

## **Lakes Region Household Hazardous Product Facility 2020 Annual Facility Report**

### **1. Facility Summary**

- a. The Lakes Region Household Hazardous Product Facility (LRHHPF) is a permanent facility providing disposal of household hazardous waste (HHW) such as oil base paint, pesticides, toxic cleaners and solvents. The facility was conceived as a joint venture between the Lakes Region Planning Commission, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, and founding member Towns of Alton and Wolfeboro 2002-2016 and Tuftonboro 2013-16. For detailed information on what the facility does and does not accept, see the colored brochure with the lake view on the cover. The facility is open every third Saturday 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM, May through October at the Wolfeboro Facility, and additional second Saturdays in July and September in Alton.
- b. During 2020, the 19<sup>th</sup> year of the Inter-Municipal Agreement, member towns consist of Alton and Wolfeboro, NH with Wolfeboro being the host municipality. Operation of the facility is governed by a 10-year Inter-Municipal Agreement that spells out the method of cost sharing, officers, etc. The agreement also has provisions for other towns becoming members. The Joint Board members during 2020 were: Liz Dionne, Chair/Treasurer/Alton Town Admin, member rep; Sarah Silk Vice-Chair/Secretary/member rep/Site Coordinator.
- c. Paid (permanent part-time) employees are: Sarah Silk, site coordinator and Town of Alton Finance Department as the facility finance manager. Licensed Pharmacists provided Pharmacist duties for the February, June, August, and September special medicine collections. In addition, seasonal part-time employees administer surveys and perform data entry for medicine collections on an alternating basis. These personnel perform their duties at the permanent and satellite sites for consistent recording of essential cost allocation data.
- d. New in 2018 was a mid-winter medication-only collection the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of February at All Saints Church (next to the hospital & across from the Wolfeboro Police Dept.) The mid-winter collection was continued in 2020 to further evaluate mid-winter demand for proper disposal.

In 2006, Northeast Recycling Council (NERC) and LRHHPF implemented New Hampshire's first ever waste collection of unwanted prescription drugs held during an HHW event. Two medical waste collections are held at the facility and one at the satellite collection in Alton. Wolfeboro participates in the DEA drug drop offs April and October and a drop box in the lobby. Alton accepts meds whenever their Police Department is open.

- e. LRHHPF continues to arrange direct-pay disposal between the waste hauler and small quantity generators with prior notice. The Facility assists NH Dept of Agriculture and DES with compliance by providing appropriate disposal while avoiding substantial mobilization costs to the individual or business. A successful pesticide disposal, primarily for farmers, for the Pesticide Control Div of the NH Dept of Agriculture, Div. of Markets and Foods was held June 12, 2010. The first such collection conducted by the state of NH in twenty years. An EPA grant enabled the farmers to attend at no cost. The contracted fee structure between LRHHPF and Clean Harbors was utilized. Personnel

costs plus disposal fees were reimbursed to LRHHPF for a total of \$19,676.68 as the program was outside the regular LRHHPF budget.

The Site Coordinator has been in contact since 2017 with Commissioner and various others in the Pesticide division as they seek grant funding to enable another collection.

Lakes Region Planning Commission (LRPC) has shown interest to incorporate such a collection in a Dept. of Agriculture grant program.

## 2. Summary of Operations

### a. Usage Data

Overall attendance was 719 (867 in 2019) Alton participation decreased slightly at 185 (195 in 2019) and Wolfeboro attendance decreased at 355 (464 in 2019). Attendance is expected to return to its previous level when the pandemic issues are resolved. The numbers below reflect households for HHW only (medicine collections not on this chart).

