



RIVANNA SOLID WASTE AUTHORITY
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RSWA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Minutes of Regular Meeting
February 23, 2016

A regular meeting of the Rivanna Solid Waste Authority (RSWA) Board of Directors was held on Tuesday, February 23, 2016 at 2:00 p.m. in the 2nd floor conference room, Administration Building, 695 Moores Creek Lane, Charlottesville, Virginia.

Board Members Present: Mr. Tom Foley, Mr. Mike Gaffney – presiding, Ms. Kathy Galvin, Mr. Mark Graham, Mr. Maurice Jones, Ms. Judith Mueller, and Dr. Liz Palmer.

Board Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Mr. Mark Brownlee, Mr. Tom Frederick, Ms. Teri Kent, and Mr. Lonnie Wood.

Also Present: Mr. Kurt Krueger – RSWA Counsel, members of the public, and media representatives.

1.0 Call to Order

A regular meeting of the RSWA Board of Directors was called to order by Mr. Gaffney on Tuesday, February 23, 2016 at 2:03 p.m., and he noted that a quorum was present.

2.0 Minutes of Previous Board Meeting

- a) *Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board on November 17, 2015*
- b) *Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board on December 15, 2015*

Mr. Graham noted that on the November 17, 2015 minutes under Item 9 regarding the baling for of cardboard and aluminum, there was to be a report back to the RSWA Board and he wanted to be sure the Board would receive that report at some point.

Mr. Frederick commented that he would be happy to update the Board but noted Mr. Graham's comment was not a request to change the minutes.

Mr. Graham agreed, and stated that he just wanted to be sure that it was noted.

Mr. Graham moved to approve the minutes of November 17, 2015 and December 15, 2015 as presented. Mr. Jones seconded the motion, which passed unanimously (6-0-1), with Dr. Palmer abstaining from the vote as she had not yet been appointed to the RSWA Board when these two meetings occurred.

3.0 Executive Director's Report

Baling Pilot Study

Mr. Frederick initiated his report by providing the updated report Mr. Graham had requested during the approval of the minutes. He reported that the RSWA had completed pilot testing of baling cardboard for the University of Virginia and baling of aluminum cans for Gerdau, and had done an analysis based on that pilot test. He stated that stakeholders believed that the baling operation was very efficient and effective, but staff analysis found that the tonnages were not sufficient to develop into a permanent program that would be economically sustainable for RSWA. Mr. Frederick explained that the RSWA went back to both UVA and Gerdau, and the agreement reached in those conversations was to extend the pilot period for an additional period of approximately 45 days. He stated that the RSWA had asked both entities if they had additional tonnages that needed processing, believing the operation could sustain sufficient revenue to offset cost if there was enough volume provided. Mr. Frederick stated that if the RSWA were a private company, they might take a risk of some financial loss in a start-up of three to six months while marketing to garner more volume through other businesses – but as a public agency there would be an expectation that an increase in its operation be sustainable from day one. He stated that as a public agency, the RSWA would have limitations on performing marketing that are accepted in the private sector. Mr. Frederick stated that because during the winter there was no vegetative growth requiring maintenance at the closed landfill, this was a good time of year for staff to take on a pilot project. Mr. Frederick stated that unless the Board was inclined to feel otherwise, he was not going to propose that the baling become permanent unless it could break even or make money.

Dr. Palmer asked if the City and the County bailed their own cardboard.

Ms. Mueller responded that the City had it collected as part of its contract.

Mr. Graham stated that the same was true for the County.

Household Hazardous Waste and Amnesty Special Collections

Mr. Frederick reported that this was the last regular Board meeting before the spring household hazardous waste (HHW) and special collections began, and the RSWA was planning to start newspaper advertising in the next few weeks, which would be approached in the way it was typically done. Mr. Frederick stated that the household hazardous waste day would begin on Friday, April 1, and be continued into Saturday, April 2. He reported that the next three Saturdays that followed were amnesty day collections, with furniture and mattresses collected on April 9, appliances on April 16, and tires on April 23. Mr. Frederick noted that Easter Sunday was the last weekend in March, which preceded the collections schedule, and the Dogwood Festival Parade was scheduled for April 23 – but previous experience indicated that it should not interfere with the tire day collections. Mr. Frederick stated that he would like to continue to encourage businesses to use the commercial household hazardous waste day, noting that RSWA was currently the largest commercial user and he would like to see more business entities utilize the service.

Ms. Galvin asked if notice of the HHW was sent to the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Frederick responded that the RSWA did advertise in the business section of *The Daily Progress* but could also send it to the Chamber, noting that Ms. Galvin had a good idea and it did not cost anything to send an email.

McIntire Center Annual Survey and Compost Program

Mr. Frederick stated that each spring, the RSWA conducted an annual survey at the McIntire Recycling Center, which helped the City and County determine the participation rate of the two entities. He noted that the RSWA Board had asked staff a few months earlier when the pilot compost program was discussed to include some questions about the use of the compost program, and those questions were identified in this report and would be included in the next survey. Mr. Frederick stated that the survey was scheduled for the week of April 13 to avoid some other community events, and there should be a report on the results available at the April RSWA Board meeting. Mr. Frederick noted that the RSWA hired a temporary worker for the survey task, and had received many compliments from the public about her customer friendly approach and the quality of her work.

