

**DPW - COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, February 12, 2025 - 9:30 AM

Robin DeLoria, Chairperson  
Clayton Barber, Vice-Chairperson

Chairman DeLoria called this DPW Meeting to order at 9:30 am with the following Supervisors in attendance: Clayton Barber, Matthew Brassard, Chris Clark, Robin DeLoria, Derek Doty, Ken Hughes, Steve McNally, James Monty, Favor Smith, Matt Stanley, Davina Thurston, Ike Tyler, Margaret Wood and Mark Wright. Shaun Gilliland and Joe Pete Wilson were excused. Charlie Harrington and Cathleen Reusser were absent.

Department Heads present: Doreen Abrahamsen, Judy Garrison and Michael Mascarenas. Jim Dougan was excused.

Also present: Todd Hodgson. Alice Halloran was excused.

News media: None present.

DELORIA: We will call this February 12<sup>th</sup> DPW meeting to order and stand for the pledge please. Welcome back Mr. Tyler.

TYLER: Believe it or not it feels good to be back.

DELORIA: Todd I will have you come up and you can present the DPW committee meeting report. Okay so Todd is going to help Jim out with his report. Everybody has that in front of you. Is there any questions on that? Todd, do you have anything to throw out there for us?

HODGSON: Well, typically Jim would have a number of resolutions I think he's holding off on that to go through them. I will say that from the storm damages that we had last year there is still some resolutions to get cleaned up from contractor work and this is I guess the lull before the storm that we start in 2025. We still have a number of things to clean up so this is just a brief break on resolutions of things to come.

As far as the rest of the report is concerned the jail is obviously down, there is a photo of that in here and we have our regular ongoing maintenance, things that we are cleaning up, equipment plans to be updated but a lot of that information will be forthcoming in probably next month's report.

STANLEY: Todd I would like to thank you. I went over to the public safety building for the hazard mitigation meeting this past week and after the meeting I was lucky to get a tour of the heating component system of the public safety building which we've been talking about at the facilities meeting. Amazing and the knowledge of the staff there knowing what's going on and the cost saving measures you guys are doing for this county I just want to throw out there and commend you guys for a job well done.

HODGSON: Thank you and thank you for the support. We really couldn't do it without you guys believing in what we are doing there and being able to take care some of that stuff in house.

CLARK: Todd I also got to look at that mess in there and it's beautiful the way they did the welding me being a welder I was totally amazed. Jim took me through and he knew I would like to see all those joints welded and whoever did that is an artist. It really turned out nice.

HODGSON: Good, thank you.

MASCARENAS: So Todd you've been spearheading the FEMA work for us any hiccups? Any bumps in the road? Question part one, part two? I'm getting some questions from board members 12 ½ % from the state. I don't believe that's going to happen but have you heard anything different and question three, what is that around your neck?

HODGSON: This is my light when I'm in the dark. I don't foresee the state coming up with the 12 ½% from everything that I've heard both for this would be the Meryl Storm and the Debbie Storm that was those two disasters that were declared this last year. So for those that have damage on damage from even the previous storms the 2023, just be careful that your damage from 2023 is not being rolled over into the 2024 because you won't get that 12 ½ % that was approved for the 2023 storm and I know like, you in particular had one of those.

TYLER: FEMA is really strongly pushing for us to roll those over. They actually did it without our approval.

HODGSON: Yes. That has to be redacted because otherwise the town is going to be holding that 12 ½ %.

TYLER: We were supposed to get close to a million dollars by April from that and we never got it and then as soon as FEMA said to the state we are not going to get it we are going to roll it over they said well, we are not going to pay that money then.

HODGSON: Yes. So just be careful of that. The other issue is last year's storms were the first year that they really pushed the 50% rule it's always been in the Papa G the guidance manual for FEMA projects but they are really holding us to that here so please be careful in pulling those costs estimates together making sure that you've addressed that in the application.

MASCARENAS: Yeah Todd the only other question I know this is coming out slowly is FEMA dollars getting held up as part of the Federal spending freeze?

HODGSON: I haven't seen that. We are still getting back and forth with our FEMA reps and there's really been no, I know they have been instructed to pause but there has been no pause on their part so they've approved ones just last week for us so things are moving forward. We do have a pause on BIL money that was funneled to us through US Fish and Wildlife we had two applications on that, that is on pause so some of those funds they are taking that seriously.

MASCARENAS: That's all I've got. Thanks Todd.

SMITH: I'm not on the committee and this is sort of off topic, Clinton County recently closed the transfer station in Harkness and so the question is when they start coming to Wilmington have there been any other experience among my senior colleagues on best to handle that? Wilmington doesn't charge a high enough rate to begin with but that's their weakness they like badness policy and so we know that the county has its own transfer cost increase and it seems to me that if citizens from Clinton County come down and then suddenly it becomes an Essex County cost to us as well. Any advice or experience?