| <b>Member Towns</b>     | <b>2014</b> | <b>2015</b> | <b>2016</b> | <b>2017</b> | <b>2018</b> | <b>2019</b> | <b>2020</b> |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Alton                   | 160         | 606         | 234         | 188         | 217         | 190         | 185         |
| Tuftonboro              | 35          | 57          | 51          |             |             |             |             |
| Wolfeboro               | 447         | 357         | 349         | 377         | 349         | 464         | 355         |
| <b>Non-Member Towns</b> |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| Alexandria              |             |             | 1           |             |             |             |             |
| Barnstead               |             |             |             |             | 1           |             | 4           |
| Barrington              |             | 1           |             |             |             | 6           |             |
| Bartlett                |             |             |             |             |             |             | 4           |
| Belmont                 |             | 3           |             |             |             |             |             |
| Boscowan                |             | 1           |             |             |             |             |             |
| Bridgewater             |             |             |             |             | 2           |             |             |
| Bristol                 |             |             |             |             |             |             | 4           |
| Brookfield              |             | 1           |             | 4           | 1           |             |             |
| Campton                 |             |             |             |             |             |             | 5           |
| Canterbury              | 1           |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| Center Harbor           | 1           | 1           |             |             |             |             | 1           |
| Chichester              |             |             |             |             | 1           | 3           |             |
| Concord                 |             |             |             |             |             |             | 1           |
| Deering                 |             |             |             |             | 1           | 4           |             |
| Derry                   | 14          | 6           |             | 9           | 1           |             |             |
| Dover                   |             |             |             | 1           |             |             |             |
| Dunbarton               |             |             |             |             |             | 6           |             |
| Durham                  | 14          | 10          |             |             |             |             |             |
| Effingham               |             |             | 1           |             |             |             | 1           |
| Epsom                   |             |             |             |             | 1           |             |             |
| Exeter                  |             |             |             |             |             |             | 3           |
| Farmington              |             |             |             |             |             |             | 5           |
| Franconia               |             |             |             |             |             | 1           |             |

|                |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Freedom        |            | 1          |            |            |            |            | 6          |
| Gilford        |            |            | 1          |            | 2          | 3          | 17         |
| Gilmanton      |            |            |            |            | 1          |            | 1          |
| Grantham       |            |            |            |            |            |            | 1          |
| Hebron         |            |            |            |            |            |            | 6          |
| Holderness     |            |            |            |            |            | 5          |            |
| Hopkinton      |            |            |            |            |            |            | 3          |
| Intervale      |            |            | 3          |            |            |            |            |
| Laconia        | 8          | 4          | 1          |            | 1          | 1          | 1          |
| Lee            | 5          | 6          |            |            |            |            |            |
| Londonderry    |            |            |            | 1          |            |            |            |
| Madison        |            |            |            |            |            |            | 3          |
| Manchester     |            |            | 1          |            | 1          |            |            |
| Meredith       |            | 1          | 1          |            | 3          |            | 9          |
| Milton         |            |            |            |            | 1          |            |            |
| Moultonborough | 2          | 19         | 9          | 9          | 16         | 21         | 11         |
| New Durham     |            | 1          |            |            | 1          |            |            |
| New Hampton    |            |            |            |            |            | 1          |            |
| Newmarket      |            |            |            | 2          | 3          |            |            |
| Ossipee        |            | 2          | 1          | 3          | 2          | 1          | 1          |
| Plymouth       |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| Rochester      | 1          |            | 1          |            |            |            | 2          |
| Rollinsford    |            | 1          |            |            |            |            |            |
| Rye            |            |            | 5          |            |            |            |            |
| Salisbury      |            |            |            |            | 1          |            | 1          |
| Sanbornton     |            | 1          | 2          |            | 4          |            | 2          |
| Sanbornville   |            |            |            |            |            |            | 1          |
| Sandwich       | 5          | 12         | 3          |            | 16         | 12         | 9          |
| Seabrook       |            |            |            |            | 1          |            |            |
| Somersworth    |            |            | 3          |            | 4          |            |            |
| South Sutton   |            | 2          |            |            |            |            |            |
| Strafford      |            |            |            |            |            |            | 1          |
| Stratham       |            | 6          |            |            |            |            |            |
| Tamworth       |            | 1          |            | 1          | 6          | 3          | 11         |
| Thorton        |            |            |            |            |            | 1          |            |
| Tuftonboro     |            |            |            | 11         | 15         | 10         | 8          |
| Warren         |            | 3          |            |            | 5          |            |            |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>693</b> | <b>705</b> | <b>669</b> | <b>606</b> | <b>657</b> | <b>732</b> | <b>662</b> |
|                |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |

**Table 1. Attendance by Households**

b. Procedures for Use by Member and Non-Member Towns:

COVID-19 precautions allowed HHW/medication collections to continue in 2020 as an essential service with modifications required by the waste hauler and member towns.

