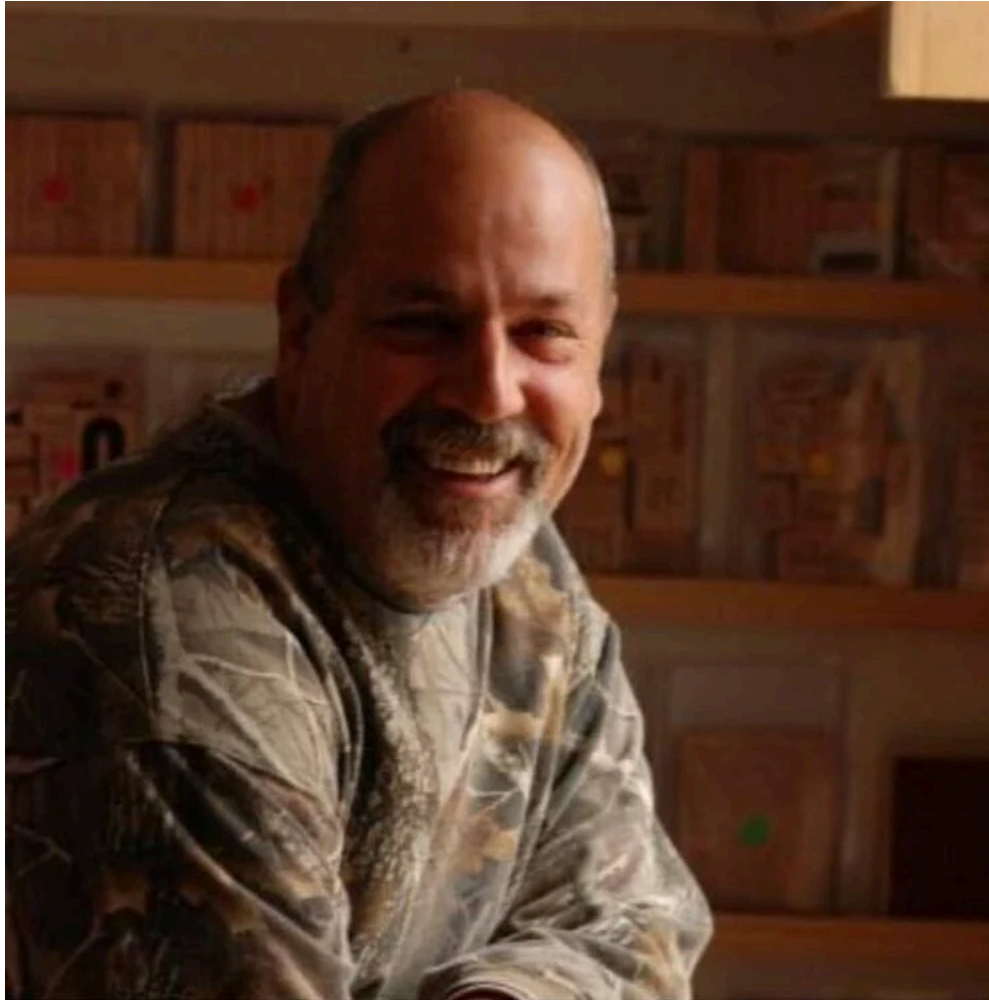


https://www.caledonianrecord.com/news/local/dalton-votes-no-confidence-in-selectman-seeks-town-wide-vote-for-landfill-agreement/article_ac761cf2-b37d-5ab2-be59-d965094fdc18.html

Dalton Votes No Confidence In Selectman, Seeks Town-Wide Vote For Landfill Agreement

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A petitioned article seeking a vote of no confidence in Dalton Selectman Tom Dubreuil, pictured here in a 2023 campaign photo, will go to a special town vote on Thursday, when residents will also be asked to revamp the town's approach to the proposed landfill host community agreement to ensure that Dalton is getting the best deal possible. (Contributed photo)

After a special town meeting, Dalton residents voted no confidence in a selectman and agreed to add four residents, in addition to the Select Board, to negotiate any landfill host community agreement and have any proposed agreement now go to a town-wide vote.

Two warrant articles were submitted by petition in December for Thursday's special town vote.

