

**APPROVED MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
HAMILTON COUNTY RECYCLING AND SOLID WASTE DISTRICT
POLICY COMMITTEE
March 17, 2016**

DATE: March 17, 2016

TIME: 1:30 p.m.

PLACE: Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services
250 William Howard Taft Road - First Floor
Cincinnati, Ohio 45219

PRESENT: **Policy Committee Members**

Elizabeth Bruggeman, General Interest Member
Tim Ingram, Hamilton County Public Health Representative
Jeff Luehrmann, Generator Representative
Sue Magness, Largest Municipality Representative
Todd Portune, County Commissioner, Chair
Larry Riddle, Ex-Officio Member

Staff

Michelle Balz, Assistant Solid Waste Manager
Holly Christmann, Director
Ali Khodadad, Operations Manager
Jenny Lohmann, Program Specialist
Brad Miller, Assistant Director
Cher Mohring, Program Specialist
Susan Schumacher, Assistant Solid Waste Specialist, Clerk
Catherine Walsh, Business Outreach Coordinator

Others in Attendance

Katie Raverty-Evans, Best Way Disposal
Dean Ferrier, Rumpke
Greg Kesterman, Hamilton County Public Health

ABSENT: **Policy Committee Members**

Sophie Manaster, Student Representative
Tom Turchiano, Public Member

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Portune called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

2. CLERK'S REPORT

A. Approval of Minutes – January 21, 2016 Policy Committee Meeting

Mr. Portune asked if there were any questions or comments on the minutes as drafted and circulated. Hearing none, entertained a motion to approve the January 21, 2016 minutes as drafted. Mr. Ingram moved approval; Ms. Magness seconded. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

B. Additions to the Agenda

Ms. Christmann stated that she would like to add, under Informational Items, an update regarding a public records request related to the District's electronic recycling events in past years.

Ms. Christmann stated that Colerain, Springfield, and Ross Townships will begin contracting for waste and recycling services beginning April 1, 2016. Rumpke was the awarded bidder and Ms. Balz did a lot of work assisting in the process.

Mr. Portune stated that this was great work and asked if other townships were interested. Ms. Christmann stated that there was nothing concrete at this point but she would keep the Committee informed.

3. DISTRICT REVENUE UPDATES/ANALYSIS

Ms. Christmann stated that Attachment B showed revenue through January 2016 compared to January 2015 and it has increased slightly by about \$25,000. Ms. Christmann stated that as announced at the last meeting, Rumpke was bringing waste back to Rumpke Sanitary Landfill and the District is projecting revenue at \$2.5 million.

Mr. Portune entertained a motion to approve the revenue report. Ms. Bruggeman moved; Ms. Magness seconded. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

4. POLICY ITEMS

A. Solid Waste Management Plan – Revenue

Ms. Christmann stated that this revenue discussion is for the Solid Waste Management Plan Update. The draft plan is scheduled to be delivered to Ohio EPA by the end of the summer.

Ms. Christmann stated that the Committee, over the past several months, has been looking at what the District's revenue will be and if the fee structure will be changed. As a reminder, at the last meeting, the financial subcommittee's recommendation was to retain the \$1-\$2-\$1 tiered disposal fee and add a \$.30/ton designation fee to bring revenue to \$2.8 million versus the \$2.5 million which is where staff had projected revenue to be with the \$1-\$2-\$1.

Ms. Christmann stated that at the January meeting, the Policy Committee requested that staff receive additional stakeholder input, speak with communities, elected officials, waste industry, etc. to get a pulse of the community. Staff has done this by meeting with twenty communities representing 80% of the population in Hamilton County. There was very good discussion and feedback by the communities.

Ms. Christmann stated that when this was presented, communities spoke very highly of the solid waste district and were impressed that there has never been a fee increase. Ms. Christmann stated that she did not hear strong opposition to a fee increase but feels the reality is that there are other potential fees coming down the road.

Ms. Christmann stated that staff has also met with the waste industry and in general, had very good conversations especially for those haulers who may not own a landfill. These haulers are at the whim of that landfill whether they sign the designation agreement or not. In general, the waste industry does not like being told where waste can go which is what the District would be doing with a designation fee even though it would be open to anyone.

