

The New Waste Management System

Waste management services have stabilized now for the next few years. In this column I wish to give you a very brief overview of the transition from our old system to the new system.

History

Serious changes to the waste management system have been occurring for the past 6-7 years and have been discussed for even longer. These changes began before I was elected to council with a discontinuation of incinerators and a plan to close all small regional dumps. Mayor Jim Harnum was opposed from the beginning to changes that would see an increase in costs to the tax payers of Winterton; I strongly agreed with his opinion and efforts and he asked me to start attending waste management meetings with him. Very briefly our efforts included:

- simple opposition to any changes to our waste system, we wished to have the dump remain open in Winterton for town residents
- trying to work with the towns from Hearts Content to Hants Harbour on sharing the dump and its expenses
- the town examined many different options for waste removal including buying a larger truck to bring our own waste to Robin Hood Bay, sharing a truck with the neighboring towns, etc. None of these options was acceptable because of high costs or unknown associated risks.
- the surrounding towns soon decided to join the group forming out of Old Perlican (Trinity North Waste Management Committee - TNWMC) which was backed by Eastern Waste Management and seeking to collect waste and transport it to the Robin Hood Bay waste management site in St. John's. This left Winterton as the only town outside of this group in the area from Hearts Content to Kingston except for one local service district on the north shore.
- soon the town was approached by government officials and the chair of the TNWMC to join the TNWMC. The government intended to close the Winterton dumpsite.
- the town continued to use its dumpsite until it received a Municipal Order to close the site or face fines. The town joined the TNWMC and closed its dumpsite.
- we have worked with the TNWMC to provide an efficient and effective waste collection service. I have served since Winterton joined as a director on the committee.
- just recently the TNWMC has agreed to disband as a corporation and have Eastern Waste Management (EWM) own and administer its contracts. This makes sense as EWM has the knowledge, resources and time to effectively hold the contractors accountable as per the contracts and deal with issues that arise.

Financial Impact

The financial cost to Winterton residents was certainly much less when the incinerator was running in our own dumpsite. Costs increased significantly when the incinerator was dismantled and we had to pay a contractor to cover the garbage every month. Costs have increased slightly again as we have moved to having our waste hauled to Robin Hood Bay by compactor truck. Current costs are roughly \$180 per household per year in Winterton. This is approximately \$40

more than the cost per household when we were burying our own garbage at our own site. The town charges an additional \$40 per year for waste removal instead of the whole \$180 because this was the additional amount incurred when we moved to the compactor contract with TNWMC. In future the council could level the whole \$180 waste fee per household but other taxes would be reduced to compensate. For the near future the cost per household is not expected to rise. There are 3 years left in a 5 year collection contract which is \$115 of the total \$180, the remaining \$65 of the \$180 is the fee for tipping in Robin Hood Bay. The tipping fee appears stable but could rise in the coming years.

The overall cost of waste removal is only going to reduce if we all make an effort to reduce our household garbage. For instance we pay \$65/ton for regular garbage but we only pay \$20/ton for recyclable material in blue bags (a price which is under review and may be reduced further). If we all started recycling more the overall fee would reduce significantly.

Future

Hopefully with increased participation in recycling, more backyard composting and overall waste reduction we will see our fees reduce for waste removal. We have regionalized our waste management service and we are cooperating with approximately 2500 households in the larger area to achieve cost efficiencies. The old dumpsite is scheduled to be covered and properly restored by the provincial government, a 2nd tender call was recently made and I understand that the work should begin soon.

We are open to making changes to the service to better accommodate residents and we would love to hear your suggestions. For actual service delivery questions or complaints please contact EWM [REDACTED], for suggestions on longer term changes to the system (composting initiatives, delivery timing, and bulk collection frequency) please reach me at the town hall 583-2010.

Mark Sheppard, Mayor