

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

**DATE:** November 16, 2017

**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  
Sue Magness, Largest Municipality Representative  
Todd Portune, Hamilton County Commissioner, Chair  
Larry Riddle, Rumpke

**Staff**

Michelle Balz, Assistant Solid Waste Manager  
Holly Christmann, Director  
Ali Khodadad, Operations Coordinator  
Jenny Lohmann, Program Specialist  
Cher Mohring, Program Specialist  
Susan Schumacher, Assistant Solid Waste Specialist, Clerk

**Others in Attendance**

Lisa Anderson, Hamilton County Budget Initiatives  
Greg Kesterman, Hamilton County Public Health

**ABSENT:** **Policy Committee Members**  
Jeff Luehrmann, Generator Representative  
Isabella Mazza, Student Representative  
Jeff Ritter, Township Representative, Vice Chair  
Tom Turchiano, Public Member

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Portune called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m. and welcomed everyone. Mr. Portune stated that, in absentia, he would like the record to reflect our sincere thanks to Colerain Township Trustee Jeff Ritter and Mr. Ritter's contribution as a member of the Policy Committee for almost two years. Mr. Portune stated that he enjoyed his service and was a very thoughtful member that contributed greatly to the work of the Committee.

Mr. Portune stated that he was not sure if any indication had been received of who would be replacing him. Ms. Christmann stated that the District would go through the Hamilton County Township Association and they will be the ones to name the new trustee.

Ms. Christmann stated that she would be reaching out to the Township Association by the end of the month.

**2. CLERK'S REPORT**

**A. Approval of Minutes – September 21, 2017 Policy Committee Meeting**

Mr. Portune asked if there were any changes, etc. to the minutes. Mr. Ingram moved to approve the September 21, 2017 minutes. Ms. Magness seconded. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

**B. Additions to the Agenda**

There were no additions to the agenda at this time.

**3. DISTRICT REVENUE UPDATES/ANALYSIS**

Ms. Christmann stated that revenue continues to exceed the District's projections as shown in Attachment B. Revenues are about seven percent higher than 2016 so revenue projections have been revised for 2017 to be \$2.75 million versus the \$2.6 that was projected a few months ago.

Mr. Portune asked if the Committee needed to formally make any amendments to the budget relative to final revenue projections. Ms. Christmann stated no. Ms. Christmann stated that staff has been in touch with Ms. Anderson from the budget office to let her know about the projection changes.

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

**4. POLICY ITEMS**

**A. Carryover Balance**

Ms. Christmann stated as just mentioned, staff is projecting revenues to be higher than was initially projected. \$2.75 million is now being projected for 2017.

Ms. Christmann stated that staff is recommending taking funds from the carry-over balance for three projects in 2018.

Ms. Christmann stated that to give some background, a few years ago, revenue dipped to the lowest it had been since the late 1990's and that was \$2.1 million. In 2016, revenue started to increase to about \$2.6 million. Since that time, revenue is exceeding those expectations. In its five year projections, staff was projecting roughly \$2.5 million per year; those are now being revised to a minimum of \$2.6 million.

Ms. Christmann stated that what all of this means is that the carry-over balance has grown. Ms. Christmann stated that staff anticipates a carry-over of \$2.8 million as of January 1, 2018. Staff thinks there is a great opportunity for a couple of one-time projects to reduce the carry-over balance.

Ms. Christmann stated that in the recently approved solid waste plan, staff included a budget contingency that states if revenue exceeds \$2.5 million, money will be added into the Residential Recycling Incentive program (which has already been done for the 2018 budget). If revenue goes above \$2.6 million a household hazardous waste program would be held which is one of staff's recommendations.

Ms. Christmann stated that the other two recommendations are one-time projects. One is to do a waste composition study. A waste composition study was done at Rumpke back in 2012 to determine what the biggest slices of the waste stream were. For 2018, staff recommends something similar.

Ms. Christmann stated that this one time information and data would allow the District to see how the waste stream has changed based on what the District has done and what staff may need to do based on those changes in the waste stream.