Residents of member towns of Alton and Wolfeboro prior to collection day, pick up a pass at their respective solid waste facility and then transport up to 10 gallons of hazardous products per pass to the permanent collection facility in Wolfeboro on one of the six monthly collection dates the third Saturday of the month May thru October. (Covid-19 changes in Wolfeboro necessitated pass registration for that town at the LRHHPF Facility on the day of collection only.) The June and August collections include the special pharmaceutical collections which have separate tallies and surveys. All member towns are allowed more than one visit and one pass (valid for 10 gallons each or one pass for medications) such that all members receive the same services.

Residents of Alton may also transport HHW products to the Alton Solid Waste Center on the two scheduled satellite collection days held the second Saturday in the months of July and September. September is the Alton medicine collection. HHW products are self-transported to the permanent facility for consolidation by the waste hauler. Non-controlled pharmaceuticals are self-transported immediately to the locked LRHHPF facility. Police Officers take custody of all controlled medications.

Residents of any non-member town may use the Wolfeboro facility on a "pay at the gate" fee basis of \$40 for each 0-5 gallon increment (scanning the cans, not measuring the ounces within them), example \$80 for 10 gallons. For pharmaceutical waste a fee of \$25 per non-member household has been charged since 2009 to cover the costs specific to that program.

Please see the attached (2020) brochure for more information on how households in your community can utilize the facility.

Due to a large increase in the first year of the 2021-2023 waste hauler contract, the charge for non-members will have to be adjusted so they continue to be self-supporting. New brochures will be printed and web sites will need updating.

c. Medicine collections:

Some medicines are classified as hazardous waste in both state and federal regulations. Increased inappropriate use of pharmaceuticals has led to a substantial rise in drug deaths caused by prescription medications as well as the stereotypical street drugs. Because of the severity of the controlled drug problem nation-wide, public service announcements regularly appear on major television networks increasing public awareness of the danger of prescription drugs, but giving little direction in proper disposal options

The Lakes Region Household Hazardous Product Facility offers the longest running program in NH (since 2006) for pharmaceutical disposal using NERC best management practice protocols with a pharmacist, two police officers (a second officer added in 2012 to comply with proposed changes by NH Attorney General's Office), and a registered hazardous waste hauler present to comply with new state and federal regulations. Controlled medications come under the custody of the officers. All prescription items are

disposed of in their original containers after positive identification and a count by a licensed pharmacist. Non-controlled items primarily go as a pesticide solid with the waste hauler (some as a liquid or an aerosol).

The 2012 brochure for disposal of sharps, lancets, pen needles, syringes and other devices for the injection of drugs, from the collaboration of stakeholders/members of the NH Legislative Sharps Study Committee is in need of an update. IN 2021 LRPC and LRHHPF personnel will complete collaborating on an updated version.

Since 2006, those attending the medicine collections continue to bring an average of 1 gal/HH of: controlled and non-controlled prescription medications; pet medications; herbals; vitamins; over-the-counter remedies; lotions; drops; salves; sprays; etc.

Of the 57 HH in 2020 (-23% under covid-19 conditions from 2019), Alton had 10 and Wolfeboro had 46 (+1 HH from Ossipee). The total of 93 1/2 gallons was comprised of 4.5 controlled, 48 non-controlled prescription and 41 over-the-counter or personal care products.

d. Alton Satellite Collections:

State law exempts towns from strict liability in the unlikely event of an accident while transporting HHW products in a town vehicle with a town employee. The possibility of a costly hazardous waste cleanup often dissuaded a community from utilizing the self-transport option for HHW collections. This exemption has fostered a higher level of comfort for local officials enabling LRHHPF to conduct satellite collections in Alton with DES HHW Solid Waste Operator Training of town personnel operating the town-owned vehicle.