Ms. Christmann stated that after hearing feedback, staff discussed the issue internally and is making the recommendation to retain the \$1-\$2-\$1 and not go for a fee increase at this point because revenue projections have changed.

Ms. Christmann stated that if revenue was at \$2.1 million and the feedback was the same, staff would be recommending a designation fee.

Mr. Portune stated that when staff was meeting with the twenty communities, asked if they offered any suggestions of what they would be willing to do without in the event the District did not have enough revenue without a fee increase. Ms. Christmann stated that staff showed them draft budgets of \$2.5 and \$2.8 million; with a big reduction being in the Residential Recycling Incentive Program.

Ms. Christmann stated that some communities said that they would rather receive less in RRI than have a fee increase others said that this is a political reality and can live with it. Obviously, there was concern about reducing the District's largest program but she goes back to the reality of this new fee passing.

Ms. Magness stated that her only concern was losing the household hazardous waste program. Ms. Christmann stated that this is a good point and the next agenda item was talking about a \$2.5 million versus \$2.8 million budget and we were talking about the fee right now. Ms. Christmann stated that the household hazardous waste program was important to communities but we have to remember that it is a very high cost per ton for very low diversion from the landfill.

Ms. Christmann stated that obviously, there are many side benefits to household hazardous waste collections versus landfill diversion (e.g. poisonings, going down the sewer, illegal dumping, waste hauler injuries, etc.) but in terms of the District's mission of diverting material from landfill, it is a high cost per ton.

The Committee discussed household hazardous waste.

Mr. Portune felt the Commissioners, at this time, would agree that this is not the right time for a District fee increase and Ms. Christmann is correct that there are a lot of increases in fees that people are absorbing today and gave an example using the Metropolitan Sewer District.

Mr. Portune stated that he felt that staff's recommendation was the correct one.

Mr. Ingram asked Ms. Christmann to walk him through a bit more and that he knows the respective health departments will be taking a cut and illegal dumping/tire enforcement program funding will be increased.

Ms. Christmann stated that in Attachment C, which is what Commissioner Ingram is referring, are the \$2.5 and \$2.8 million budgets versus the 2016 budget. The 2016 \$398,000 health department amount is what is budgeted; not what is spent. The average amount spent by Hamilton County Public Health from 2012 to 2015 was roughly \$288,000 and Cincinnati Health Department was \$70,500 over that four year period.

Ms. Christmann stated that part of the recommendation is to get the budget more in line with expenses and there is a 2.3% reduction to both health departments in both the \$2.5 and \$2.8 million budgets.

Ms. Christmann stated that this will allow the District to do other things such as the illegal dump enforcement (environmental crimes taskforce) and to help with any outstanding illegal dumps that need help with law enforcement to get those moving along in the system.

Mr. Ingram asked how the contract with Keep Cincinnati Beautiful (KCB) works with cleaning up tires. Ms. Christmann stated that historically, the District has provided KCB \$20,000 to run the tire collection program for the District. KCB either does tire clean ups or tire amnesty days in which dumpsters are available for that communities' residents so their tires can be disposed of versus dumped illegally.

Mr. Ingram asked if these dumpsters would be used when health department staff finds an illegal dump in which the property owner would be held responsible for the clean up. Ms. Christmann stated that the dumpsters used in the KCB program would not be used for these illegal dumps. Ms. Christmann stated that it would be done very similar to how it is operating now, however, if a sheriff deputy would come on board and it is done correctly, staff anticipates tire dumping to decrease because enforcement is increasing. Staff also anticipates eventually lowering how much in grant funds are provided for tire collections because the enforcement is working.

Mr. Ingram asked who was involved in the planning. Ms. Christmann stated that the following were involved: Cincinnati and Hamilton County Health, Cincinnati Law Department, Hamilton County Prosecutor's Office (Nee Fong Chin), KCB and the District.

The Committee discussed the Environmental Crimes Taskforce.

Ms. Bruggeman stated that the Priority Grant is going away and asked if this was going to be funded in 2017. Ms. Christmann stated that the budget has not been set for 2017 yet and these conversations will be started in the next month.