Mr. Portune asked Ms. Christmann when the last time the study was done. Ms. Christmann stated 2012. Mr. Portune asked what, if anything, does Ms. Christmann anticipate staff would be doing springing out of the study and what

would it show. Ms. Christmann stated that the last study focused on only residential waste and the District learned that sixty percent of what is still going to the landfill by residents could be recycled.

Ms. Christmann stated that staff changed some its tactics; more advertising and awareness, more focus on organics and textiles. Internally, staff is discussing if the new study should be residential only or should it be expanded to include a combined residential and business composition study to get a better handle of what businesses are throwing away as well.

Ms. Christmann stated that it is good data to have for planning purposes to see what is being missed and if a large waste stream is being missed like textiles and gave examples.

A brief discussion ensued regarding textiles and cultural shifts occurring that a composition study would reveal.

Ms. Magness stated that if funding allowed, she would like to see a waste characterization at the Materials Recovery Facility to see what mistakes people are making when recycling because of the high contamination level. This would help to provide better messaging to help reduce some of those mistakes that are occurring. Ms. Magness stated right now, it is just anecdotal what the contamination is and we really haven't done a valid study on that.

Mr. Portune stated that based on the discussion, in terms of the waste composition study, staff already has a fair idea of a few things it is going to show; cardboard, textiles, etc. Ms. Portune asked if the money would be better spent on doing a study that confirms what our intellectual impressions are as opposed to spending the money that would otherwise be spent on the study that we think we know a lot of what it is going to show already than spending that money on responding to those elements and gave examples (cardboard, textiles, etc.).

Mr. Portune asked if the District would be better off overall in trying to funnel those dollars into programmatic effort designed to address those two issues for example, as opposed to spending it on a study that will confirm what we probably already know.

Ms. Christmann stated that this was a fair question and stated that she would rather have the District's dollars go towards programs than studies. Having said that, she thinks it is very important to measure what the District has done and see if it has worked and doing a composition study over a five year period can help show what we have done in the past five years and has it worked. This will tell us and if it has not worked and how can we change.

Ms. Christmann stated that this was one of the benefits of doing a waste characterization study. The District does not want to keep doing the same thing because we think we know what the results are; this study will show us in plain terms what that result has been.

Mr. Portune asked if this one time funding will cover the cost of a five year study. Ms. Christmann stated that staff is looking at doing two sorts; one in the spring and one in the fall which will show what people are throwing away. Staff will be able to compare that to what was done five years ago.

Ms. Christmann stated that the third item is an organics survey which was outlined in the solid waste plan in terms of helping the private or public sector that is interested in siting a digester or a compost facility. One of the ways staff said they would help them was to identify how much organic waste was out there that could be fed to a digester or a compost facility.

Ms. Christmann stated that it is time for the District to do this and staff would like to do this as early as possible in 2018.

Those three projects combined are estimated at \$250,000 that would come from the carry-over balance in 2018. Mr. Ingram asked if these were good estimates based on past experience and that it would not exceed \$250,000. Ms. Christmann stated that she would hope not but these numbers are based on previous years' experience, but they have not been bid out yet and this would be the next step.

Mr. Ingram stated that he understood where Mr. Portune is coming from but on the other hand, it has been five years and an assessment has to be done to understand what might need to be addressed in programs. We all know that the household hazardous waste programs that have been sought after and we have toiled with that for some time. Mr. Ingram stated that he would support the staff recommendations.

Ms. Magness stated that Tri-Health helped the city fund the battery and the lights so they may be willing to sponsor a portion of the household hazardous waste program. KAO Brands has a new sustainability coordinator who has joined the Green Umbrella Waste Team and has expressed interest in helping support a household hazardous waste collection.

Mr. Portune stated that based on the discussion, notwithstanding the questions that he raised, he is convinced by the discussion that the Committee should move forward with staff's recommendation and entertained a motion to approve. Mr. Ingram moved approval; Ms. Bruggeman seconded. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

**5. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

Mr. Portune stated that there were a number of informational items and asked Ms. Christmann if she wanted to give a brief discussion and stated that he was sure Ms. Christmann wanted to make reference to the Annual Awards Ceremony and regrettably, he could not participate in the discussion because he was unable to attend. Mr. Portune stated that he believed this was the first time ever he was unable to attend.

