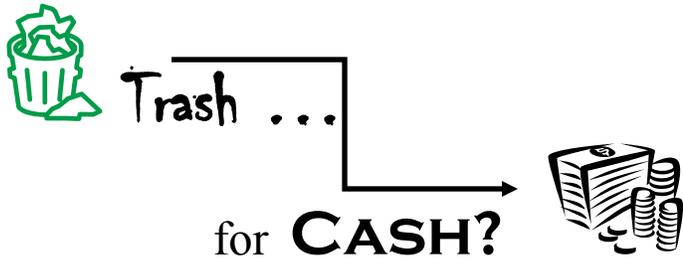

League of Women Voters of Newton

Newsletter

Volume 14, Issue 5

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by Andreae Downs

With tightening budgets, more Massachusetts municipalities are looking for cash in the trash—or rather, in the solid waste budget.

Newton is joining them.

Increasing personnel and fuel costs are making the collection and hauling more expensive. It costs Newton \$152/ton for trash--\$70 of which is just what the incinerator facility charges to accept our refuse.

By contrast, Newton is PAID \$85-90 per ton of mixed paper (newspapers, cardboard and white paper collected curbside), and in 2006, the city received \$415,000. The 2007 figure may reach \$500,000 by the Department of Public Works' estimate.

Those who drop their white, office paper off at Rumford Avenue net the city over \$200/ton. Metals are realizing \$360/ton.

But according to Elaine Gentile, the city's Environmental Affairs director, Newton's curbside residential recycling rate has remained flat, at about 43%, including yard waste, over the last decade. In 1990 it was 50%. Still, an impressive 95% of Newton residents participate in the recycling program.

Recycling rates at the Newton Public Schools have also remained flat. According to Gentile's figures, our cafeterias toss 200 tons/year of food waste, which could be composted.

The city's Solid Waste Committee and DPW are looking at various ways to reduce our waste as well as trash and recycling hauling budgets.

Over the fall, the DPW will pilot an automatic trash collection system on six runs (one a day) for roughly 4,000 households. The reason for looking at this system, according to Gentile, is that the bid for automatic trash collection was the lowest she had ever seen. Costs are cut because the trucks have one driver, not two, each stop is faster (about 8 seconds per stop), and less fuel is burned. If it works for the city, our routes could be combined from 35 now, or 7 per day, to 5 or fewer per day.

Single stream recycling is part of the program. Since 1997, this

approach has been piloted in a few Boston neighborhoods. Residents are given a 96-gallon recycling barrel, which when Gentile examined them on a trip to the pilot area, were generally filled to capacity.

Other possible options could include instituting a White Goods fee. White goods are large metal appliances such as refrigerators. The city now collects them for free, although it costs about \$50,000 a year to do the collection runs. Since used metals realize such a high price on the market, the recycling of the appliances covers the remainder of the costs.

Another option would be Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT), which is being aggressively promoted by the state Department of Environmental Protection.

Roughly 120 of the state's 351 cities and towns use some form of PAYT—a system which charges residents a fee for every bag or barrel of trash they produce. In some systems, the charge is for every bag over the first one. In all the state PAYT municipalities, recycling remains fee-free.

The effect on recycling is dramatic, according to the state's Joseph Lambert. Worcester, which has had a PAYT system for the last 15 years, has seen its recycling rate rise to 50 percent. By

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Comparison of Municipal Recycling Rates for Nearby Cities & Towns

Municipality	2002	2006
Brookline	35%	31%
Cambridge	31%	31%
Dedham	21%	39%
Needham	50%	69%*
NEWTON	37%	38%
Waltham	18%	26%
Wayland	52%	43%
Wellesley	65%	49%
Weston	32%	38%

Source: Mass DEP *Municipal Recycling Rates*:
mass.gov/dep/recycle/priorities/munirate.pdf

*Needham uses a Pay-As-You-Throw system. Needham, Wayland and Wellesley have no curbside trash collection.

Trash for Cash: continued from page 1

contrast, Boston, which has curbside trash and recycling pickup but no trash fees, had a 2006 recycling rate of 12 percent.

