

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

DATE: January 16, 2020

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
Bob Gedert, Public Member
Karen Hurley, General Interest Member
Tim Ingram, Hamilton County Public Health Representative, Vice Chair
Sue Magness, Largest Municipality Representative
Raj Rajagopal, Township Representative

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
Angela Rivera, Outreach Specialist
Susan Schumacher, Assistant Solid Waste Specialist, Clerk

Others in Attendance

Brad Boyer, Environmental Enterprises, Inc.
Chuck DeJonckheere, Hamilton County Public Health
Dean Ferrier, Rumpke
Greg Kesterman, Hamilton County Public Health
Dr. Jim O'Reilly, Wyoming
Deputy Bryan Peak, Hamilton County Sheriff's Office

ABSENT: **Policy Committee Members**
Victoria Parks, Interim County Commissioner, Chair
Larry Riddle, Rumpke

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Ingram called the meeting to order at 1:33 pm and welcomed everyone. Mr. Ingram asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Mr. Ingram stated that he was serving as interim Chair in the transition of the County Commissioners Office with Commissioner Portune resigning and Ms. Parks being appointed in his place to serve out the remaining of his term.

Ms. Ingram stated that Ms. Balz was selected for a national award honoring the next generation of leaders who are shaping the future of waste and the recycling industry. She was chosen by the Waste360 group to be included in their

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prestigious 40 Under 40 awards which recognize inspiring and innovative professionals under the age of 40 who work in this field.

Mr. Ingram stated that he was very proud and the Committee and audience gave Ms. Balz a round of applause.

Ms. Balz stated that she was overwhelmed and very much appreciated the recognition as it is quite the honor. Ms. Balz stated that everything that she does is supported by the great staff at the District and feels very lucky to get to work with them every day.

Mr. Ingram congratulated Ms. Balz.

Mr. Ingram stated that in light of Commissioner Portune resigning in December, 2019, since then, there has been an appointment to his position temporarily who is Ms. Victoria Parks.

Mr. Ingram stated that Ms. Parks was Commissioner Portune's Chief of Staff. Ms. Parks reached out to Mr. Ingram yesterday to say that she wished she could attend today's meeting but feels there is a conflict with the scheduling of the Board of County Commissioners general sessions and the Policy Committee meeting. She further reiterated how much she is interested in this issue and wants to be a part of the Committee.

Mr. Ingram stated that her request is to move the bi-monthly meetings to Wednesday or Friday at the same time and hoped it worked for the majority of the Committee. Mr. Ingram said that she will step into the position of the Chair regardless.

Mr. Ingram asked the Committee if there was a preference in the two days. After a brief discussion, the Committee agreed that Wednesday would work for them. Staff stated that as long as the conference rooms were available, Wednesdays would work.

Mr. Ingram stated that there would need to be an official motion and entertained a motion that the Committee was going to change the schedule of the Solid Waste Policy Committee Meetings starting on Wednesdays every other month from 1:30 p.m. – 3 p.m. beginning in March 18, 2020 in this room. Ms. Magness moved. Ms. Hurley seconded. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

Mr. Rajagopal stated that last Tuesday, Colerain Township named January 14, 2020 Commissioner Todd B. Portune Day in Colerain Township for his service to the community in Hamilton County.

2. CLERK'S REPORT

A. Approval of Minutes – November 21, 2019 Policy Committee Meeting

Mr. Ingram asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes and asked if there were any corrections or additions. Mr. Ingram entertained a motion to accept the minutes as submitted. Ms. Hurley moved to approve the minutes. Ms. Magness seconded. All in favor and the minutes were approved.

B. Additions to the Agenda

Ms. Balz stated the 2019 Waste Reduction Innovation Grants overview should be added under informational items.

3. DISTRICT REVENUE UPDATES/ANALYSIS

Ms. Balz stated that there was a large spike in in-district waste in October and November in which an additional 46,000 tons were received when comparing 2019 to 2018. Ms. Balz guessed this could be some sort of special projects that Rumpke took on in these months.

Ms. Balz stated that overall, revenue is up about \$186,000 or six percent. Mr. Ingram asked if there were any projections on where the District would finish in 2019. Mr. Khodadad stated close to \$3.4 million if averaging what we have been receiving.

Ms. Balz stated that the carry-over balance is \$4.1 million. Staff is required to, at a minimum, have 8 months operating expenses in the carry-over. The eight months operating now is just under \$2.2 million so there is quite a big spread in between that. Ms. Balz stated that she would recommend at the March meeting the Committee discuss the potential opportunities to use some of those funds and extra capacity. Ms. Balz stated that the District is planning on hiring an additional District staff member in 2020, but this has not been done yet which will need to be a consideration.

Mr. Ingram asked the Committee to bring ideas for the March meeting and reminded the Committee that in the past there has been a pretty big focus on organic/food waste diversion and thinks there are some further opportunities to deal with that as well as some other items.

Mr. DiPuccio asked that besides a new staff member, would staff have some recommendations. Ms. Balz stated yes.

