



TOWN OF HAMILTON
BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS

HAMILTON, MA 01936

MEMORANDUM NO. 94-12

TO: Candace Wheeler, Town Coordinator

FROM: Stanton W. Bigelow, P.E., Town Engineer ^{sub}

DATE: October 7, 1993

SUBJECT: Board of Public Works' Leaf Collection Program as
Finally Adopted by Board at October 4, 1993 Meeting

Ref: Memoranda Nos. 94-2 (Original), 94-2^{R1} and 94-2^{R2}

Based upon the input which was received from Town officials and the general public at the Selectmen's Meeting at Hamilton Town Hall on Monday, October 4, 1993, regarding the "Alexander Hamilton Leaf Bag" program as developed and described in the three above-referenced Memoranda, we have modified our proposed program for final adoption by the Hamilton Board of Public Works. A leaf collection program was adopted as presented below by the Board on October 4, 1993, following their meeting with the Selectmen. As was mentioned in our last previous memo, while this program has continued to "de-volve" from a full-blown program, to include funding by "seed" funds sought before a Special Town Meeting for purchase and distribution of special paper leaf bags, into the program that is described below, that "de-volvement" has allowed serious public comment through a number of media, and I believe has resulted in a program that can be both efficient and cost-effective, while freeing up the DPW's staff and equipment resources to accomplish more critical infrastructure repair and maintenance functions which must be addressed in a short time-frame (the next two months).

This fall, the Board of Public Works intends to modify the Town-wide yard waste pick-up program to replace the vacuum/blower unit with a program of collection of bagged or contained leaves by a private contractor, using packer trucks which are 10-15 times more effective than open-body dump trucks, and disposing of the leaves at the disposal site owned and operated by Peter Britton. Residents will be responsible for raking and placing their leaves in biodegradable bags or trash barrels for pick-up on the designated collection days. Generally, leaf bags or barrels are to be put out at curbside by 8:00 a.m. on the day of pick-up.

As previously stated, we are confident that we could provide an efficient, clean service to our customers using only two contractor packer trucks, each with a two-man crew, for three Saturdays, (November 6 and 20 and December 4, 1993), spanning a yard-clean-up period of six (6) weeks. Problems with wind-blown leaves, dam-

10-12-93 *mlg*

age to private property from flying projectiles, handling of wet, heavy leaves and loosely-packed loads necessitating frequent trips to the dump-site will be virtually eliminated by this system. Leaf bags should be filled with leaves and grass clippings only, with each bag not to exceed 60 pounds in total weight. To the maximum extent possible, participants are asked not to put overly wet leaves, gravel, large stones, or branches/limbs/logs of any type in bags.

Attached are two publicity documents for Hamilton's 1993 Leaf Collection Program. First, an advertisement to be run weekly in the Hamilton and Wenham Chronicle, and three (3) times in the Beverly Times, describing the Leaf Collection Program in detail is attached. Secondly, a press release for immediate distribution to the news departments of both papers is provided. Also enclosed are telephone quote canvass forms used for the procurement of leaf collection services, including the specifications for those services.

While it would have been very advantageous to have presented the proposed "Leaf Bag" Program at this fall's Special Town Meeting, and to have hopefully prevailed in gaining that body's approval of such a Program prior to undertaking it, due to the delay in scheduling of that Meeting until November 8, 1993, a date that would be far too late to allow proper implementation of any type of coordinated leaf bag program, it was decided, after conferring with other Town officials and obtaining input from the general public, that it was necessary to make a decision and proceed with a Leaf Collection Program as designed above, expensing its operation out of the Highway Maintenance Account.

The Department's plans with respect to the leaf vacuum machine are to prepare a single dump truck with a fabricated steel leaf box, to be designed and built by the Public Works Department's staff in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications. The cost of a standard pre-fabricated box from the manufacturer would be \$2,500; the materials cost of an in-house-fabricated box will be \$1,300. The delivery time on a pre-fabricated box would be six (6) months; we estimate we will have a box built by our staff on the road with the vacuum machine within six (6) weeks (by late November). The planned priority uses for the vacuum system are clean-up of leaves in the vicinity of catch basins on Town highways, pick-up of loose leaves from the cemetery and parks, and pick-up of leaves in other public areas around Town. The Old Dominion Brush Company Model LCT 600 Vacuum Leaf Loader, which the Town purchased in September, 1990, while not capable of standing up to a workload of cleaning 250 curb-miles of gutter-raked leaves each season, is more than sufficient to meet the service requirement which would be placed on it under this revised mode of operation, with minimum annual repair expenses estimated at \$750-\$900.

The question was raised regarding the leaf collection system in Wenham, where a vacuum collection program is also utilized. Upon discussing their system with Peter Burnham, Superintendent of the Wenham Public Works Department, I discovered that they identify the relative success of their program with:

- a) the fact that they have only to clean 35 curb-miles of leaves per season,
- b) the fact that a number of their residential properties, particularly the larger estates, contract with private companies for landscaping and yard cleanup,
- c) the fact that the Salem-Beverly Water Supply Board owns a disproportionately large portion of the Town's property, and has the staff and equipment to maintain those areas, and
- d) the fact that, by limiting their residents to one (1) collection of leaves on a pre-arranged schedule, they are able to keep the curb-miles down to a manageable amount.