Mr. Portune stated that all the things that will be going away are litter collection, multi-family recycling, school recycling, and priority grant. Ms. Christmann stated that for clarification, school recycling will still continue, it is under the heading of Commercial Recycling. Commercial Recycling heading now covers multi-family, commercial businesses, bar and restaurants, and schools.

Ms. Magness asked if government could be added under the Commercial Recycling heading. Ms. Christmann stated that they have always been included.

Mr. Portune asked what the new budget was for Commercial Recycling assistance. Ms. Christmann stated that the new budget for a \$2.5 million budget was \$48,000 versus roughly \$16,000 in 2016. Commercial Recycling is receiving a strong emphasis because one of the District priorities is paper.

Ms. Christmann stated that a new staff person is not included under the Commercial Recycling line item because it is listed under the Personnel budget line item.

Ms. Christmann stated that staff would like to include a contingency in the Plan Update.

- If revenue drops to \$2.4 million, staff would recommend cutting the RRI another \$100,000; if revenue is \$2.3 million, staff would cut RRI by \$100,000 and cut the illegal dumping enforcement; if revenue is \$2.2 million, staff will go for a designation fee to get revenue back to \$2.5 million.
- Ms. Christmann stated that if revenue is \$2.6 million, versus \$2.5 million, \$100,000 will go back into the RRI program; if revenue is \$2.7 million, \$100,000 for RRI and \$100,000 for the household hazardous waste program.

Ms. Christmann stated that staff will reserve the right in the Plan Update to implement designation, as in previous Plan Updates, as a safety measure.

Ms. Christmann stated that both contingencies will be included in the Plan.

A brief discussion ensued regarding designation.

Mr. Portune stated that before the Committee was staff's recommendation to not recommend to the County Commissioners to act on a designation fee increase and stated that he would entertain a motion to accept and approve the Recycling and Solid Waste Management District's staff's recommendation on revenue. Mr. Ingram moved; Mr. Luehrmann seconded. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

Mr. Portune thanked staff for all the hard work that went into this and taking the extra step in soliciting feedback from the other jurisdictions and stated that he felt this was very necessary and very informative for the Committee to make an informed decision.

B. Solid Waste Management Plan – Budget and Program Recommendations

Mr. Portune stated that based on analysis and feedback from communities and Policy Committee input, there are some changes recommended to be included in the Plan Update.

Ms. Christmann stated that staff spent 2015 reviewing all of the Plan analyses and has heard feedback from communities and the Policy Committee. There were quite a few themes that surfaced during these analyses':

more advertising; they want to hear more about recycling and waste reduction; focus on the largest waste streams going to landfill which are organics and paper; strong interest in the environmental crimes taskforce.

Ms. Christmann stated that what was done with the \$2.5 million budget was reallocating to fit into these priorities so there are more dollars spent on advertising, helping underperforming communities improve their recycling programs, environmental crimes taskforce, more emphasis on where paper is generated (commercial recycling program), placing a strong emphasis on diverting more paper from landfills through the hiring of a staff person, focusing on schools, businesses, governments, and bars and restaurants.

Ms. Christmann stated that there is a new category called the priority waste stream which has been discussed in previous meetings. This is where the District wants to focus on paper and/or organics. Money has been set aside to design a program that will really target one of those two materials each year or few years.

Ms. Christmann stated that staff was trying to make a more focused effort at the District's mission which is reducing reliance on landfills. Staff tried to reallocate funds within the \$2.5 million budget to do that.

Ms. Christmann stated that household hazardous waste, the priority grant, and litter collection were removed from the \$2.5 million budget.

Ms. Magness stated that regarding the low performing communities, was staff considering underperforming neighborhoods in the City of Cincinnati. Ms. Christmann stated yes and gave examples of what this might entail.

Ms. Bruggeman stated that regarding the staff person, it seemed like such a big job and asked if this person would be tasked with going to businesses and schools to talk about paper and organics reduction. Ms. Christmann stated that Ms. Lohmann and Ms. Mohring would still be working with businesses and schools; the new person would add additional assistance to target more businesses and schools.

Ms. Bruggeman asked for more information regarding the priority grant and asked if it was being cut because it was not effective. Ms. Christmann stated that she did not think it was ineffective but it is always tricky to administer grants. Under the priority waste stream (paper and organics), if stakeholders are brought together to focus on this and if there is a need for equipment, grant funding for X, Y, or Z to improve food donation, etc. that's when staff can come to the Committee or an outside organization can come to the Committee and request funding, to assist the District, with X and this money could be taken out of the priority waste stream line item. This could be a grant but it will be much more focused than the District Priority Grant is right now.

