

Panel advises against landfill pullout

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WINSTED — A panel of speakers from the regional landfill board told a taxpayers group yesterday that it would not be in the town's best interest to follow Colebrook's lead and withdraw from the Regional Refuse Disposal District No. 1.

Landfill Administrator James Hart said private garbage haulers may initially offer attractive prices during the first year, but

could later hike up the fees for garbage removal. He also said a regional coalition is more economical for member towns.

"All of the indicators we have seen show that the district should stay together," Hart said. "It would be the most cost-effective, and each town has got to look into the situation for themselves."

Winsted's men John Gauger, Jr. and Walter D. Miller, who attended yesterday's Winsted Taxpayers Association discussion

at the Eagle Club on Elm Street, said they favor sticking with the regional district rather than trying to go it alone like Colebrook did.

"The best thing to do is to maintain control over your waste stream," Gauger said. He said keeping an eye on what goes into the garbage locally will help towns in the regional district compete for the lowest possible disposal costs.

Miller said he also supports the

regional landfill. "Common sense tells me it's a money-saving operation and I'm behind it 100 percent," he said.

Winsted, Barkhamsted, Colebrook and New Hartford pay annual per-capita assessments to belong to the Regional Refuse Disposal District No. 1, which operates the landfill in Barkhamsted.

The landfill is listed as a federal

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Superfund site because of groundwater contamination, but parts of it are still being used for burying bulky waste. The site also serves as a transfer station, where recycled materials are collected and garbage from the four member towns is taken to an incinerator in Hartford.

Colebrook has already announced that it will pull out of the district in the fall, opting instead for a municipal contract for curbside trash pickup. New Hartford and Barkhamsted have launched formal studies into other garbage disposal methods and Winsted officials are also considering alternatives.

Winsted Community Lawyer Charlene LaVole moderated yesterday's panel discussion, which

featured Hart and two Winsted representatives to the landfill board — Margo Kelleher and Paul Grigg. The panelists answered LaVole's questions about the advantages and disadvantages of pulling out of the district, and later answered questions from the 30 people in the audience.

Kelleher said Colebrook is in a unique situation that made pulling out of the regional landfill more attractive — it has few industrial or commercial waste generators and 80 percent of its residents already contract with private trash haulers. Of all the towns in the district, Colebrook is the farthest from the transfer station.

"In effect Colebrook has been paying more than its share for cause it generates so little commercial waste," Hart said