



January 27, 2024 visit to the Walpole, NH Recycling Center

by Debbie Putnam & Kate Messner (Hudson Sustainability Chair and Member)

In the above picture you can see one entrance to the Walpole Recycling Center (WRC). This entrance leads you to the store that they operate solely with volunteers from the community. Saleable items brought to WRC are placed on shelves by some of the approximately 40 volunteers and sold back to the community. (See interior pictures below).



The volunteers each work 2-hour shifts and their schedules are coordinated by another single volunteer. As of this writing they are all set through April 2024. And the bulk of the proceeds go to support a local food shelter.



They have 3 full time and 1 part time staff members (with benefits such as healthcare) and 30 – 40 committed volunteers (shown is the extensive volunteer list).

Even local bookstores come and buy used books from them (which are in excellent condition and have been sorted by author on the shelves). Hardcover sell for \$2 and paperbacks for \$1 and proceeds go to the Friends of the Walpole Library. These funds go into 1 box, separate from the food shelter box.



There are around 4500 residents of Walpole, but the WRC services more like 8000 as it takes in waste from other surrounding locations as well because they make money on the recyclables. (Numerous residents commented during the visit that it's "the best dump around.") The primary source of income is from the bags that are sold to the residents for use when dumping at the facility. Each bag costs \$2.00. Residents must put their waste in these bags to dump at the facility. Household recyclables are free to drop off in the sorting areas (see pictures below).



Note that Ben Hoy finds it important to stick to one type of high-quality plastic bag for this, not to offer choices. These are delivered through local businesses (such as Shaw's) for people to buy from there and from the sale of these bags the WRC makes between \$130 and \$140K per year. **When it costs money for trash (in the form of bags) and no money for dropping off recyclables the incentive to recycle is clearly strong.**



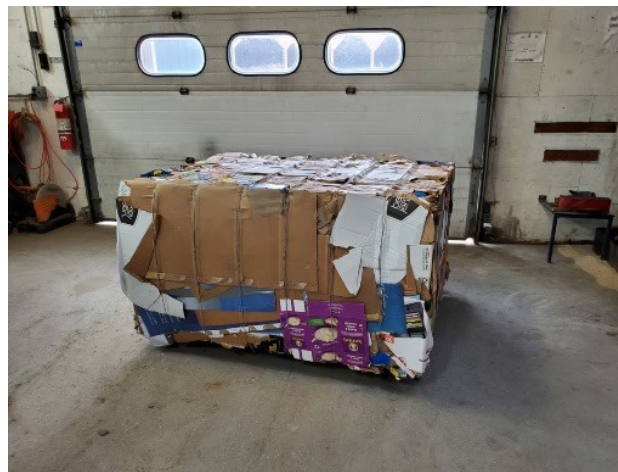
The WRC even accepts old refrigerators and the freon is pumped by a Concord-based business as well as electronics waste and used oil (the last of which is used to help heat the building).

For larger items, such as mattresses, sofas, etc. there is a scale that they use, and the resident is charged 25 cents per lb. (There was one occasion where the WRC got \$3,000 for roofing shingles.) They will take these items, but they must be paid for. (Note that this is higher than other locale's pricing, Keene charges 14 cents per lb. and WRC Director Ben Hoy says a typical rate is 20 cents per lb.)



Town-wide their rate for waste tonnage is \$115 / ton. It's important to note that WRC gets the highest value for its recyclables because they have been diligently sorted (by residents placing in the correct places and volunteers on the inside managing them), thereby eliminating the risk of contamination. Their vendors know and trust this.

They also shred paper and charge 25 cents per lb. for this (and earn \$200 / ton for shredded paper). Bales of final product (shredded paper, baled cardboard, etc.) get moved to the end of the building where they can be picked up by forklifts and moved to the larger storage shed. They take in 2 trailer loads of cardboard from a commercial company every 5 weeks from which they make \$5K. See the following three pictures.



Below shows the conveyor belt feeding cardboard into the baler.



Each baled section is marked with black marker showing “Walpole” and the weight in lbs. (e.g. Walpole 1281 as shown here).



Glass is broken down into shards which then go to Canada, but eventually end up getting shipped to Albany for processing into fiberglass insulation at Owens Corning in Albany. (They pay about \$250 three times per year to transport the glass by truck.) NRRA, Northeast Recovery Resource Association (mentioned below) is instrumental in this ongoing practice.



Different rates are paid for different types of plastics. They even take #5s as there is a market for them in Canada. Their plastics now go to GFL Environmental in Toronto, Canada not Michigan, as shown in the video on their website. **We encourage all interested parties to view the [website video](#) here.**



Ben Hoy suggested that the Hudson Sustainability Committee contact Bonnie Bethune at Northeast Recovery Resource Association (NRRRA) for more information on how Hudson might move forward with Recycling for our town in light of November 2023 comments by the Hudson Budget Committee and DPW.

Again, it is strongly recommended that municipalities join this organization www.nrrarecycles.org