Convenient access has shown to be the most important factor for substantially increasing attendance, securing safe and appropriate disposal.

e. Facility Improvements

The member towns continue to set aside funds each year for the future construction of a cover over the work area for protection of personnel on collection days. Collection days with heavy rain make the essential data collection process very difficult and render consolidation of HHW products subject to potential site contamination. A dry environment is essential when collecting and identifying pharmaceuticals.

In 2014, the dry chemical tank needed replacement because of rusting to meet fire regulations and the issue of peeling paint continues. The paint problem commenced immediately after delivery and several types of paint and paint prep methods have been used to no avail (touchups again in 2019). Roof treatment was completed in 2015.

### **3. Financial Data**

- a. In 2003 the LRHHPF finances were managed by the Town of Wolfeboro (employees are under Wolfeboro). Beginning in 2004, the Town of Alton took over the financial accounting for the facility acting as LRHHPF finance manager. A special revenue account, under the control of the Alton Town Treasurer, was established for the facility.

This successful working relationship remains in place. A summary of the financial data is shown in table 2.

Table 2

| <b>REVENUES:</b>                      | <b>2014</b>        | <b>2015</b>        | <b>2016</b>        | <b>2017</b>        | <b>2018</b>        | <b>2019</b>        | <b>2020</b>        |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Carryover adjustment from prior year  | -\$25.27           | \$0.00             | \$0.00             | \$0.00             | \$0.00             | \$0.00             | \$0.00             |
| Contributions from Alton              | \$8,000            | \$15,536.40        | \$17,000           | \$17,500           | \$19,947.00        | \$20,041.00        | \$24,210           |
| Contributions from Wolfeboro          | \$36,755           | \$39,612.30        | \$41,924           | \$39,858.06        | \$46,564.00        | \$48,395.00        | \$56,490           |
| Contributions from Tuftonboro         | \$2,500            | \$4,000            | \$4,000            | \$0.00             | \$0.00             | \$0.00             | \$0.00             |
| Contributions from the State of NH    | \$5,717.49         | \$0.00             | \$3,273            | \$3,393            | \$4,166.00         | \$0.00             | \$3,185            |
| <b>REVENUES</b>                       | <b>2014</b>        | <b>2015</b>        | <b>2016</b>        | <b>2017</b>        | <b>2018</b>        | <b>2019</b>        | <b>2020</b>        |
| Receipts from Non-Member Participants | \$4,072.50         | \$6,092.01         | \$3,055            | \$2,800            | \$6,320.00         | \$5,717.09         | \$8,260.00         |
| Cost of Pesticide Collection          | \$0.00             | \$0.00             | \$0.00             | \$0.00             | \$0.00             | \$0.00             | \$0.00             |
| Interest from Bank                    | \$136.67           | \$161.95           | \$206.43           | \$208.92           | \$222.87           | \$244.21           | \$701.60           |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>\$57,156.39</b> | <b>\$63,866.26</b> | <b>\$69,458.43</b> | <b>\$63,759.98</b> | <b>\$77,219.87</b> | <b>\$74,397.30</b> | <b>\$92,846.60</b> |
| <b>Year End Overpayments</b>          |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| Alton Overpayment                     | \$2,909.61         | \$0.00             | -\$13,537.91       | -\$174.29          | -\$3,733.08        | -\$1,683.00        | \$490.40           |
| Tuftonboro Overpayment                | \$1,459.34         | \$271.12           | \$786.58           | \$0.00             | \$0.00             | \$0.00             | \$0.00             |
| Wolfeboro                             | \$3,294.19         | \$9,393.84         | \$9729.46          | \$20,084.31        | \$22,662.85        | \$21,734.          | \$10,732.98        |

