

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

DATE: May 20, 2020

TIME: 1:30 p.m.

PLACE: Virtual Meeting using Zoom

PRESENT: **Policy Committee Members**

Lexi Born, Student Representative
Tony DiPuccio, Generator Representative
Bob Gedert, Public Member
Karen Hurley, General Interest Member
Greg Kesterman, Hamilton County Public Health Representative
Sue Magness, Largest Municipality Representative
Victoria Parks, Hamilton County Commissioner
Raj Rajagopal, Township Representative
Larry Riddle, Rumpke

Staff

Michelle Balz, Solid Waste Manager
Mary Copenbaker, Business Specialist
Brad Johnson, Director
Ali Khodadad, Operations Manager
Jenny Lohmann, Community Outreach Coordinator
Brad Miller, Assistant Director
Cher Mohring, Community Outreach Coordinator
Susan Schumacher, Assistant Solid Waste Specialist, Clerk

Others in Attendance

Chuck DeJonckheere, Hamilton County Public Health
Katie Evans, Best Way Disposal
Matt Hittle, Ohio EPA
Deputy Bryan Peak, Hamilton County Sheriff's Office

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kesterman called the meeting to order at 1:43 pm and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Ms. Parks stated that this was her first meeting since Commissioner Portune transitioned. Ms. Parks stated that she wanted to express her appreciation for the work that this Committee did with Mr. Portune. She wanted everyone to know that although the knowledge she has nowhere near compares to what he knew, she is committed to working as hard as she can and learning as much as she can to continue his legacy. Ms. Parks stated that she is looking forward to working with everyone and thanks everyone for what they have done in the past. Ms. Parks stated that she looks forward to seeing more progress as we move forward.

Mr. DiPuccio stated that on behalf of the other Committee members, he would like to welcome Ms. Parks and was delighted that she agreed to take on this role as she had a close working relationship with Mr. Portune.

Mr. Kesterman then turned the meeting over to Ms. Balz.

2. Chair and Vice Chair of the Policy Committee

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Ms. Balz stated that because there is a situation where, unfortunately, Commissioner Portune has passed away and Mr. Ingram has retired, the Committee is in a position where there is no Chair or Vice Chair. The ORC is very clear that the Chair or Vice Chair of a solid waste policy committee is supposed to be voted upon by the members.

Ms. Balz stated that the floor is now open to the Committee to volunteer, nominate, etc. in the form of a motion for the Chair. Ms. Hurley asked who is eligible. Ms. Balz stated that everyone was eligible; Ms. Balz stated that she met with Commissioner Parks a few months ago and she expressed that she does not want to be the Chair.

Ms. Balz stated that there will be a new commissioner next year and that commissioner may want to take on this role next January but for the rest of this year, the Committee will need a Chair and Vice Chair.

Ms. Hurley nominated Mr. Gedert as Chair. Mr. Gedert declined but stated that he would like to possibly entertain the Vice-Chair position. Ms. Hurley changed her nomination to nominate Mr. Gedert as Vice-Chair.

Mr. Kesterman nominated Mr. DiPuccio for Chair. Mr. Gedert seconded. Ms. Magness moved that Mr. DiPuccio serve as Chair and Mr. Gedert serve as Vice-Chair. Ms. Hurley seconded. All in favor and the motion was approved.

3. CLERK'S REPORT

A. Approval of Minutes – January 16, 2020 Policy Committee Meeting

Mr. DiPuccio asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes and asked if there were any corrections or additions. Hearing none, Mr. DiPuccio entertained a motion to accept the minutes as submitted. Ms. Hurley moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Gedert seconded. All in favor and the minutes were approved.

B. Additions to the Agenda

Ms. Balz stated the 2020/2021 Student Representative should be added under Policy Items and the 2020 Waste Reduction Innovation Grants overview should be added under informational items. Ms. Balz stated that the Agenda and Manager's Memo have been updated to reflect this change.

3. DISTRICT REVENUE UPDATES/ANALYSIS

Mr. Khodadad stated that in the first quarter of 2020, there was approximately \$829,000 compared to the first quarter of 2019 with \$786,000 which is roughly \$44,000 higher than last year. Mr. Khodadad stated it will be interesting once May's numbers are received to see the effects of COVID-19 with the effects not only from commercial but also from residential. Mr. Khodadad stated that he was not sure what the impact would be and asked Mr. Riddle.

Mr. Riddle stated that Rumpke's tonnage has been pretty consistent through the year but last week saw a less than 40,000 ton week. Mr. Riddle stated that some of their commercial customers are changing the number of pick-ups per month but thinks Rumpke will see a corresponding increase in residential.

A brief discussion ensued about the composition of the recycling stream.

Ms. Riddle stated that Rumpke is optimistic that tonnage will be very close to last year; optimistically, about 2.3 million tons.

Mr. DiPuccio asked if this needed to be voted on. Ms. Balz stated no.

4. POLICY ITEMS

A. Carryover Balance

Ms. Balz stated that at the January meeting, the Committee requested that staff put together some ideas for spending some of the carryover balance. These items are included as Attachment C.