Mr. Ingram stated that there does not need to be a motion on this and is accepted as submitted.

4. POLICY ITEMS

A. Market Development Grant Applications

Ms. Balz stated that every year, Ohio EPA solicits applications for grants with one of those grants being the Market Development Grant which is intended to go to industries and businesses to further develop markets in Ohio. Those industries must apply through a solid waste district, city, or other entity as a pass through; they cannot apply directly. No District funds are spent for these grants.

Ms. Balz stated that the District has two companies interested in applying for these grants.

Ms. Balz stated that Sam Adams Cincinnati Brewery is one of the applications with whom staff has had a close working relationship the past couple of years. They want to apply for a grant to purchase an aluminum can crusher and a baler. Sam Adams has never had an aluminum can canning line at their facility; they have always just done bottles.

Adding this canning line will add 20 new jobs to that plant. The total project cost is \$201,578.00; Sam Adams is requesting half of that in the amount of \$100,789 and providing a 100% match.

Ms. Balz stated that she reached out to Larry Falkin with the City of Cincinnati and the City is supportive of this application.

Ms. Balz stated that the other application is Synthica Energy, LLC which is a company that is developing an anaerobic digestion facility in the Village of St. Bernard. Their application is to purchase a de-packaging unit which will separate liquids and/or organics from the actual package to hopefully recycle the package and use the organics in the anaerobic digestion facility.

Ms. Balz stated that this grant would be to purchase the de-packaging unit. Ms. Balz stated that there is a change in the amounts stated in the Manager's Memo. The total project cost is \$369,810 and Synthica is requesting \$189,905 and is providing 100% match.

Ms. Balz stated that she reached out to the Village of St. Bernard and they are aware of the project and in support of the grant.

Ms. Balz stated that the procedure is that the Committee vote on whether they would be in support of staff applying on behalf of these businesses but ultimately, it would be County Administration submitting the applications.

A brief discussion and question/answer session ensued about the specifics of the grants.

Mr. Ingram stated to recap what will be voted on is to ask if these two applications should be submitted to Ohio EPA so Hamilton County would be competing with other solid waste districts and other entities to bring monies from Columbus back to Hamilton County. Mr. Ingram stated that it sounds like there are two pretty good applications.

Mr. Ingram entertained a motion from the Committee to authorize the Solid Waste Manager to submit an application to Ohio EPA to process these two applications. Mr. Gedert moved; Mr. DiPuccio seconded. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

5. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. 2019 Waste Reduction Innovation Grants

Ms. Balz stated that there were two final Waste Reduction Innovation Grants for 2019. As the Committee recalls, these grants do not require Committee approval due to being \$10,000 or less.

Ms. Balz stated that all of the budgeted 2019 funds were spent on these grants.

Ms. Balz gave Ms. Mohring kudos in doing an amazing job in administering these grants due to being a continuous grant.

Ms. Balz stated that the two remaining grants that will use the rest of those funds are Great Parks of Hamilton County and Queen City Commons and briefly summarized what each entity would be doing with their grant funds.

Ms. Balz also briefly discussed the three grant applications that were not funded. Ms. Balz stated that Ms. Mohring has reached out to them and let them know how their applications could be improved.

A brief question/answer session ensued.

B. 2018 Waste Diversion Rate

Ms. Balz stated that Hamilton County achieved a 51.29% overall diversion rate in 2018 which is up from 48.77% in 2017. Hamilton County has surpassed the other large urban counties (Cuyahoga, Franklin, and Montgomery) in Ohio.

Ms. Magness asked if staff was getting a better survey response. Ms. Balz stated that that staff was and stated that over the past few years, Ms. Schumacher has worked to build relationships with companies, even with companies that do not respond to start some name recognition. Ms. Schumacher was able to obtain one very large metal recycler who has never responded and it ended up being over 33,000 tons that was reported.

Ms. Balz stated that individual emails were sent to the companies versus a generic email. Once staff received the good news about the diversion rate, Ms. Schumacher sent a thank you email to everyone that responded to give them a pat on the back so hopefully, this year, staff will receive better responses.

Mr. DiPuccio asked if the overall tons of waste landfilled had increased. Ms. Balz stated she would check into it.

Mr. Ingram stated that on behalf of the Committee, this was great work.

C. 2020 Workplan

Ms. Balz stated that she wanted to reiterate that this was a draft plan and staff has not yet set the performance measures for 2020 because we want to make sure we have all of 2019 data. Ms. Balz stated that this was a working document for staff and updates are made throughout the year.

Ms. Balz summarized some of the big projects and who would be working on those. Mr. Ingram asked if this document could be sent to the Committee. Ms. Balz stated yes.

Mr. Ingram suggested that it might be helpful to staff and others if benchmarks were included to be compared to the performance metrics to see if a program was better than last year, three years ago, etc. If there is not a benchmark available, that is OK. Mr. Ingram stated that he likes to see comparisons and the Committee concurred.

Ms. Magness suggested that in addition to conducting compost and food waste seminars, to conduct general recycling seminars for adults and gave an example.

