



The Town of Granby New Curbside Collection Program

Reduce-Reuse-Recycle-Rethink



In early April, Town Meeting voted to advance an override question to the ballot box. This override would raise the money necessary to provide curbside trash pickup for Granby. The Select Board has negotiated a three-year contract with Allied Waste in Chicopee. This fact sheet explains how this curbside program would work. Please mark your calendar and be sure to vote on May 19.

FACTS

1. The Town of Granby has never owned the landfill or transfer station. As a community hosting a landfill, we received money for every ton of commercial trash that entered there.
2. Any solid waste proposal involves TWO COSTS: a) pickup b) disposal. Operations collects the trash. Disposal deposits the trash in a landfill or incinerator averages about \$65 a ton.
3. Long before it was a modern, regulated landfill, toxic waste was buried at the Granby landfill and transfer station site. For this reason, we made a conscious decision not to buy it.
4. Charging a user fee means people must be able to “opt out”.
5. A solid majority of town meeting voters supported placing the override question on the ballot for May.
6. The override requires a simple majority to pass.

How curbside pickup would work...

Trash would be picked up weekly. Recyclables would be picked up bi-weekly. You can use the trash container you already have. The Town will supply stickers for your trash container to identify it as trash or recycling. Inside the trash container, you would use regular trash bags. Excess trash would be placed outside the trash container in blue PAYT bags.

Weight limits. There is a weight limit of 40 pounds per barrel. If a worker judges a trash can to be too heavy, a sticker will be placed on it, and it won't be picked up. If you have more than 40 pounds of trash, you can either put it in one of the same Granby blue bags we have been using or save it for the next week's trash collection around.

Recycling. You can have as many containers of recyclables as you like. You can get rid of as many recyclables as you like every two weeks. The new program will have single stream recycling. That means that you no longer have to separate paper products from bottle and cans for recycling. It is easy and convenient.

Yard waste. The Select Board has heard from many residents with concerns about yard waste collection. As part of the curbside agreement, we would have TWO days a year for yard waste collection at a central location. You would bring your waste to a designated location where it will be collected, most likely chipped, and disposed of. These TWO days are included in our proposed contract with Allied Waste at no additional cost to the town. We realize that TWO times a year may not be enough for some folks, and we'll continue to try to work out other solutions.

Flat tax vs. User Fee

The most controversial aspect of this curbside pickup proposal has been the fact that voters have been asked to fund this curbside program with an override. The fact is, the selectboard would much prefer to offer an optional, non-controversial, user fee. We can't do it. There are **TWO FACTORS** involved with this:

1) When it comes to **user fees**, people must be allowed to opt out. The legal authority for municipal user fees is found in M.G.L. Ch. 140 and the case *Emerson College v. Boston* (1984). We have no legal authority to charge a user fee for trash without letting people opt out.

2) The **economy of scale** Granby can offer a trash company is small. Only as an entire town, were we able to negotiate and receive a lower price for curbside pickup. If people were allowed to opt out, there wouldn't be enough customers for town-wide pickup to be affordable. Without the participation of all of Granby, we could not offer an affordable alternative to private pickup.

Many people have pointed out that other towns, in spite of the law, charge a user fee for trash. There is more to their financing than meets the eye or tax bill. Ludlow, Longmeadow, East Longmeadow, Feeding Hills, and Chicopee all finance curbside pickup with tax dollars. South Hadley, which some people have suggested we emulate, may seem to finance its system with a \$50 per household fee and a pay-as-you-throw bag system, but there are other revenue streams supporting their program.

How the plan is financed...

There are TWO costs associated with the curbside proposal 1) pick up 2) disposal. Our contract accounts for a number of tons of disposal, not an amount per household. We calculated the amount per household as an average of what people were currently throwing away at the transfer station. Pickup costs are fixed for the next three years. Our contract includes a not-to-exceed 2.5% CPI annual increase; we averaged those increases into the cost over the three years, so payments, barring *force majeure* or an "act of God," will remain the same over the course of the contract.

Why can't we keep the transfer station open?

Too expensive. There are approximately 2200 households in Granby, 1400 of those households have transfer station stickers. A number of households have not even been using the transfer station. The fewer people using the transfer station, the higher the cost for each user. The Board assumed that as user fees approached the costs of private curbside pickup more people would prefer curbside pickup.

Lease: \$25,000 a month, or \$300,000 a year.

Actual Waste Disposal: \$65 a ton, estimate \$70,000

Employee Costs: \$50,000

Liability Insurance: \$10,000-20,000?

Without paying for employees or insurance, running the transfer station would cost more than curbside pickup, and the cost would be split by fewer people. Estimate: \$500 per person to run a transfer station.

The Select Board encourages you to vote on May 19th .

For more information call the Select Board Office **413-467-7177** during the following hours:
9-3 Monday-Thursday, 9-12 Friday or visit **granbyselectboard.wordpress.com** for more information

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