Ms. Balz wanted to mention that the solid waste plan, which is done every five years, will be started next year and there may be some large things that come out of the plan that staff would want to use some of those funds for. Although we have this opportunity for these funds, she does not think there should be rush to have to spend them, however, there are some things that could make staff's life easier or that would be a good impact on our community.

Ms. Balz stated that staff has included four items for consideration as additional spending. These items would be in addition to the budget that was already passed. Ms. Balz summarized below:

- **New vehicle.** Currently the District has two compact vehicles, one 2008 and one 2010. Neither vehicle has large capacity for transporting larger groups of people or supplies. A new van would give staff better capability for transporting people and/or supplies. **\$35,000**
- **Waste Reduction Innovation Grant.** Currently the District has \$80,000 budgeted for the Waste Reduction Innovation Grant. Adding \$70,000 to this program would increase the total budget to \$150,000 and allow the District to fund more projects. **\$70,000**
- **CHARM/ One Stop Drop Feasibility.** Funds would be used to hire a consultant to conduct a feasibility study for operating a facility in Hamilton County where residents could drop off hard to recycle items, such as hazardous waste, yard trimmings, and electronics. These facilities are traditionally called CHARM ("Center for Hard to Recycle Materials") or a "One Stop Drop". The feasibility study would suggest best practices and material streams as well as specifications on the physical structure needed and operation. **\$30,000**
- **Social Media Strategy.** Currently the District only reaches a small percentage of our potential audience with social media. These funds would hire a professional consultant to develop a strategy to grow our followers and social media, advice on which platforms will help us reach our audience best, and guide us on the best content for posts. **\$10,000**

The Committee discussed staff's recommendations and concurred to postpone the purchase of a new vehicle.

Mr. DiPuccio stated that he would entertain a motion to cover all four items in terms of an approval or not. Mr. Kesterman moved that the Committee approve the Waste Reduction Innovation Grant, CHARM/One Stop Drop Feasibility, and Social Media Strategy. Ms. Parks seconded. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

B. Cincinnati Contamination Project – Round 2

Ms. Balz stated that staff worked with Ohio EPA, City of Cincinnati, and The Recycling Partnership in 2019 which involved a cart tagging project which focused on contamination. There are some grant funds left and they would like to fund three follow-up projects; Toledo, Franklin County, and the third in Hamilton County.

Ms. Balz stated that staff would like to propose doing a second round, targeting the City of Cincinnati, new households in a shorter time frame. The idea is to be able to replicate this project in other areas. The hope is that if a shorter time period is done, it will be more cost effective for other communities to replicate.

Ms. Balz stated that the program would also check in with an audit to the area that was done last year to see if they still kept up with the behavior change.

Ms. Balz stated that the total grant amount is \$42,152; Ohio EPA is requesting that the District put in a match towards that project of \$10,780. The ask of the Committee today is to put a motion to put that grant forward with the \$10,780 match from the District.

A question/answer session and a brief discussion ensued regarding conducting this audit and COVID-19.

Mr. DiPuccio stated that he would like to have someone make a motion and a second to adopt the staff recommendation of the District continuing the partnership and apply for a grant to conduct a second round of contamination outreach in the City of Cincinnati in 2020.

Ms. Hurley moved that the Committee adopt the staff's recommendation along with the matching money that would be required in the grant. Mr. Kesterman seconded. All in favor and the motion was approved.

C. 2020 – 2021 Student Representative

Ms. Balz stated that although Ms. Born is a great student representative, the term is for one year. The term for the new student representative will begin in September and follows the school year. Ms. Born's last meeting will be in July.

Ms. Balz stated that the Student Representative is a one year, non-voting position and it is really meant for students to gain hands on experience in developing policy and to learn how these committees work. They have also been able to give a young person's perspective and view which has been fantastic.

Ms. Balz stated that the next representative that staff recommends is Elizabeth Ritch. Ms. Ritch attends Summit Country Day school and will be a senior next year. Ms. Ritch had a fantastic application as did Ms. Born.

Ms. Balz stated that the staff recommendation is to approve Elizabeth Ritch to serve as the Student Representative and forward the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners for approval.

Ms. Born stated that she concurs with the staff recommendation and stated that she has had a fantastic time this year and learned so much which solidifies pursuing environmental law as a career path.

Ms. Born thanked everyone and stated that she fully supports appointing Ms. Ritch.

Ms. Parks spoke of the wonderful program the District offers students.

Mr. DiPuccio stated that he will need a motion and second to support the staff's recommendation for the new student representative beginning in September. Ms. Magness moved. Mr. Gedert seconded. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

5. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Effect of COVID-19 on Programming

Ms. Balz stated that the District has postponed the Compost Bin Sale until June 27 and cancelled all in person programming including the Get the Dirt on Backyard Composting seminars. Ms. Rivera stated that the seminars were done via webinars which has had a pretty good turn-out with additional groups requesting private webinars. Residents that attend the webinars receive a ten dollar off coupon for the purchase of a compost bin.