D. Household Hazardous Waste Program Update

Ms. Balz stated that staff would soon be putting out a request for proposals for a one-day event for the household hazardous waste program.

Mr. DiPuccio asked what the timeline was. Ms. Balz stated that the request for proposals would go out soon and the event would take place in the fall.

E. Anaerobic Digestion Working Group Update

Ms. Balz stated that the next meeting for this group is Tuesday, January 21, 2020.

F. Environmental Enforcement Program Update

Ms. Balz stated that Attachment D included a chart of total cases investigated and a table showing the complaints by jurisdiction for 2019. A little over 70% (153) are within the City of Cincinnati with Colerain Township being the next highest with 17 complaints received.

Ms. Balz stated that Ms. Magness had a good suggestion at the last meeting of creating a map and stated that Ms. Schumacher and Deputy Peak have been working on this. It is difficult to go back and create this so, moving forward, beginning in January, 2020, a spreadsheet will be created to make mapping of complaints received possible.

The Committee discussed the importance of Deputy Peak's presence at community meetings.

A brief question/answer session ensued.

6. TENTATIVE FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Carry-Over Balance Spending Recommendations
- Recycling Partnership Contamination Grant
- Phase II of Beyond 34 into Pilot Projects on how to increase public participation on recycling

7. POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBERS' COMMENTS

Ms. Born stated that after the World Wildlife Fund presentation, she got interested in doing something like it at Madeira and after speaking with the superintendent, an audit will be done at her school and hopefully at others etc. as well.

Mr. Gedert stated that relating to Beyond 34, there will be a meeting the week of March 8 but the date is not set. The Policy Committee members will be invited. Mr. Gedert stated that this is proper timing for the next Policy Committee meeting to discuss and this could maybe be an agenda item for the Policy Committee meeting. Mr. Gedert stated that they will be moving into Phase II of Beyond 34 into pilot projects and how to increase public participation on recycling which might be an appropriate topic for the Policy Committee.

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Ingram introduced Dr. O'Reilly and gave a brief background on him and the years he has devoted on behalf of the betterment of the environment not only in Hamilton County, but across the country.

Dr. O'Reilly spoke of Mr. Aluotto starting his career as the Solid Waste Manager. Mr. Ingram stated that if you look at the leadership in the County, the County Administrator and the Assistant County Administrator has all passed through here.

Dr. O'Reilly stated that he was on the executive committee of the first suburbs consortium which included approximately 48 suburbs around the City of Cincinnati. The committee is going to be giving a presentation on January 31st to its members projecting their costs in the next five to 10 years for the things that they do. One of the things municipalities and townships do is negotiate a pick-up rate for their solid waste and that often includes, although sometimes separate, a rate for curbside recycling.

Dr. O'Reilly stated that somebody came to their meeting on Monday and stated that China is no longer accepting plastics. As China refused to accept plastics, there are fewer opportunities to export recycled plastics from the U.S. to China for re-processing. There are some accepted in India, Vietnam, etc. but we won't be able to do that anymore.

Dr. O'Reilly stated that the committee is trying to project what the costs of operation will be in five to 10 years and trying to figure out where the rates will go for curbside recycling service in that same time frame.

Dr. O'Reilly stated that he would like have the Board tell the first suburbs consortium whether they think there will be a direct impact on curbside collection costs. This effect will have an indirect but logical effect on how the City of Wyoming bids out.

Mr. Gedert stated that he couldn't speak on behalf of the Rumpke Corporation but he can speak on the China situation and how it impacts the recycling costs in this region. Mr. Gedert stated that he meets with Rumpke officials on a fairly regular basis and many years ago, Rumpke insulated themselves from the China shipment situation; they do not ship to China at all. None of their commodities go overseas; they ship to markets in the Midwest.

Mr. Gedert stated that because of their marketing strategy, they restrict the types of plastics they accept so they encounter criticism from the general public that they do not accept certain kinds of plastics. This insulates them from the price hikes that other communities are experiencing; however, what is subject to price increases in the recycling market in this region is contamination rather than plastic shipments overseas.

Mr. Gedert stated that the contamination issue is the biggest concern of increasing the cost of recycling. Rumpke is really working with the public to limit the amount of contamination going into their recycling containers and that is the cost driver right now.

Dr. O'Reilly thanked Mr. Gedert on behalf of all the suburbs.

Mr. Ingram thanked Dr. O'Reilly.

Dr. O'Reilly thanked Ms. Balz for her detailed chart.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the grant received by the Recycling Partnership that involved identifying contamination inside City of Cincinnati recycling carts and letting residents know when wrong things were included.

Ms. Magness stated that this has significantly helped clean up the waste stream. Ohio EPA has pretty much offered the City to do it again so she is hopeful that the partners will come together and do this again in the spring and continue to keep the costs down.

A brief discussion ensued regarding contamination.

9. UPCOMING DISTRICT MEETINGS

The next Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste Policy Committee meeting will be held on the new day and date of Wednesday, March 18, 2020. 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. Ingram stated that meeting stood adjourned at 2:48 p.m.