Mr. Portune asked where the issue was with vetting new and evolving technologies dealing with solid waste streams fall under these line items. Ms. Christmann stated that there was not a budgeted line item for that; staff is always talking to companies interested in coming to the area and although there is no line item, there is certainly staff time.

Mr. Portune stated that with respect to siting strategy, views these as related in that although it is not being recommended to include a siting strategy for a new landfill, if for example, there were opportunities to develop new anaerobic digestors that would handle some of the difficult to manage waste streams. These produce as residual benefits alternative sources of energy that could be distributed to defray costs of operations along with providing excess energy usage to area residents and businesses. They generate a new end product that may be able to be recycled versus landfilled and asked Ms. Christmann how this worked with what is being done here to fit into the Plan Update.

A discussion ensued regarding Metropolitan Sewer District and anaerobic digestors.

Mr. Portune entertained a motion to accept the program recommendations for the Solid Waste Management Plan. Ms. Magness moved; Ms. Bruggeman seconded. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

C. Solid Waste Management Plan – Siting Strategy

Ms. Christmann stated that the Manager’s Memo included in the Policy Packet outlines what solid waste districts are allowed to do with a siting strategy. As an example, if the District shows in the Plan that there is not enough landfill capacity for its garbage, the District must create a plan to ensure the District has that capacity.

Ms. Christmann stated that in the unlikely scenario that a solid waste district says that they need to build a new landfill, districts must put in the Plan what their siting strategy would be to site that new landfill.

Ms. Christmann stated that obviously, the District is not recommending building a landfill therefore, the District is not recommending a siting strategy in this Plan Update. This is fairly consistent with previous Plans that if there is a new landfill facility that wants to come in, they rely on the Ohio EPA siting strategy and the District typically does not get involved.

Ms. Christmann stated that the District is not recommending including a siting strategy in the Plan Update.

A brief discussion ensued regarding siting strategies and the expansion planned for Rumpke Landfill.

Mr. Portune stated that the Committee would accept a motion to approve the Staff Recommendation to not include a siting strategy in the draft Solid Waste Management Plan. Ms. Magness moved; Mr. Ingram seconded. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

5. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. 2015 4th Quarter Results and 2016 Workplan

Ms. Christmann stated that Attachment D includes the results of District programs for 2015. Ms. Christmann discussed a few highlights: 24,000 customers used the yard trimmings drop off sites, 249 public events provided recycling by using the District’s recycling containers that are able to be loaned, 30 schools started a new recycling program or expanded their recycling programs, and 8,300 students were reached through classroom presentations and field trips.

Mr. Ingram asked if the District trended this information. Ms. Christmann stated yes and a three to five year program trend information could be included at the next meeting.

B. Yard Trimmings Drop Off Sites Opening

Ms. Christmann stated that the yard trimmings drop off sites open on Saturday, March 19. The program is open weekends (11:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.) through November 27. The Anderson Township location is also open during the week 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

The locations are:

- Anderson Township (3295 Turpin Lane)
- Green Township (Kuliga Park)
- Colerain Township (Rumpke Landfill)

C. Records Request

Ms. Christmann stated that the District received a public records request from the Cincinnati Enquirer about any relationship or written communication the District had with an e-waste company, 2TRG.

The Committee discussed the District’s relationship with 2TRG.

6. TENTATIVE FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

There were no future agenda items at this time.

7. POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBERS' COMMENTS

There were no Policy Committee comments at this time.

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Christmann stated that the Committee does not have a Township Trustee. She heard from the Township Trustee Association last Friday and they hope to have a recommended trustee this week. Mr. Ingram asked if Ms. Christmann had any indication which township this person would be coming from. Ms. Christmann stated no.

9. UPCOMING DISTRICT MEETINGS

The next Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste Policy Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, May 19, 2016. The meeting will begin at 1:30 p.m. at Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services located at 250 William Howard Taft Road - First Floor, Cincinnati, Ohio 45219.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 3:00 p.m.