Ms. Balz stated the sale will be pre-order only and customers will stay in their cars. Staff and volunteers will wear masks and the hope is that there will be no contact and briefly discussed how this is going to work.

Ms. Balz stated that the west side Yard Trimmings Drop-Off site is closed because there is no way to limit in-person contact at that site. This site will remain closed until the Stay Safe Ohio order is lifted; the other two remain open with appropriate social distancing.

Ms. Balz stated that staff has been conducting a lot of webinars and creating videos and gave examples.

A brief discussion ensued regarding webinar attendance.

Ms. Balz stated that other programs such as 513Green and the Waste Reduction Innovation Grant have also been promoted.

B. 2019 Residential Recycling Campaign

Ms. Balz showed everyone a presentation of what staff did in 2019 to target contamination in curbside recycling. The first was a project with Ohio EPA, the Recycling Partnership, and Cincinnati to audit and tag recycling carts with contamination. The second, the larger of the two, was what staff referred to as the Recycling Coach campaign in which an actor was hired as the Recycling Coach to create videos; one video focused on plastic bags and not bagging recyclables and the other video focused on what types of plastics are recyclable. All the commercials are on YouTube.

Ms. Balz gave a presentation on the two campaigns. Click here for the presentation. **DO YOU WANT TO INCLUDE?**

A brief question/answer session ensued.

C. Beyond 34 Initiative

Mr. Gedert stated that the group had narrowed it down to ten strategies back in March. That was then narrowed down to three working groups and several strategies out of those working groups.

Mr. Gedert stated that since then, there have been meetings of those working groups in April. Organics solution working group, commercial diversion strategies working group, and in May, the residential education strategies working group.

Mr. Gedert stated that those groups are preceding and have approximately 30 – 35 of the 80+ directly involved in these working groups. The others are on stand by and ready to be involved as needed.

Mr. Gedert stated that working groups of the residential were more involved in residential education strategies and in that group a discussion ensued about labeling the carts which dove tails into some of the Policy Committee's discussion. On the commercial strategies, the group has primarily been talking about cardboard diversion and Molly, the Rumpke representative has been involved. Audit strategies have also been discussed for commercial businesses and CVG Airport is very interested in doing an audit. Mr. Gedert stated that Kroger and Procter and Gamble are also involved.

Mr. Gedert stated that in the organics solutions, food waste prevention strategies has been discussed. The group is talking about centralized and decentralized compost strategies. Central to that discussion is the potential of applying for an Ohio EPA grant to support those activities.

Mr. Gedert stated that this was the summary of what has been happening and if anyone is interested, just email him and he can get you involved.

Mr. Gedert stated that he wanted to give a shout out to Ms. Balz, Ms. Cropenbaker, Ms. Lohmann, and Ms. Rivera whom are directly involved in these working groups.

Ms. Hurley asked what has happened to the conversations around an anaerobic digester and asked if that conversation was continuing anyplace. Mr. Gedert stated that he knows that Ohio EPA just announced an anaerobic digestion grant opportunity and asked Ms. Balz if she had any updates.

Ms. Balz stated no but does believe the anaerobic digestion project is still moving forward in St. Bernard but has not heard of any updates. Ms. Magness asked if this was Synthica Energy. Ms. Balz stated yes.

Mr. DiPuccio asked for an update at the September meeting.

D. Program Trends, First Quarter Performance Measures, Environmental Enforcement Program Update, and Waste Reduction Grant Overview

Mr. DiPuccio stated that in the interest of time, the remaining informational items will not be covered.

Mr. DiPuccio stated that he wanted to let Commissioner Parks know that the Environmental Enforcement has been a very good program and the Sheriff's office have worked very well with the District on this program. The program has been successful. It is starting to curtail some illegal dumping and tire transport. Mr. DiPuccio stated that he has learned a lot from Deputy Peak about difficulty to both identify and get to the point of actually prosecuting someone.

Mr. DiPuccio stated that Deputy Peak has really done a great job in working with the county and city prosecutors on this. Commissioner Parks thanked Deputy Peak for his hard work. Deputy Peak thanked Commissioner Parks and stated that it has been slower during the pandemic and has limited what he has been able to do and gave an example.

Deputy Peak stated that he feels the District's name is getting out there because more people are calling upon him for assistance, etc.

6. TENTATIVE FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Anaerobic Digestion - Synthica

7. POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBERS' COMMENTS

Mr. DiPuccio stated that on behalf of the Policy Committee, he thanked the staff for being able to continue on even under these conditions and know that working from home can be a challenge.

Mr. DiPuccio thanked Commissioner Parks and Mr. Kesterman for taking time out of their busy scheduled to attend the meeting.

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 Wednesday, July 15, 2020. The meeting will begin at 1:30 p.m. via Zoom or at Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services located at 250 William Howard Taft Road - First Floor, Cincinnati, Ohio 45219. Meeting information will be sent at a later date.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. DiPuccio asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Parks moved; Mr. Gedert seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 3:03 p.m.