According to Lambert, a typical Massachusetts household produces about 1,000 lbs. of garbage annually. In a pay-as-you-throw community, that average is 500 lbs, he said.

The benefits are environmental as well as financial. According to the state DEP, in 2006 Massachusetts prevented 9.6 million tons of waste from being trashed—through composting, recycling and other methods [2006 *Solid Waste Data Update on the Beyond 2000 Solid Waste Master Plan*, EOE, Feb. 2008].

According to Executive Office of Environmental Affairs estimates, the diversion:

- ◆ “Reduced greenhouse gas emissions by more than 2.4 million tons of carbon equivalent per year.
- ◆ “Saved nearly 100 trillion BTUs of energy, equivalent to the annual energy consumption of 17 million barrels of oil, or 800 million gallons of gasoline.
- ◆ Saved nearly 2 million tons of iron ore, coal, and limestone.”

The Newton League of Women Voters has invited Newton’s new Department of Public Works Commissioner, Tom Daley, along with our Director of Environmental Affairs, Elaine Gentile, to come to our next Topic Meeting, Sept. 10 at the NewTV conference room, 11:30-1:30. We hope to see you there!

GOVERNOR’S COUNCIL: CANDIDATES DEBATE

by Sharyn Roberts

On Monday evening, August 18, the League of Women Voters Newton and NewTV sponsored a Candidates Debate for the Governor's Council 3rd District. The three candidates, all Democrats, are: the incumbent, Marilyn Pettito Devaney, of Watertown; John (Jack) Doyle, of Waltham; and Thomas Walsh, of Brighton. The moderator for the debate was Debbie Winnick of Needham, which is not in the 3rd District. Audience questions were posed by the moderator, giving rise to a lively debate during a discussion on endorsements.

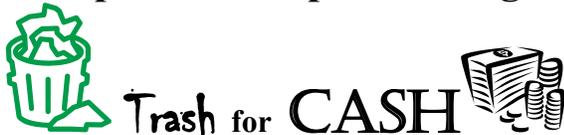
Marilyn Pettito Devaney emphasized her ten years of experience on the job as well as many decisions and reforms of which she was proud. She has also held elective office as a Watertown Councilor-at-Large for the past 27 years. John (Jack) Doyle recently retired after 23 years at Tufts Medical Center and 40 years of experience in insurance. He has lectured to Massachusetts Superior Court Judges on insurance and medical malpractice cases. Thomas Walsh is currently a Watertown firefighter and immediate past president of Watertown Firefighters Local 1347. He received a law degree from New England School of Law in 2006.

The Governor’s Council (also called the Executive Council) plays a key role in the appointment of judges in Massachusetts. It is a publicly elected body of eight individuals, plus the Lieutenant Governor who serves ex officio. The Council is charged with a Constitutional obligation to render advice and consent to the Governor on various matters, including the nomination and appointment of judges, clerks, and other officers of the court, including notaries public, justices of the peace, and probate officers. It also compiles and certifies the results of statewide elections and approves expenditures from the state treasury, including purchases of land. Each Council member is elected from one of eight districts in the Commonwealth and serves for a term of two years. Councilors receive a salary of \$25,000 plus travel expense compensation.

The LWVMA took a position some years ago to eliminate the Council to streamline our state government. However, all three candidates disagreed with this position, believing that the Council provides a system of checks and balances to the power of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor.

The debate will be cablecast on NewTV in Newton on Comcast channel 9, RCN channel 13, and Verizon channel 33 at various times until the election. See www.newtv.org for times.

September Topic Meeting



Tom Daley
Newton’s Public Works Commissioner
Elaine Gentile
Newton’s Director of Environmental Affairs

Wednesday September 10 2008,
11:30-1:30

NewTV
23 Needham Street Newton

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

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George Foord & Terry Yoffie

Topic Meetings

Carol Ann Shea & Jodi Klein

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Lisa Mirabile, 617-332-5374. To receive an audio version of this Newsletter call Terry Yoffie at 617-965-1796.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization open to all citizens of voting age. For more information about the League of Women Voters, call 617-964-0014 or visit www.lwvnewton.org.