Mr. Burnham did, however, indicate that it takes approximately five (5) weeks of his Departmental operations for the year to collect leaves, and that he is investigating alternative methods of accomplishing that task that could be less labor-intensive. He has just completed the sixth year of a ten-year highway reconstruction program, and finds that activity winding down. Therefore, he feels that his Department is in a much better position, given their reduced maintenance schedule, to place a high priority in the fall months on collection of residential leaf and yard wastes.

To reiterate, we feel that it is much more fiscally-responsible to expend \$4,800 in Town funds to have the leaves collected on weekends by contractor packer trucks, than to expend approximately \$47,000 in Town funds, which represents the actual job cost for collection by the vacuum machine, tabulated as follows:

<u>Leaf Vacuuming Option Item</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Leaf Vacuuming Labor ¹	\$ 36,465
Leaf Box Matls. for 2nd Box ²	1,300
Leaf Box Fabricating Labor ²	1,488
R&M, Vacuum Machine	3,864
Gas, Oil, Vacuum Machine	1,238
R&M, Dump Trucks ³	1,578
Gas, Oil, Dump Trucks ³	1,238

Total, Including Overhead	\$ 47,171

¹Calculated at average \$12.75/Hour for 40 Hours per Week for a Five-Person Crew over 11 Weeks (Based on past experiences).

²Plans are to expend the labor and materials costs for jobbing one (1) leaf box in-house this fall already. These are costs for second box.

³Expenses over those normally expected to occur under street maintenance operations (heavy wear on clutches, brakes, fans and blowers; engines will need full PM schedule after fall of heavy stop/start use.

Beyond the fiscal aspect of the change, we feel that there is a need to place a very high priority on the street maintenance functions of clearing drainage ditches, catch basins and culverts, flushing and marking fire hydrants and repairing damaged culvert headwalls and dropped catch basin inlets that have been unattended for so long, before the onset of the winter of 1993-94, most particularly on those streets that are scheduled for reconstruction and resurfacing.

At the urging of Selectwoman Stedman, I have agreed to publish, to the maximum extent possible, our Highway and Water Divisions' work schedule in the Hamilton and Wenham Chronicle on a weekly basis, provided that Erik Schwartz has the room to carry such as an "Around Town" article. This is, as she suggested, to help dissuade residents from the impression that, if our employees are not picking up leaves, they are not working. If people want to drive by and see our worksites, they should feel free to do so, as long as they do not interfere with worksite operations. Having only been on the job now for six weeks, I have been impressed with the diligence with which our staff approaches their duties. Whatever impressions the public may have had of this Department based upon past performance should be put aside; it is not fair to blame or criticize these people for problems they were not responsible for. I urge the Selectmen and the public to give our staff, many of whom are relatively new to the Department, as well as our programs, a chance before "sacking" them.

Encl. (3)

cc: Board of Public Works Members
Board of Selectmen



TOWN OF HAMILTON
BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS
HAMILTON, MA 01936

PRESS RELEASE

DATE: OCTOBER 7, 1993

HAMILTON LEAF COLLECTION PROGRAM

The Town of Hamilton Board of Public Works announced today the final, approved version of a town-wide curbside leaf and grass clippings collection program, to use a separate Saturday collection by solid waste packer trucks. The program has been designed to minimize demands on the DPW's limited staff and equipment resources, while allowing safe, efficient and clean collection of leaves and grass this fall.

Two years ago, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) mandated that these materials, among others, be banned from the state's landfills and incinerators, with resultant cost and operations impacts on local governments. The past two leaf seasons, DPW forces had vacuumed leaves from curbside through the community using a large trailer-mounted machine and dump trucks. That system, while very prominent in its noise and presence, has proven to be extremely inefficient and costly due to the equipment damage and resultant repair costs incurred, as well as the labor-intensive nature of the operation. The trailer-mounted machine is expected to be confined to Town properties this fall, with the curbside collection program collecting the bulk of leaves in the Town.

Collection will be on three separate Saturdays: November 6 and 20 and December 4, 1993. Two contractor packer-type trucks will be used for collection, and the leaves and grass clippings will be taken to a local farm for disposal and composting.

Stones, gravel, sticks, branches, limbs or logs are not allowed in the leaf containers. Only biodegradable bags (no plastic) and trash barrels (which will be emptied into the packer truck) containing leaves and grass clippings, weighing not more than 60 pounds per container, will be taken.



TOWN OF HAMILTON
BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS
HAMILTON, MA 01936

NOTICE TO HAMILTON RESIDENTS

The Hamilton Board of Public Works announces its Fall 1993 Leaf Collection Program for curbside collection of leaves and grass clippings. A mandate by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) that these materials be banned from disposal in landfills and incinerators State-wide, beginning in 1992, with resultant increases in local expenditures for separate disposal, has resulted in the need for the Town to develop an efficient, low-cost curb-side collection operation that does not continue to place excessive burdens on the Department's limited manpower and equipment resources.

Curbside collection will be on three separate Saturdays: November 6 and 20 and December 4, 1993. Collection will be by a private contractor using packer trucks, and leaves will be taken to a private composting operation in Hamilton.

Leaves are to be put out at curbside by 6:00 a.m. on the days of collection. Leaves must be placed in biodegradable bags (no plastic) or in large trash barrels for emptying into the packer truck. Loose leaves will not be collected.

Residents are asked not to place stones, gravel or sticks/branches/limbs in containers for collection, as they interfere with the composting operation.