

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

**DATE:** September 19, 2019

**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**

Lexi Born, Student Representative  
Tony DiPuccio, Generator Representative  
Karen Hurley, General Interest Member  
Tim Ingram, Hamilton County Public Health Representative, Vice Chair  
Todd Portune, Hamilton County Commissioner, Chair  
Raj Rajagopal, Township Representative  
Larry Riddle, Rumpke

**Staff**

Michelle Balz, Solid Waste Manager  
Abbey Cherry, Public Relations Specialist  
Jonah Christner, Solid Waste Intern  
Mary Copenbaker, Business Specialist  
Brad Johnson, Director  
Ali Khodadad, Operations Manager  
Joy Landry, Public Relations Specialist  
Brad Miller, Assistant Director  
Cher Mohring, Program Specialist  
Susan Schumacher, Assistant Solid Waste Specialist, Clerk

**Others in Attendance**

Lisa Anderson, Hamilton County Budget Office  
Cathy Born, Resident  
Ken Born, Resident  
NeeFong Chin, Hamilton County Prosecutor's Office  
Chuck DeJonckheere, Hamilton County Public Health  
Katie Evans, Best Way Disposal  
Dean Ferrier, Rumpke  
Greg Kesterman, Hamilton County Public Health  
Deputy Bryan Peak, Hamilton County Sheriff's Office

**ABSENT:** **Policy Committee Members**

Bob Gedert, Public Member  
Sue Magness, Largest Municipality Representative

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Portune called the meeting to order at 1:34 pm and welcomed everyone.

Ms. Hurley asked about the Hamilton County Public Health's 100 year anniversary. Mr. Ingram gave a brief background.

Mr. Portune welcomed Lexi Born as the new student representative and gave some background on previous student representatives. Ms. Born stated she was thrilled to be on the Committee. Ms. Born gave some background on herself and stated that she was excited to learn about what this Committee does and the process.

Mr. Portune stated that it was great to be back and he had missed the discussions in the Committee.

Mr. Portune stated that he felt very badly that he has not been able to chair the Committee for the several meetings he has missed and thanked everyone and the Vice-Chair for leading in his absence. Mr. Portune stated that Ms. Balz had a great team and it was fun during the awards ceremony recognizing Ms. Lohmann at the Board of County Commissioners meeting.

**2. CLERK'S REPORT**

**A. Approval of Minutes – July 18, 2019 Policy Committee Meeting**

Mr. Portune asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes and asked if there were any corrections or additions. Mr. Portune stated that since he was not present, he would abstain from the vote.

Ms. Hurley moved that the minutes be accepted as written. Mr. Rajagopal seconded. Mr. Portune abstained. All except for Mr. Portune were in favor and the minutes were approved.

**B. Additions to the Agenda**

Ms. Balz stated that she would like to add an update about the Yard Trimmings infrastructure Grant as an informational item.

Mr. Portune stated that Ms. Balz could give the update now. Ms. Balz stated that the Yard Trimmings Infrastructure Grant, for 2020, is out right now and is available to all 48 communities in Hamilton County to help improve their yard trimmings infrastructure.

Ms. Balz stated that there will be a webinar tomorrow that staff is hosting on the topic and all of the communities have been invited. Applications are due October 31, 2019.

Mr. Rajagopal asked if this was for the neighbor with tall grass and enforcement. Ms. Balz stated that it was for community collection of yard trimmings and gave an example, such as the community wanting to buy a chipper. Ms. Balz stated that this grant would also cover the promotion of a current program.

**3. DISTRICT REVENUE UPDATES/ANALYSIS**

Ms. Balz stated that Attachment B compared revenue through July from 2019 and 2018. Revenue is up about \$150,000 or eight percent compared to 2018. Most of the increase is due to out-of-district waste and some out-of-state waste.

Ms. Balz stated that she wanted to note that in-district waste has decreased by about 3,000 tons compared to 2018 which is less than one percent but thought it was worth mentioning since out-of-district continues to increase.

Mr. Portune asked Mr. Riddle if he would like to add anything. Mr. Riddle stated that this spike is a result from receiving a contract for the Montgomery County transfer waste. In mid-August there was another spike as Rumpke picked up some additional volume from Republic. Instead of transferring the waste to Kentucky, they are bringing the waste to Rumpke which will be an extra dollar for the District for between 450 to 600 tons/day.

Mr. Riddle stated that he did not see anything in the market that is driving the in-district reduction.

A brief discussion ensued on future waste projects and commercial versus residential tonnage.

Mr. Portune asked Ms. Balz due to the revenue increase, earlier in the year, the committee was discussing how to apply extra dollars, if available, to projects and asked if other projects would be started between now and the end of the year. Ms. Balz stated that the yard trimmings infrastructure grant is one of those extra things that is being done which is \$500,000 and is a significant amount of money.

Ms. Balz stated that she did not think the District had the staff capacity to take on any other projects before the end of year but in the budget, pending approval, by the Board of Commissioners is adding an additional staff person in 2020. Staff may be able to do something then.