From the President

Dear League Members,

Over the summer, your League leadership has busied itself developing the agenda for local action activities approved by members at the annual meeting, preparing the newsletter, planning monthly topic meetings and future educational forums, monitoring city activities, organizing and running the governor's council debate, drafting a letter to city leaders on a snow and ice removal ordinance, and revamping our membership tracking and billing procedures.

Topics we plan to cover in our upcoming forums and monthly topic meetings will support our interests in making Newton a leader in managing our environment as well as in managing the costs of government services.

- September topic meeting – DPW Commissioner Tom Daley will introduce his vision for Newton's solid waste management efforts and Director of Environmental Affairs Elaine Gentile will discuss "pay as you throw" approaches to managing trash.
- October topic meeting – George Foord, Ruthanne Fuller, and Mal Salter will discuss the Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) and offer League members the chance to ask questions and share their ideas on how to improve city operations and services with the CAG.
- November topic meeting – Priscilla Leith, Leslie Burg and the Local Action Committee will discuss the Community Preservation Committee, reviewing the projects it has funded since it began in 2002 and talking about what the future may hold.
- November Forum - Brooke Lipsitt will moderate a panel discussion with Commissioner Tom Daley and Brooke Nash of the state Department of Environmental Protection about solid waste management. Watch for more detail on the forum in the future.
- Future topics - Later this year we hope to explore new revenue development opportunities for Newton and to discuss Newton's employee health care plan, with special focus on ways to manage the cost of providing health insurance to city employees.

Opportunities for you to get involved:

- **Election Day is November 4!** Don't forget to register to vote before October 15. See Newton's Election Department web page for more information at www.ci.newton.ma.us/election. If you need a ride to the polls, call LWVN at 617-964-0014. If you have questions about voting, see the LWVMA's www.votinginfo.info site.
- **Election Day Opportunity in Boston.** The Boston Area Colleges Election Project has asked the LWV to assist in a project to evaluate the effectiveness of a new training program for poll workers in Boston. See www.iq.harvard.edu/election.
- **LWVMA is a member organization of the Coalition for Our Communities in opposition to the Ballot Initiative to repeal the state income tax.** LWVMA Fiscal Policy Specialist June Michaels is working with the Coalition on a VOTE NO on QUESTION 1 campaign. The income tax question on the ballot this fall is a reckless proposal that will have severe and immediate consequences for everyone in the state. The binding referendum would remove \$12.7 billion – nearly 40%—of state revenues from the budget, driving up local property taxes and leading to drastic cuts in services. For more information visit www.VoteNoMA.com.

Finally, if there are topics you would like us to cover, please let me know by email or phone.

Respectfully,

Terry Yoffie, President, League of Women Voters, Newton

More Trash Talk!

SAVE THE DATE! On Nov. 20, the LWVN and several co-sponsors will hold a public forum on solid waste options for the city.

LWVN CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

- 10th Wed., 11:30 am, **Topic Meeting, Trash for Cash**, NewTV Conference Room.
- 12th Fri., 9:30 am, **Local Action Committee Meeting**, AnnaMaria Abernathy's, 45 Islington Rd.
- 16th Tue., **Election Day, State Primaries**
- 18th Thu., 7:00 pm, **LWVN Board meeting** at Gail Glick's, 24 Carleton St.

OCTOBER

- 6th, 16 **Phonathon**
- 18th Sat., 9:00-3:00, **LWVMA Fall Conference** with Lt. Gov. Tim Murray, Crowne Plaza, Worcester
- 22nd Wed., 11:30 am, **Topic Meeting: Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAG)**

NOVEMBER

- 12th Wed., 11:30 am, **Topic Meeting: CPC.**
- 16th Sun., 10:30 am, The LWVN is co-sponsoring a **book talk at the JCC Book Fair with Madeline Kunin**, author of *Pearls, Power and Politics: Women Can Win and Lead.*
- 20th Thu., 7:00 pm, **Solid Waste Forum**, Newton Free Library.

League of Women Voters of Newton

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