MASCARENAS: Yeah I would look to some of your colleagues to help answer some of those questions. I think we've been seeing some emails flying around about what our program even is

and what our program isn't and I think what we really have is a county wide hauling system with independently operated transfer stations at each location that exist so it's kind of an unusual set up what we have here in Essex County compared to the rest of the state of New York. Hamilton County has something similar because of the '98 suit that forbid landfills in the park so if I were to go to Wilmington for instance or Keene you may take things that they don't take. Your fee schedules are different at each location. If I went to Minerva there is no fees they would be pushed onto the tax base. If I go to Moriah there's no scales it's by the bag. If I go somewhere else I'm getting weighed the answer is not a good one unfortunately because it's so diverse in how each one of you operate your facilities. Some of you operate in the black. The good part about it is our system is really built on volume so if you are receiving trash from another place it probably is helpful in some way, shape or form to us when we charge by the tonnage to get a little of reimbursement but if you're not charging a fee locally it's absolutely an added cost to those individuals that are fitting the bill. I think you would look at that in terms of a fee for individuals that are dumping that don't live in your town.

THURSTON: I just had something to add because St. Armand deals with this every single week so where our transfer station is located Vermontville, there is no transfer station and so they are in Franklin County, Loon Lake, we get people from Saranac Lake, Franklin County come to our transfer station. We charge by the bag and we charge three different prices for different size bags and we don't take demolition materials, we don't take refrigerators and things like that but we did recently have a whole overhaul increased the price of the bags, went to punch tickets so that we are making sure that we are collecting the correct amount of money and our goal is to just have the fee equal what we spend to run the transfer station and we are pretty successful with that so I would just say increase the price of your bags or however you do it.

SMITH: Has anyone ever said no?

THURSTON: No.

SMITH: No you aren't a resident?

MONTY: We do. You have to be a resident of Elizabethtown/Lewis/New Russia within the confines. If you are outside the residence you can't deliver. Trust me our tenants have had arguments about it but they stick to their guns. My question though is we have a lot of independent haulers coming out of counties that are coming in and using I see it every day sitting in the office coming through Lewis and I know they are coming out of Clinton County going to Serkil. Serkil is getting paid for it but they are using our facilities, they are using our equipment and everything to do that it's not just coming north its coming from the south.

MASCARENAS: We did put an additional charge on independent haulers last year as the equipment replacement plan because of that so we are getting an additional \$25.00 per ton on those private haulers that are bringing it in and dumping there. We did not issue on the towns if you remember that because of that reason but have no idea where the garbage is coming from.

MONTY: Well I have a pretty good idea knowing what the trucks are and seeing on the side of their trucks I see a pretty good idea where they are coming from but also I'm seeing there is that a lot of them are bringing recyclables before it was separating your twos and your ones but now Serkil just has everybody dump into one but for many years Essex County was getting billed and I mentioned this to Jim and Todd that all these are being dumped by your private haulers and where the twos are supposed to be you look in there an half of them are number ones and/or

returnable they are dumping in there that Serkil then hires their people to sort it and yet where does that bill come back to? Us.

MASCARENAS: And we don't handle any recyclables, the County in itself. Some of the towns do their own recyclables, there's a handful of those Serkil deals with those recyclables and recyclables are really a difficult thing because it's one of those issues where there needs to be a market to broker and it all sounds really nice when we talk about recyclables and what's going to happen but when there's not a buyer for that recyclable at some point it turns into trash and that's really the issue with it. We saw it with glass right? Glass the market fell out of the, bottom fell out of that market this board was kind enough to allow us to pilot a program which I think is really successful. They are starting to see some quantity in terms of being able to build some fill up there but we're really the only ones doing that right now so as time goes on and these things get more convoluted it's going to be increasingly difficult to manage solid waste plans as the state and federal government keep moving the bar in terms of what that expectation is for localities.

DELORIA: What about cardboard? This world is turning into everybody shops online, I'm a big online shopper and I take a lot of cardboard to the transfer station but is there a market for that?

MASCARENAS: Well what you will see and Todd jump in anytime you know this much better than I do he's educated me an awful lot on this kind of thing, up here you'll see them stock pile it for a period of time I think until they can get some kind of market and make it profitable. I think we still are moving cardboard pretty successfully but you'll see us stockpile for long periods of time and stored until there is a market.

THURSTON: I believe there's a company in Plattsburgh I know someone that works there and they take in all recycled cardboard and paper and they've turned it into something I don't know if it's containers but they do take all that kind of paper and cardboard but it's in Plattsburgh.

MASCARENAS: Todd, do you have anything to add to kind of the discussion?

HODGSON: I think right now because we are cut out of the loop as far as the marketing of that material that's all done through Serkil that really leaves us vulnerable for any type of planning on those materials so I know there's a market for the cardboard but it really hurts us to have that handled separately to where we can't go out and market that ourselves and really have a future of that because those markets come and go.

MASCARENAS: Yeah, now Derek you handle your own recyclables what's your experience with that market?