**A. 2018 Wasted Food Campaign**

Ms. Christmann stated that the last time the wasted food campaign was discussed, the Committee was very engaged and wanted to learn more about staff's plan for 2018.

Ms. Christmann stated that she would give the Committee a high level overview because all of the details are not set yet. Staff plans a large campaign in 2018 focused on how much food is going to landfill. The target audience will be young families, primarily women with families in their late 20's to early 50's.

Ms. Christmann stated that the Ad Council's assets are going to be used. Staff is thinking the timeline will be late spring/early summer and then in the fall around the holiday season.

Ms. Christmann stated that staff is looking at an awareness piece and also a behavior change piece. The bigger picture, awareness, will include paid advertising which will consist of digital advertising and marketing, billboard, banners, and posters in high traffic areas.

Ms. Christmann stated that, thanks to Ms. Lohmann's leadership, we will host a screening of the Anthony Bourdain produced movie, WASTED! The Story of Food Waste.

For non-paid advertising, Ms. Lohmann does a great job with lunch-n-learns and seminars on how to reduce wasted food. Ms. Christmann passed out the new food storage guides and the reducing food waste guides which are some of the collateral pieces of the campaign. A lot of media relations will be done, and partnerships with Green Umbrella and the City of Cincinnati to amplify our message about preventing wasted food.

The behavior change piece focus on a challenge that U.S. EPA developed called "Food: Too Good To Waste." Staff will work with individual residents to weigh how much wasted food they have and give them information on how to reduce that wasted food. Participants will continue to weigh their food over a four week period so they can actually see how much food they are throwing away and what the changes are over roughly a month's time.

Ms. Christmann stated that this is the overall big picture of the campaign. Staff will come back in January or March to give the Committee more details on the exact campaign pieces. Staff is planning to spend about \$50,000 on this program.

Ms. Bruggeman asked how these tools could be accessed. Ms. Christmann stated that Ms. Lohmann is providing the handouts at lunch-n-learns and the wasted food seminars, they are available at special events, they are on our website, and through social media. Ms. Bruggeman stated that it would be great if the District could partner with Kroger to have them available in the produce section or where people could see it because these are things you need to think about when you are actually buying food.

Ms. Christmann stated that staff is reaching out to farmer's markets as well. Ms. Christmann stated that staff is anticipating having a meeting with Kroger over the next couple of months.

Ms. Christmann stated that she wanted to thank Ms. Lohmann who is the brain-child behind these ideas and is very passionate about wasted food. The Committee and audience gave Ms. Lohmann a round of applause. The Committee complimented staff on the food storage guide and the food booklets.

Mr. Portune asked Ms. Christmann who were the current partners. Ms. Christmann stated that Green Umbrella is a very strong partner and just received a grant that is going to help supplement a lot of the efforts that are being done not only on the residential level but in the schools, the City of Cincinnati is a strong partner and staff is still pulling in Keep Cincinnati Beautiful, getting ready to meet with Freestore Foodbank, Ms. Lohmann is on the Food Policy Council, and staff will be meeting with Kroger, so we are getting ready to meet with some of the bigger organizations as well.

Ms. Bruggeman stated that she just heard about food insecurities in colleges and it might be a good partnership with wasted food on campus that could be redirected to their food insecure students.

Mr. Portune stated that this was great work with a great focus.

**B. Battery Disposal Outreach**

Ms. Christmann stated that at the last meeting, Rumpke Recycling was here talking about their challenges in which one was lithium-ion batteries and the fires they are causing.

Ms. Christmann stated that staff has developed and will be launching a mini campaign about lithium-ion batteries December 11, 2017. The plan has been shared with Rumpke's PR folks. Rumpke will share some videos with us and the District and Rumpke will hopefully do some joint press releases. There will be paid social media advertising but the majority of it is non-paid advertising to the District's core audience who are strong recyclers.