Mr. Portune asked for a motion to approve the District revenue update. Mr. Rajagopal moved approval. Ms. Hurley seconded; all were in favor and the motion was approved.

#### 4. POLICY ITEMS

##### A. Anaerobic Digestion Work Group

Ms. Balz stated that this is an idea that came about because, as you know, Hamilton County does not have infrastructure for food waste composting or anaerobic digestion within a 50 mile radius. Ms. Balz stated that she has been approached by several parties who are interested in moving the discussion forward. There has been small discussions over the last ten years to try to get something going but an anaerobic digestion work group would really formalize that discussion and bring in the right people to identify what the barriers are and why is this not happening in Hamilton County because it is successfully happening in other parts of Ohio.

Ms. Balz stated that the work group could also possibly identify ways that these barriers could be overcome. If there was anything that would need financial backing, such as a study, would be brought to the Committee.

Ms. Balz stated that she envisioned one or two Committee members being included in the work group as well as staff and other outside entities. Ms. Balz stated that Mr. Gedert has already expressed interest.

A brief discussion ensued on the list of people who could be invited to participate in the work group.

Mr. Portune briefly discussed anaerobic digestion discussions/mediation sessions between the County and City relative to the Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) that have occurred the past few years and also stated that the solid waste plan included a discussion element about anaerobic digestion and how that could reduce waste with one facility to address a variety of waste producers.

Mr. Portune stated that there was not much interest from the City regarding this topic. Mr. Ingram suggested someone from MSD be included in the work group. Ms. Balz stated she would reach out to MSD.

Mr. Portune asked if the Committee needed to act to approve this. Mr. Ingram stated that Mr. Gedert needed to be appointed. Mr. Ingram stated that he would make that motion. Mr. Portune stated that the Committee had to officially form the anaerobic digestion work group including District staff, and, as recommended, at least one Policy Committee member, and other interested stakeholders.

Mr. Portune stated that unless the Committee wants to have further discussion relative to Mr. Gedert, this could be included in the motion to create the group.

Mr. Ingram moved that the Committee form an anaerobic digestion work group of the Solid Waste Policy Committee and that Mr. Gedert is appointed to the work group.

Mr. Portune stated that before he asked for a second on the motion, asked Mr. Ingram if he would be open to a friendly amendment. Mr. Ingram stated yes. Mr. Portune moved to amend the motion from Mr. Ingram that his motion include the following quote "including District Staff, at least one Policy Committee member, and other interested stakeholders" and move that as a friendly amendment to the motion previously made.

Mr. Portune stated that the Committee would be voting on the amendment first and the Committee will move on to the motion. Mr. Portune asked if there was any discussion. Mr. Portune asked if there was a second. Mr. Ingram seconded the amendment. All in favor and the amended motion was approved.

Mr. Portune moved that the Committee adopt the motion to create an anaerobic digestion work group as stated by Mr. Ingram and as amended by a motion made by the Chair. Mr. Ingram seconded. All in favor and the motion was approved.

Mr. Portune stated that Ms. Balz would now work on pulling the group together.

## 5. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

### A. 2019 Waste Diversion Innovation Grant

Ms. Balz stated that as the Committee remembers, staff had the Organics Diversion Grant earlier this year in which all of the funds were not granted so the Committee voted to have an additional grant, which is the Waste Diversion Innovation Grant.

Ms. Balz stated that this is a \$10,000 or under grant and is open on a continuous basis so staff is still receiving applications. Ms. Balz stated that up until the agenda was created, the District has received six applications and funded five. Ms. Balz stated that Ms. Mohring is working with the sixth one on their application to improve the project.

Ms. Balz briefly summarized the five grants that were awarded.

Mr. Portune asked if staff could provide periodic updates on how the programs are going. Mr. Balz stated yes and that each grantee will report a year into their project and they report at the end of the next year.

Mr. Portune stated that they were all great proposals and just looking at them, he already has some ideas how might they be able to expand the reach of what they are proposing to do and whether it would be possible for staff to engage them throughout the initial year to talk about other aspects of what they are doing or what they might be able to do within the context of their grant.

Mr. Portune stated that he would leave it up to Ms. Balz and staff to decide and figure out whether that would be appropriate at all, for example, during the first year, if so, what the process ought to be for staff to engage them. Each one of these is a great step in a different area and the water bottle issue, in particular, is a great educational tool.

Mr. Portune stated that 720 +/- pounds a year and everyone else is in terms of tonnage per year so he is thinking of all the waste that occurs through the use of water bottles and the purchase of water bottles and wondered if there was any way at all to try and reduce and eliminate expanding that kind of waste going on.

Mr. Portune stated that this would be a great thing if there is any way staff would be able to look at what their program is and gave examples of what some of the schools were doing.

Mr. Portune stated these were great first steps and so, number one, how can this be taken to all the school districts in the County and what would be a way to see if there would be a willingness to expand it that way and then some other things regarding the reduction and use of plastic bottles, etc.

Mr. Portune stated that it may be appropriate or prudent for staff to touch base with them after a half of year or three months just to see how things are going. Through that conversation, there might be something that would become readily apparent that staff might be able to add to what they are doing to expand its impact.

