



TOWNSHIP of JEFFERSON

County of Morris

Municipal Building
1033 Weldon Road, Lake Hopatcong, NJ 07849
Tel. (973)697-1500

Office of the MAYOR

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Upcoming Change to our Recycling Program

As Mayor, I try my best to get all important township information out to our residents via many different social media platforms, RAVE notifications, our website, wherein you can register for email alerts.

Since February, three *Jefferson Chronicle* articles have been written, an online survey was prepared, and my Fall Mayor's Message also alerted residents about the change in our recycling program. Additionally, to be proactive, we also sent out the recycling calendar for 2021, so our residents were informed, and still, many appear to be surprised with the change.

I understand that change isn't easy, but sometimes it's necessary. Let me explain in more detail why the decision was made to revert back to dual-stream recycling.

Our current five-year garbage recycling contract was due to expire this year. In February, we began the process of preparing a new bid specification. In August, we went to bid; in September, the Township Council awarded the bid and approved the new five-year contract.

We had quite a few options for going out to bid for our next garbage contract, including not collecting garbage and recycling at all. The Municipality is not required to provide garbage and recycling services. Since we do, we get the benefit of a large-scale contract to reduce the overall cost and pass those savings along to our residents. If you had to go out on your own to contract for the same services as many towns do, your cost would easily be triple, if you could find the same service.

Based on what we were seeing and hearing over the last two years in cost increases, especially in the cost of recycling, we were really worried about the overall cost going through the roof in this next contract. China was a major market for our recycling here in the United States, and they no longer accept our recycling. So there is little market for recycling products these days. As an example, single-stream went from approx. \$40.00 a ton to \$80.00 a ton to dump. When I took office almost two years ago, Blue Diamond, our contractor, wanted to pass the extra cost on to us to the tune of \$12K a month to cover the increased expenses to dispose of single-stream recycling. Since we already had a contract, we refused to pay any further costs. Many Municipalities are getting away from single-stream, mainly because of contamination. Our loads were repeatedly

rejected due to contamination, and the contractor was getting charged extra for it. It is certainly a convenience, but basically, our recycling became mostly garbage and could not be recycled.

There is also only one vendor in the area that will even accept single-stream recycling, and that drove up the cost as well!

We looked at many options and structured the bid in such a way so we could weigh out all the costs, from going to once per week garbage pick up, no vegetation pick up, eliminate the recycling center, etc. In order to keep the services to basically what we have currently and keep it all in the most cost-effective manner, the best option was to eliminate the single stream. As it is with this new five-year contract, cost went up on average per homeowner approximately \$27.00 the first year then approximately 3% each year for three years after and 0% the last year of a five-year contract. I have to say we were pleasantly surprised with the bid we received and feel we have a fair five-year contract for our residents with a minor inconvenience of separating their recycling. I actually never stopped separating!

With over 1500 people responding to our online survey, overwhelmingly, most were very satisfied with the service we provide. We attempted to keep the service as close to what we have without exploding the cost to our residents. This was the best choice.

I am sure most may not realize, garbage pick up is not included in your taxes. We pay a special assessment for garbage that you can find on your tax bill. I paid \$264.00 this year for twice per week garbage pick up, once a week recycling pick up, weekly vegetation pick up, and Christmas tree pick-up. Furthermore, I can go to the recycling center twice a week, bring construction material twice a month or up to six times a year to the recycling center, bring unlimited brush to our recycling center, put out bulk items on our second garbage day (one per week) to be picked up, dispose of electronics for free at the center and have metal and metal appliances picked up curbside as well. All these services cost only \$264.00 per year. I find that to be a bargain.

Some residents have criticized the change on social media; that's okay; many people do not like change. However, my job as Mayor is to keep our residents informed and give you the facts and do what is best overall for our community. Hopefully, you now understand and are better informed.

Wishing you all a safe and Happy Holiday, a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and a Blessed New Year.

Eric F. Wilsusen
Mayor