|  |                   |                   |                  |                    |                    |                    |                    |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Overpayment                            |                   |                   |                  |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>\$7,663.14</b> | <b>\$9,664.96</b> | <b>\$9158.13</b> | <b>\$20,258.60</b> | <b>\$18,929.77</b> | <b>\$20,051.35</b> | <b>\$11,223.38</b> |
| <b>EXPENSES:</b>                       |                   |                   |                  |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| Wages                                  | \$7,392.10        | \$8,887.29        | \$9,841.79       | \$11,950.72        | \$13,773.59        | \$14,550.41        | \$14,284.76        |
| FICA & Medicare                        | \$565.56          | \$679.94          | \$752.94         | \$919.08           | \$1,028.36         | \$1,099.25         | \$1,080.07         |
| Meetings                               | \$25.00           | \$300.00          | \$300.00         | \$155.00           | \$110.00           | \$53.26            | \$109.97           |
| Dues / Fees                            | \$250.00          | \$300.00          | \$300.00         | \$1,086.58         | \$300.00           | \$300.00           | \$0.00             |
| Mileage                                | \$746.68          | \$1,131.61        | \$1,170.72       | \$970.78           | \$725.43           | \$964.40           | \$809.10           |
| Office Supplies                        | \$326.16          | \$127.98          | \$25.95          | \$63.19            | \$173.14           | \$250.44           | \$0.00             |
| Reference Materials                    | \$0.00            | \$6.48            | \$0.00           | \$0.00             | \$0.00             | \$0.00             | \$0.00             |
| General Supplies                       | \$94.73           | \$249.30          | \$93.68          | \$181.40           | \$38.54            | \$36.77            | \$112.61           |
| Legal Fees                             | \$0.00            | \$0.00            | \$0.00           | \$0.00             | \$0.00             | \$0.00             | \$0.00             |
| Telephone                              | \$928.29          | \$1,024.04        | \$1,010.63       | \$991.02           | \$1,010.32         | \$1,041.98         | \$1,073.22         |
| Medicine Collection                    | \$0.00            | \$0.00            | \$2,260.50       | \$2,158.00         | \$2,751.00         | \$3,114.39         | \$2,496.00         |
| Outside Services                       | \$39,216.06       | \$44,254.85       | \$39,416.82      | \$38,491.30        | \$49,549.32        | \$51,195.33        | \$53,151.10        |
| Professional Services                  | \$0.00            | \$0.00            | \$0.00           | \$0.00             | \$0.00             | \$405.63           | \$49.70            |
| New Equipment                          | \$0.00            | \$0.00            | \$49.99          | \$0.00             | \$0.00             | \$0.00             | \$0.00             |
| New Equipment funds reserved for cover | \$4,000           | \$4,000.00        | \$4,000.00       | \$4,000.00         | \$4,000.00         | \$0.00             | \$4,000            |
| Equipment Maintenance                  | \$0.00            | \$481.28          | \$101.94         | \$0.00             | \$243.59           | \$8.99             | \$1,497.69         |
| Unemployment                           | \$47.30           | \$86.00           |                  | \$95.00            | \$105.00           | \$110.00           | \$107.00           |

|                          |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                          |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| Workers Compensation     | \$334.70           | \$791.00           | \$840.00           | \$924.00           | \$1,024.00         | \$0.00             | \$1,088.08         |
| Electricity              | \$74.45            | \$90.77            | \$83.87            | \$103.51           | \$75.84            | \$96.95            | \$80.91            |
| Encumbered Bldg. Expense | \$1,060.65         | \$939.35           | \$0.00             | \$0.00             | \$218.64           | \$525.00           | \$0.00             |
| <b>Totals</b>            | <b>\$55,061.79</b> | <b>\$59,244.89</b> | <b>\$59,244.89</b> | <b>\$62,099.58</b> | <b>\$75,131.77</b> | <b>\$73,642.80</b> | <b>\$79,940.21</b> |

Table 2. Financial Summary

One hundred twenty-three non-member HHW households including 1 medication household from non-member towns (including referrals to the Facility by NH DES) paid in cash or check. HH are charged \$40 per 0-5 gal increment for HHW. This was only a 12% reduction by non-members during a difficult year. The total collected for 2020 was \$8,260, a substantial increase of \$2543 over 2019 (\$5,717.)

b. Net Cost to Member Towns

Net operating costs are the expenses after all outside revenues have been subtracted from gross expenses. The expenses are then prorated to the member towns based on each town's actual household visit data. The 2020 net costs are shown in Table 3.