A brief question/answer ensued about the grantees projects.

Ms. Mohring gave a brief update regarding the one grant application that had not been approved.

**B. Southwest Ohio Pollution Prevention (P2) Internship**

Ms. Balz stated that Ms. Copenbaker, formerly Ms. Sticklen, is in charge of this program and put together the presentation. Ms. Balz stated that Ms. Copenbaker was unable to be present and gave the presentation about the P2 Program and the internship that occurred over the summer with Sam Adams brewery.

Mr. Portune suggested reaching out to Cincinnati State as a training partner. Mr. Ingram suggested reaching out to General Electric as a sponsor. Ms. Balz stated that staff would look into these suggestions. Mr. Portune asked Mr. Ingram if he would help to facilitate outreach. Mr. Ingram concurred.

A brief question/answer session ensued.

**C. Environmental Enforcement Program Update**

Ms. Balz stated that Attachment D showed the number of complaints received and the number of complaints investigated since August, 2018 and briefly summarized the chart.

Deputy Peak stated a big deal now is that he has been approved to cite under the City Municipal Code for their open dumping and summarized what this meant.

Deputy Peak gave a brief update of his work over the past few months.

Mr. Portune suggested to add another line for “cases otherwise dealt with” in light of what Deputy Peak mentioned about contacting the township, etc. first, before responding to a complaint, to not step on any toes, to get an idea of what the total of number of cases resolved are versus the total number of complaints.

Mr. Portune suggested to include what “cases investigated” as Deputy Peak has defined what that means and “cases otherwise resolved” and that might give a clearer picture of knowing of the complaints that are made, how many of them are actually getting addressed, as opposed to how many are getting addressed solely by Deputy Peak in the chart.

Mr. Ingram suggested adding some narrative and that it is always good to give a success story and a challenge and gave an example.

**D. Second Quarter Performance Measures**

Ms. Balz stated that Attachment E showed the performance measures from the second quarter. Ms. Balz highlighted some of the successes.

A brief question/answer session ensued.

**6. TENTATIVE FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Ms. Hurley asked what the connection with Beyond 34 was going to be and asked if there was going to be any sort of reporting back from that. Ms. Balz stated that staff would report back and that the research arm, which is the Arizona State University, is pulling all of that together and staff is not really too much involved.

Mr. DiPuccio asked how the compost bin sale went. Ms. Michelle stated it was excellent and an update will be given at the next meeting. Ms. Balz stated that almost 600 bins were sold.

Ms. Balz thanked Ms. Hurley and her husband Dan, for volunteering at the For The Love of Food event held Sunday, September 8, 2019 which was a big help due to being understaffed and it was wonderful to have her knowledge there at the booth.

Ms. Hurley briefly discussed what a wonderful and educational opportunity it was and offered a suggestion.

**7. POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBERS' COMMENTS**

Mr. Riddle stated that he would like to report that the District will continue to receive solid waste fees from Rumpke Sanitary Landfill with the issuance of its solid waste permit which started 13 years ago. Rumpke will continue to be in business for the next 25 years or so.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the permit.

Mr. Rajagopal commended Mr. Portune on all his service he has done for the community and the Committee.

Mr. Rajagopal stated that he wanted to bring up how we can improve the community, especially in the township. There are some abandoned properties and are now full of cats, rats, etc. which is a health hazard. The people that live next door are being exposed to an environmental hazard especially to the children who grow up in that area.

Mr. Rajagopal stated that he wondered how Environmental Services could help this problem like clean up the waste and how the Township can work with Environmental Services to give a better place for the children to live. It is getting to be a very environmental hazard and dangerous. There are two properties like this and people are complaining.

Mr. Rajagopal stated that Public Health helped us by providing a dumpster which worked really well and people stated using it but some people do not want to pay for garbage pick-up.

Mr. Rajagopal stated that his question was that since Environmental Services could help the neighborhood situation like this for now but was wondering about the future.

Mr. Portune suggested that if the Township has a specific focus on a neighborhood or aspects within a neighborhood that the Township believes are negatively impacting greater than other areas by the location of the landfill and has some ideas along that line, present something to the Policy Committee from the Township.

Mr. Portune stated that he cannot promise anything could or could not be done but he can promise that he would think that the Policy Committee would be willing to look at whatever is presented along those lines and see if there is something that could be done or not.

Mr. Portune stated that he thinks it starts with the Township in terms of making the request and gave an example using a previous Committee member in the same position as Mr. Rajagopal.

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Mr. Portune stated that if there are issues that the Trustees want to bring to the Policy Committee's attention or even if the majority of the Trustees do not want to but there are community action groups that believe something is a problem and they would like the Committee to look at that; any citizen can bring anything to the Committee and he will guarantee that the Committee will give it a fair hearing and see what the issue is all about and respond to it but think it starts with Mr. Rajagopal and the citizens of Colerain.

Mr. Rajagopal thanked Mr. Portune.

**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, November 21, 2019. 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 entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. Ingram moved; Ms. Hurley seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.