Mr. Ingram asked Mr. Riddle if Rumpke has already put advertising out on Channel 9. Mr. Riddle stated yes. Mr. Riddle stated that he did not think there were any recent incidents other than the recycling center which happens a couple of times per week.

Ms. Bruggeman stated that the Zoo does that recycling contest with batteries with old recycled cell phones and students from Sycamore have done it the past few years. That might be a good way to educate the students out in

the community talking about recycling their phones and batteries but to also share this video because they come to Sycamore's PTO meetings.

Ms. Christmann stated that the District is no longer using the term "recycle your batteries" but instead saying get rid of your batteries at these places because when the term "recycle" is used, people think they can be included in their recycling cart and gave an example.

**C. Annual Awards Ceremony**

Ms. Christmann stated that the awards ceremony was spectacular and wished Commissioner Portune could have been there. There was a lot of good conversation and a lot of networking that took place afterwards and thinks a lot of good connections were made in the room.

Ms. Bruggeman stated that she was inspired and contacted Mr. Burns, the keynote speaker, after the meeting and said that she wanted to be involved in the things he was doing.

Mr. Portune asked if there was anything in particular, specific, an award recipient, that did inspire anybody or that anyone took note of. Ms. Bruggeman stated that at her table, people were really impressed with the Play Library and just all of the reuse awards this year just make people think about this more.

Mr. Ingram stated that he thought the Kroger presentation was great. It is almost overwhelming; they have such a big footprint. It is just amazing how much they are recycling. Mr. Ingram stated that how Mr. Burns was able to teach and engage Procter & Gamble (P&G) plant managers was very interesting and saving P&G \$2,000,000 over the course of seven years which is amazing.

Ms. Christmann stated that she was happy that some of the Committee was able to attend and was looking forward to it next year.

**D. 2016 Waste Reduction Rates – Correction**

Ms. Christmann stated that the District's 2016 recycling rate actually increased. At the last meeting, she reported it was 29.7% and after reviewing the numbers a little closer, staff contacted Ohio EPA and they realized there was a mistake making the District's recycling rate 30.7% for the residential/commercial sector only.

Ms. Bruggeman asked how Hamilton County's rates compared to other Districts. Ms. Christmann stated that it varied. Recycling rates are estimates because they are based on voluntary surveys. If a District places a lot of effort on getting numbers, their rate will be higher than someone spending more time developing programs versus chasing numbers.

Ms. Christmann stated that Hamilton County is pretty close with Franklin and Cuyahoga Counties.

**E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Performance Measures**

Ms. Christmann stated the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Performance Measures were included as Attachment D and she encouraged the Committee to take a look. As always, the solid waste staff is doing amazing work. There were 19,000 customers who went through the yard trimmings sites and will probably be about 25,000 by the end of the season, 73 public events and festivals have had recycling available, almost a 900 ton increase in residential recycling compared to 2017. She thanked the staff for this success.

**6. TENTATIVE FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no tentative future agenda items at this time.

**Policy Committee Meeting**

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**7. POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBERS' COMMENTS**

Mr. Portune stated that the county budget is going to be acted upon either November 20<sup>th</sup> or on or before November 29<sup>th</sup>. If anyone is concerned about the budget for the District and wants to reach out to any Board Members, please do so. Mr. Portune stated that he was pretty sure the budget would not be acted upon November 20<sup>th</sup> so it will be the 27<sup>th</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup>.

**8. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments at this time.

**9. UPCOMING DISTRICT MEETINGS**

The next Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste Policy Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, January 18, 2018. 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**

Mr. Portune wished everyone a happy holiday season. Mr. Portune stated that he wanted to formally excuse the members absent today and to let the record reflect by formal consensus of the Committee that they are excused. Mr. Portune entertained a motion to adjourn. Ms. Bruggeman moved; Ms. Magness seconded. Mr. Portune stated that by rising vote, the meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

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