—both individual and collective—to advance our goal.

We also intend to invite the COGs, regional waste authorities, CCM, and COST to participate as observers in this process so that they can share information with member towns that may be not participating in this initiative and provide their expertise as needed.

If this initiative aligns with your priorities; you and/or your staff are able to commit time for several online meetings for the balance of this calendar year; and you are motivated to work on these solutions in 2021 and beyond, we hope you will join us. We appreciate it if you can let us know by August 21 so that we may add you as a signatory to the attached statement, and including you in scheduling for our kickoff meeting in late August/early September. To sign on to the statement, or if you have any questions, please contact James Albis at james.albis@ct.gov.

Sincerely,

DEEP-MUNICIPAL WASTE REDUCTION INITIATIVE

The residents and businesses of Connecticut deserve a waste system that: provides reliable disposal options at an affordable and predictable cost; advances our state's leadership on sustainability; reduces adverse environmental impacts and disproportionate burden on certain communities in our state. As State and Municipal leaders, we share a vision of an equitable, sustainable, affordable waste system, and are commitment to advancing innovative solutions and supporting critical services needed to achieve that goal.

Four decades ago, state and municipal leaders faced a waste system that was at a critical juncture. State and municipal leaders came together to secure investment in six waste-to-energy (WTE) facilities, which provided adequate in-state capacity to maintain our disposal self-sufficiency. Through these investments in municipal solid waste (MSW) disposal infrastructure, the state was able to close in-state MSW landfills. Since that time, Connecticut municipalities have been leaders in promoting new, innovative mechanisms for MSW disposal that advance the state's waste hierarchy—from designating recyclable items, to hosting the first commercial-scale anaerobic digester, to unit-based pricing for disposal or pay as you throw programs.

In spite of this progress, Connecticut's waste sector is once again at a critical point. In 2016 approximately 100,000 tons per year of MSW were being sent for out of state disposal. In 2018, that tonnage increased to approximately 400,000 tons. In-state WTE facilities are aging and in need of expensive upgrades and more extensive maintenance, and are generating lower revenues from electricity sales—a combination of factors that has increased tip fees at WTE facilities significantly. The closure of the Wallingford WTE facility, and now potentially the MIRA WTE facility, presents the real possibility that Connecticut will take a backward step towards increased reliance on out-of-state landfills to manage our MSW. This will put our state at the mercy of other states to accept our MSW, with negative consequences for the environment and greater volatility in disposal costs over the long term.

We believe that now is the time to take a step forward, harnessing State and Municipal innovation and collaboration to spur action and investment in new programs and services that will achieve a more affordable, equitable, and sustainable waste system for our citizens. Our collective vision is that this system will:

- Make substantial progress towards reducing several hundred thousand tons of generated MSW statewide by 2027;
- Promote opportunities for innovation, investment, and employment in Connecticut;
- Provide for predictable and (long-term) cost-effective options;
- Seek to minimize and mitigate impacts of waste infrastructure on overburdened communities.

To advance that future, we commit to working together in this initiative to accomplish the following:

1. Share experiences and lessons learned from various efforts to adopt effective waste reduction strategies;
2. Engage market participants and local stakeholders to solicit input and proposed waste reduction solutions;
3. Seek creative means to fund solutions that further our collective goal;
4. Identify and evaluate a menu of options that municipalities and the state can adopt that will help us to collectively make progress towards our goal;
5. By January 1, 2021, report on our progress and announce commitments to action in furtherance of our waste reduction vision.

We recognize that by working together, we have the potential to achieve economies of scale and send a strong signal for private investment and sector transformation. At the same time, we respect the unique needs and policy preferences of each participating jurisdiction, and the importance of flexible approaches. We recognize that each municipality can contribute in different ways, through different measures, to achieve our shared goals.

We welcome all municipal partners that would like to join us in this endeavor.

Participating Entities, as of August 11, 2020:

Town of Bethel – Matt Knickerbocker, First Selectman

Town of Durham – Laura Francis, First Selectman

CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection – Katie Dykes, Commissioner