DOTY: We have a very aggressive, Shannon runs a very aggressive recycling program and she has a network of multiple markets to go to just like Todd said, it's very volatile. It's up for two months then it's non-existent. The worse thing of course is plastics 2's, 3's, 4's and higher numbers there is nothing out there. One's are the best you can hope for. Now we do have sideline programs for cellophane and those light things that they are making furniture and stuff out of but that's not even on the radio it's so small.

MASCARENAS: Do you find it to be profitable to recycle or break even?

DOTY: You mean just on the recycling?

MASCARENAS: Yes sir.

DOTY: Absolutely not. No way in hell. All we can do is bring in what we get to help offset I mean when you look at health care costs, I've got seven people that work that landfill that doesn't include my bucket loaders I mean just to save on our C&D pits, C&D alone you know what kind of building goes on in North Elba so every time anything comes to our C&D we hire a tub grinder at \$700 an hour to come in and mush that stuff up and it saves us 30% of the volume every year so we've gained maybe ten years on the last cell that we can be permitted for. I mean to dig a one acre hole costs us \$470,000 I mean how do you make a landfill work with numbers like that?

MASCARENAS: You don't.

DOTY: Like Favor talking about the Harkness, did Casella control the Harkness haul and does anyone know if Clinton County got an extension for five more years like Franklin County just did because without those two counties we are going to be dead in five to seven years that's what we should be worried about equally as much as what we are going through right now. Right now it's like yes it's a bump in the road but it doesn't even compare what we are going to be looking at very soon.

MASCARENAS: You're right.

STANLEY: So to circle back to your initial question I've had a lot of comments about the Harkness transfer station as well because I'm going to say probably 75% of Jay would use that so I had a lot of comments come to me about that location. I did bring it up to Jim and talk to Jim about how we can be looking into adding something in Jay. I think right now we have bigger problems but also looking at maybe reaching out to Casella as well because we are so close to Clinton County to see if there is a solution for us so I'm waiting to hear back from Casella and it's on Jim's radar so there is conversation about it I just don't know how quickly it's going to move. I know we're already talking about composting at our highway garage working into maybe recycling at the highway garage and from there see how that goes.

DOTY: As a quick point of interest, Casella brings us 30 ton a week right now so they don't have to haul that to Plattsburgh.

MASCARENAS: Which is unbelievable to even hear.

DOTY: That's a pencil dot.

MCNALLY: Just for the board's enlightenment here the reason we've been successful for the last year is because we've all stayed in the Serkil system with the county system. If it gets to the point where we start separating and start going all our own ways it's not going to be a positive for the rest of the county so you have to keep that in the back of your mind.

MASCARENAS: Yeah, Steve is absolutely right in that our system is built around volume we need to understand that so the reason why the county is your hauler is because independently so many of our towns don't have enough volume to make it attractive for the private sector to even bid on your product so that's the problem you might end up with in Jay with just Casella handling the Town of Jay would look like, it would be such a small volume for them that they might have to charge you a rate that's astronomical to make it happen our Minerva's, our Newcomb's our North Hudson's they wouldn't find anybody so it wasn't until we put all the garbage together years ago

St. Armand, right? And was able to address a larger volume of garbage that it made it attractive to the private sector to do the hauling that's why it exists the way it does.

STANLEY: The only reason I was reaching out to Casella is because it will essentially be a five mile move for their transfer station from Harkness to Jay.

MASCARENAS: Oh yeah, it makes absolute sense. I'm just trying to give the background of the system.

STANLEY: I mean I'll gladly do something and add more volume we can do that.

MASCARENAS: Well right now you're going to Keene, your people are going to Keene right?

STANLEY: Most people in Jay currently I would say more than not hire a private person to I mean you drive through Jay and my biggest thing is there's too many trash cans out by the road.

MASCARENAS: People don't put them away right?

STANLEY: No they stay 24/7, 365.

DELORIA: Anything else on that? Todd if you don't have anything you're excused. Okay Alice is excused and Doreen.

ABRAHAMSEN: Good morning everyone. You have my monthly statement, statistics I should say for January if anybody has any questions there? And I do have one resolution request and that is a resolution authorizing Essex County to apply for Federal and State 5311 two year grant fund '24-'25, that's included we've already been approved for the overall grant for 2023-2029 and we're required to apply every two years for that block of funding throughout so that's what this is.

DELORIA: Apply for accept?

MASCARENAS: Yes, please apply for and accept and understand that 5311 is nothing out of the ordinary it's part of their operating expenses a large part of it that's covered so not a new grant program something that typically is dealt with in terms of a formula allocation that you end up receiving as part of their operating cost to make them whole.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT TO APPLY FOR FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION/NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SECTION 5311 GRANT FUNDS FOR YEARS 2024-2025. Stanley, Clark**

DELORIA: Any questions? Being none, all in favor, any opposed – carried. Thank you Doreen. Okay is there anything else? We are adjourned.

As there was no further discussion to come before this DPW committee it was adjourned at 9:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Garrison, Clerk  
Board of Supervisors