



PUBLIC WORKS & FACILITIES COMMISSION
Special MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, September 23rd, 2025
TIME: 6:30 P.M.
Via WebEX.com
MIDDLETOWN, CONNECTICUT

Members Present: Mayor Gene Nocera
Councilwoman Leslie Spatola
Councilman Tony Gennaro
Councilman Darnell Ford
Councilman Steven kovack
Councilwoman Kelly Sweeney

Staff Present: Bobbye Peterson
Lisa Liesener

Public: Lorraine Panciera
Linda Salafia
Michael Looney

Councilman Darnell Ford called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Councilwoman Leslie Spatola moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on August 13th, 2025. Seconded by Tony Gennaro.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

No body wished to speak.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Update from Bobbye

We are trying to get some staff members into public works. We have done tones of interviews. We interviewed four truck drivers for three openings and the offers went out for those. We had one qualified candidate to replace Tom, our city engineer, after the interview the offer was out there. And we did some interviews for the director position and we are still in that process. We interviewed candidates for the sustainability coordinator and the candidate who we offered the position declined the offer, so we are working through some things there and we hope we have more updates for the next month meeting. We still have a significant amount of openings, which are being backfilling by a lot of temps.

We are trialing a GPS program with Sensera, we have four trial units at zero cost to see what would be the data collected and how it would be helpful.

2. Sanitation- SAYT, Weekly Recycling, Moving Forward

All the info was sent to the sanitation commission and it was too much to process for them to come with suggestions. In order to continue with this program we need to increase residential and commercial, fees need to be raised to match what we need to be earning.

In addition, we don't have the staff to maintain operation, we don't have the funding to sustain the program.

If we want this program to continue, we will have to go to the council and ask for a large appropriation to subsidize the program.

Lisa put together a lot of data and create projections with different options range to continue the program. What it would cost if we open it and it is optional, if we discontinue it or if we decide to continue the program as is currently, or if we just continue with food scrap collection. Lisa's suggestion is to make it optional as it would bring 25% of what we need to balance the budget. Lisa presented the idea of continue with the food scrap collection in combination with a 35 gal cart that can be easily brought to the Food Scrap Collection. We can offer it to people who liked the SAYT program.

There is the option to let people opting in for the organic collection, which would help us to recoup about 25% of what we need to continue the program and continue with solvency.

As we need to send bills on October 1st, we need to make a decision of if we continue with the program for six months, if we are going to get rid of it or if we are continue with modifications. We need to know if what type of bills we are sending, and continue run up a deficit.

Leslie and Tony commented about different negative feedbacks they got from residents and stores.

Kelly likes the idea of continue with the food scrap and the extra cart, she thinks putting the program in standby to rethink how to bring it back with the correct modifications is the best option currently.

Commercial was raised 15% and residential wasn't raised yet when the recommendation from Sanitation was to raise both, commercial and residential 30%. If we don't do it we won't be able to cover the tip fees, which is about 700,000.00 for the year and every year increases close to 3%. Summary by the chair: We will should be billing, they are going to go out late and they are going to have grace periods. There is a solid appetite for raising the residential rates, which would be after we have the time to looks at the options we have at the moment and can take months. Even we don't want to raise the fees for residential we still have the possibility of raising it for commercial.

There are three options to dump our trash, going to Berlin, which is the cheapest but it is going out of the state, going to Lisbon, which is the most expensive option but they convert the trash into energy instead of sending it outside of the state.

Darnell recommendation is to go back to \$380 for residential, give enough grace period for the adjustment and raised commercial, and get rid of SAYT program. Then within the next six months come up with options for people to save based on the options presented previously.

Bobbye recommends to raise rates to actual cost of the carts, from \$450 to \$480 a year, which divided in two bill per year would be \$225 to \$240 per bill. Increase commercial another 15% which would bring it to what the sanitation commission recommended. We are working on reviewing all the agreements with the housing authority, as we pick up their trash for free and we need that income.

Potential Final Recommendations:

- Stop the SAYT program
- Increase weekly recycling, with no additional cost
- Raise the rates for residential with what was presented by Lisa
- Raise the rates for commercial with what was proposed by the sanitation commission previously

Chair did the motion to approve to schedule a workshop in October to prepare our recommendation for the council regarding fee adjustments based on findings from discussions for a November vote. Seconded by T. Gennaro and motions passed unanimously.

3. Current Paving Projects/ Coleman Road/ Road Bond

We are almost done with Coleman Rd, the road bond will be voted in November by the public and that will inform how we move forward and what would be our plan for the future.

4. Facilities Update

We are continue doing the repair that we are, and we are waiting for the November vote to have future plans.

5. 334,344 Russell St. Easement Issue

The PW commission needs a motion and a vote to have the land surveyed, with the survey we would know how much land has been abandoned to the owners of those properties front lawn.

Once we know how much land there is, it would go to land use and PNV.

L. Spatola made a motion to approve the survey, seconded by T. Gennaro, motion passed.

OTHER

- a. Department Updates
- b. August 2025 Monthly Report – Highway Division
- c. August 2025 Monthly Report –Parks Division
- d. August 2025 Public Works Overtime Report: Councilwoman Leslie Spatola pointed out that where people getting underpaid.
- e. August 2025 Building Permits
- f. August 2025 Recycling Coordinators Report

ADJOURN:

A motion to Adjourn was made by Tony Gennaro, and seconded by Leslie Spatola. The meeting was adjourned.