| <b>2020 Net Cost</b>   |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| Total Operating Expenses   | <u>\$75,940.21</u>  |
| <b>Total Facility Expenses</b>                                       | <b>\$75,940.21</b>  |
| Remaining 2020 funds from 3-7000-201 for roof fund                   | <u>\$4,000.00</u>   |
| <b>Total Facility Expenses including funds saved for Roof repair</b> | <b>\$79,940.21</b>  |
| Alton Payments YTD   | \$24,210.00         |
| 2019 Carryover for Alton   | -\$1,683.00         |
| Wolfeboro Payments YTD   | \$56,490.00         |
| 2019 Carryover for Wolfeboro   | \$21,734.35         |
| Contributions from Grant for Alton                                   | \$1,465.10          |
| Contributions from Grant for Wolfeboro                               | \$1,719.90          |
| Interest for 2020  | \$701.60            |
| Outside Income   | <u>\$8,260.00</u>   |
| <b>Total Income</b>  | <b>\$112,897.95</b> |
| <b>Net Member Expenditure</b>  | <b>\$70,978.61</b>  |
| 2020 Use Data  |                     |
| Alton Households HHW & Medications                                   | 195                 |
| Wolfeboro Households HHW & Medications                               | 401                 |
| <b>Total Member Town Households</b>                                  | 596                 |
| Alton % Use  | <b>33</b>           |
| Wolfeboro % Use  | <b>67</b>           |
| Alton Vehicle Fee 105 Vehicles @ 0.75                                | \$78.75             |
| Total Alton Cost @ 33% and vehicle fee                               | \$23,501.70         |
| Alton over payment to be carried over                                | \$490.40            |
| Total Wolfeboro Cost @ 67% <b>minus</b> Vehicle Fee                  | \$47,476.92         |
| Wolfeboro to be carried over   | \$32,467.33         |
| Estimated Alton Payment 2021 @ 30%                                   | \$27,524.91         |
| Estimated Wolfeboro Payment 2021 @ 70%                               | \$64,224.79         |
|  |                     |
|  |                     |

Table 3. Net Member Town Costs

**4. 2019 Projections**

a. Wolfeboro Schedule 2021 – open to Alton and all Towns

The facility will be open 8:30 AM to 12:00 PM on the following six, 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays with medicine collections on three dates:

Feb 20                      All Saints Church, Wolfeboro \*medications only\*

(CANCELLED due to covid-19 restrictions on venue)

May 15                      Household Hazardous Waste  
June 19                      Household Hazardous and Medical Waste  
July 17                        Household Hazardous Waste  
August 21                    Household Hazardous and Medical Waste  
September 18               Household Hazardous Waste  
October 16                   Household Hazardous Waste

b. Alton satellite collections – Alton residents only

Collections will be at the Alton Solid Waste Facility from 8:30 AM to 12:00 PM on the following two, 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturdays with medicine collection on one date:

July 3                        Household Hazardous Waste  
September 11               Household Hazardous and Medical Waste

c. Fees for non-member town households

Non-member HHW fees will be readjusted for each 0-5 gallon increment scanning the cans to compensate for the increase in the contracted fees for the 3-year waste contract. (The towns of Moultonborough, and Sandwich have continued reimbursement to their households for the first \$40/year. It is not known if they will adjust their reimbursement.)

The Facility recovery fee will be set at 13% thru 2023 (an increase from 10%). Setup and disposal fees thru 2023 have been negotiated with the waste hauler at +10%-2021, +4%-2022, +2%-2023 (increased from 4 ½% in 2018 and 3% 2019 and 2020.)

It is increasingly important to educate the public to the availability of less hazardous alternative products to prevent increases in Facility disposal costs as the unit prices rise over of time. Such education is a required component of NHDES Grant applications. (The amount of grant money per capita has been changing, lowering the amount to the Facility.)

Quarterly state-wide Site Coordinator meetings are facilitated by Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning. Review of standardized messaging for educating the public, exchanges of information from RFP responses by waste haulers, performance of contractors at events, and trends in paint care legislation and manufacturer’s responsibility for disposal, are topics of interest to the group.