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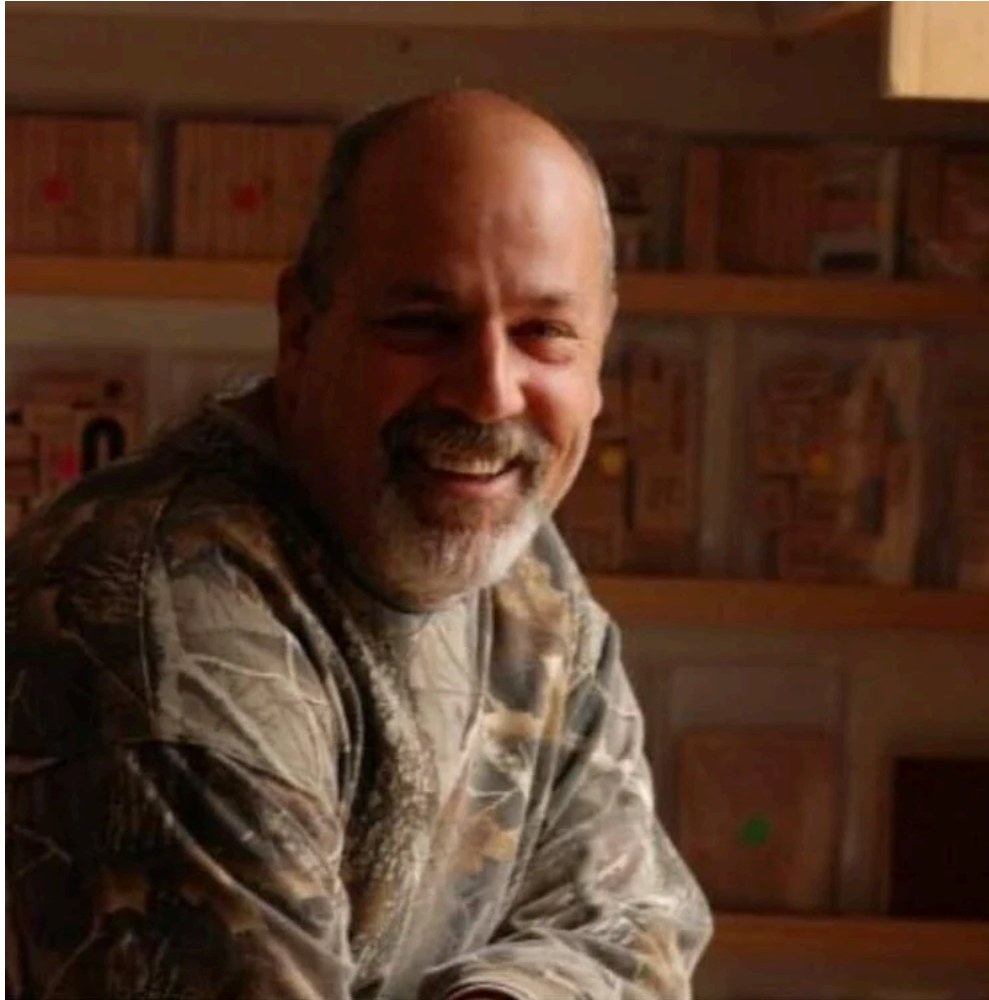
FEATURED

Dalton Petitions Seek No Confidence In Selectman, New Approach To Landfill Agreement

Special Vote To Be Held Thursday

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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)

As division ratchets up in Dalton, two citizen petitions seeking a vote of no confidence in a selectman and a new approach to the proposed landfill host community agreement (HCA) with Casella Waste Systems are going to a special town vote on Thursday.

Both petitioned warrant articles, which surpassed the minimum number of 50 resident signatures, were submitted to the town on Dec. 9.

The first seeks that it be the policy of the town that the 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 petition follows concerns voiced by residents that Casella has been in the driver's seat regarding the HCA and the required permits for what the company is calling the Granite State Landfill LLC, which have yet to be approved by regulators.

Per the article, the committee would engage in legal counsel, and experts experienced in such agreements to help negotiate the best possible deal for the town. The final agreement would be voted on by the committee and would require a simple majority vote at town meeting.

According to the petition's background, "GSL has indicated it is interested in negotiating a host community agreement with the town of Dalton and has offered the agreement they want. While it may look fair and generous, it is not. 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. Dalton Select Board members say they intend to proceed with 'negotiating' the host community agreement on their own, without seeking knowledgeable and experienced negotiating advice and legal counsel. GSL has offered \$25K to fund the town's legal expenses to negotiate the agreement now, before it has the necessary permits to proceed. This approach uses that money to ensure Dalton gets the best deal it can."

On Oct. 11, Brian Oliver, vice-president for Casella, wrote Dalton Selectman Eric Moore to say that the company would be willing to reimburse the town's HCA-related legal expenses up to \$25,000, according to a copy of the email.

The second petition seeks "to see if the town will vote to inform Selectman Tom Dubreuil that the town has lost confidence in his ability to perform his role as Dalton Selectman ..."

The reasons stated include Dubreuil being "routinely unprepared to comprehend, discuss or vote on the town's business at select board meetings"; failing to deliver a result after accepting responsibility to take action or following up on town business; risking "significant legal expenses to the town by refusing to respond and/or delaying response to legal Right To Know requests"; routinely

abstaining from voting on motions before the Select Board; and championing “the replacement of the Town’s legal firm with a new legal firm that quickly exceeded the Town’s annual budget for legal expenses addressing his issues.”

The Dubreuil petition also follows an October verbal notice and November written notice by Dalton Town Clerk Jeanette Charon, who advised the board of a “hostile work environment.”

Spearheading both petitions was resident Mandy Deveno, who on Monday said the vote of no confidence article on Dubreuil netted 66 signatures and the HCA article around 56.

Both could have attracted more signatures, but there was a deadline by which to submit them for the special town meeting, she said.

“The biggest thing for myself and other concerned citizens is we were worried about the neglect of the 91-a [right-to-know requests] specifically and how our right to know was being neglected or outright ignored until we brought our concerns to public meetings,” she said. “That was the basis of our issue with Tom.”

For the HCA, the petitioning residents want to make sure that Casella compensates Dalton appropriately in the long run, said Deveno.

During the Select Board’s Sept. 30 meeting, resident Michael Ryan said Casella doesn’t have to give Dalton anything and is floating its proposed \$2 million annually and other proposed benefits as a tax write-off, similar to a person donating to a charity, because that’s how it works.

Select Board member Jo Beth Dudley said the town doesn’t know how much of a benefit it should get since it doesn’t know what the base tax rate would be. Property taxes are paid off the value and the tax rate so Dalton doesn’t know if it’s getting a fair amount through what Casella is offering, she said.

A call placed Monday to Dubreuil’s phone number listed on his social media campaign did not go through. Another number was not in service.

An email sent to Dubreuil asking if he intends to speak on his behalf on Thursday and present his case against the articles, how he responds to the right-to-know concerns in the petition, and how specifically he would ensure that Dalton would get the best deal possible through an HCA was not returned by press time.

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