As originally submitted, the HCA article stated it would be the policy of the town that the three-member Select Board not enter into any agreement with Casella unless a committee consisting of members of the Select Board, planning board, and conservation commission negotiates and develops the agreement on behalf of the town and that the agreement is approved by voters at town meeting.

The final agreement would be voted on by the committee and would require a simple majority vote at town meeting.

The petition, spearheaded by resident Mandy Deveno, stated that while the proposed HCA “might look fair and generous, it is not,” and “that’s not how \$7 billion companies play.”

“Only fools would think GSL is offering Dalton the best deal or that they will ever pay out close to what they are advertising under the current terms,” it stated.

The petition arose after some residents voiced doubt and mistrust that the current Select Board alone could negotiate the best agreement.

During the nearly three-hour special town meeting, the article was amended to remove references to the conservation commission and planning board members and to read:

“It shall be the policy of the Town of Dalton that the select board may not enter into any agreement with Granite State Landfill, LLC owned by Casella Waste Systems, Inc. (or any subsidiaries or agents of Casella Waste Systems, Inc.) unless:

“A committee will consist of the members of the select board along with only four residents of the town of Dalton who do not currently hold any official role for the town. This group negotiates and develops the agreement with GSL on behalf of the town. The resident candidates will appear on the ballot at town meeting and will be voted for at town election on March 11, 2025.

“The resulting agreement is approved by the legislative body (Town Meeting). The committee will engage legal counsel and experts experienced in such agreements to help it negotiate the best possible deal for the town of Dalton. The final agreement will be voted on by the committee and will require a simple majority to be put forth to the town for vote at Town Meeting.”

The article passed in a 145–49 vote.

For the second article, residents vote 93-49 “to inform Selectman Tom Dubreuil that the town has lost confidence in his ability to perform in his role as a Dalton Selectman ...”

The reasons cited state Dubreuil “is routinely unprepared to comprehend, discuss or vote on the town’s business at select board meetings,” fails to deliver results or take action on town business follow-ups, “risks significant legal expenses to the town by refusing to respond and/or delaying response to legal Right to Know requests,” and Dubreuil “championed the replacement of the Town’s legal firm with a new legal firm that quickly exceeded Town’s annual budget for legal expenses addressing his issues.”

An email placed Friday afternoon to Dubreuil asking how he intends to continue as selectman in light of the vote of no confidence and if he plans any changes in his approach to the role was not returned by press time.

On Friday, Casella spokesman Jeff Weld was asked via email why Casella believes a large majority of residents supported the HCA article as amended; if the article as amended will change Casella’s approach to negotiations with the town, and if so, how; and if the company will attempt to influence the votes of the four new negotiating members, the HCA, or the process involving town-enlisted legal counsel and experts.

He was also asked why Casella is seeking HCA negotiations with Dalton when no major permits to date have been approved for the landfill and if Casella is looking to cite any HCA to permitting agencies as an indication of local support.

“The outcome last night shows that a vast majority of the voters are in favor of negotiating a host community agreement with Casella,” said Weld. “The amendment is a clear rebuke to the originally proposed language of the article which attempted to capture the process and provide undue influence against the project while silencing a large number of people who are in favor of the project. While opposition and criticism tend to get the most publicity and attention, the most recent voting outcomes in the town point to a growing number of people who are in favor of allowing the process to move forward in an effort to learn more about the project, welcome the economic development it brings along with it, and have been open to understanding the realities of the highly regulated, highly engineered facilities of today.”

The Granite State Landfill has received its shoreland impact permit from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services and its driveway permit from the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, he said.

“Six other permit applications have been submitted and are in various stages of completion, review, and response,” said Weld. “Beginning negotiations now, and getting an agreement in place during the permitting process offers residents the best opportunity to provide input that will help shape operations at the facility and we look forward to negotiating in good faith with whomever the town determines is best suited to do so.”

On Jan. 9, during her first remarks as New Hampshire governor, Kelly Ayotte said, “There will be no landfill at Forest Lake in Dalton” and “we will not allow that beautiful part of our state ... to become a dumping ground for out-of-state trash.”

Weld on Friday was asked if Casella has reached out to the governor since her remarks, or intends to reach out, and how the company plans to overcome Ayotte’s opposition.

He did not respond to the questions regarding the governor.

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