Mr. Frederick stated that their Board packets included a report on the pilot compost collection program, and reports of the collections showed that 1.67 tons of food waste had been collected in six weeks, and the RSWA Board had already agreed to continue the compost program through March. He stated that within the Executive Director's report was a suggestion to continue that program at least one more month, through April, with the results of the survey provided at the April RSWA Board meeting that would help the Board determine to what extent it wanted to extend the program beyond that point in time.

Citizen Tracking Log

Mr. Frederick noted that one of the factors considered in providing administrative services was how useful and helpful the information provided was in relation to the effort involved, and he stated that the Rivanna Authorities had kept a master citizen tracking log to ensure that all calls were properly addressed and questions or issues "followed up". He stated that additionally, since 2011 at the Board's request administrative staff reviewed the list each month and pulled separately the calls that were related to services that were cut in 2011 by the RSWA and included the number of those calls on the Consent Agenda. Mr. Frederick stated that it would be helpful for staff to know from the Board if this information was beneficial enough to continue to provide the Board, and if not then perhaps work efforts could be retargeted to focus on other priorities.

Ms. Mueller stated that there had been an increase in complaints regarding services at the transfer station, which was to be expected any time service was cut, but she did not feel that the numbers were helpful – especially since complaints were not separated from inquiries. She stated that at this point, she did not think that the RSWA was going to restore any of those services, and if this would relieve some of the burden on administrative staff, she would be in favor of discontinuing the "call logs".

Dr. Palmer commented that she was very new to the Board, but she would like to understand what the cost would be to bring back to the Ivy MUC the “paint swap” and CFL disposal programs. She stated that she was looking recently at options besides paying Van Der Linde individually for the paint cans, recognizing many cans “went into the back of trash trucks”. Dr. Palmer stated that she was not sure if collecting the data any longer was meaningful, but she would like to learn more about the history of the paint disposal program and its costs, and she would like to have that conversation because she felt it was important for people to have a place to drop off paint and CFLs.

Ms. Galvin asked if the RSWA staff had noticed any significant or enlightening trends with the citizen inquiries to help inform policy, as this was a policy-making board.

Mr. Frederick responded that the RSWA Board had made some tough decisions to cut programs, and stated that the RSWA was receiving 150-200 complaints per month at first, with that trend persisting for a number of months, but that had dropped to about 50-100. He stated that whether this meant that fewer people were complaining or that people had just chosen not to complain any more, the complaints had dropped but were still being received. Mr. Frederick stated that one of the complaints that was anticipated during Board discussion before adopting the \$10 service fee on trash received from residences and businesses located in the City was that the businesses physically located in the City would find it unfair to be assessed when they were hauling trash collected from contracted work on property in the County. After the fee was adopted, we did receive such complaints, and continued to receive them to the present.

Dr. Palmer stated that citizen feedback from outreach by the County’s Long Range Solid Waste Solutions advisory committee encountered a desire for a regular means to dispose of paints and CFLs – and she walked away from that process with an interest in exploring this history further. With respect to the \$10 disposal fee for the City, Dr. Palmer hoped for further discussions about how both the City and County could use the new transfer station in the future.

Ms. Galvin commented that because the decisions predated her tenure on the RSWA Board, she was also unclear as to what had led to the cuts in services, and as a Councilor she was a proponent of keeping track of the complaints citizens made. Ms. Galvin stated that until they had an opportunity to have a larger and more substantive discussion about solid waste, she was hesitant to discontinue tracking complaints¹ because it continued to show that there was a need. Ms. Galvin asked how much of a burden this was imposing on staff.

Mr. Frederick responded that the person who could best answer that question was not present at the meeting, and perhaps staff could do it for another month and bring that information back to the RSWA Board. He explained that there had been a desire to cut costs at Ivy, and the decision was made to do several things at once. Among these things was to reduce Ivy MUC operations from 6 days per week to 5 days per week open, as well as closing on all 12 local government holidays instead of the 6 previously observed by the RSWA at a time they were paying overtime

¹ Editor’s Note: The “tracking” referred to here is the additional administrative work to review the Rivanna Authorities’ complaint log every month to separately compile the number of complaints regarding loss of solid waste services. Staff has not proposed to cease the general logging of complaints used to assure that effective customer service is provided.

pay to work on holidays. Mr. Frederick stated that further the MUC was collecting CFLs and fluorescent tubes and had a bulb grinder that crushed them within a vacuum so that mercury could not escape. He stated that the RSWA also had a “paint swap” program in which people could bring latex paint to a convenience center at Ivy whereby paint cans could be left or picked up by others to use. Mr. Frederick then asked Mr. Brownlee if there were other services discontinued in that decision.

Mr. Brownlee stated that the items Mr. Frederick mentioned were the biggest components of the program that was cut.

Mr. Graham stated that batteries were also being accepted, and all of those things were carefully considered at the time because government revenues were tight and agencies were trying to cut costs. He explained that the RSWA looked at whether alternatives for disposal were being provided, and at the time there were commercial businesses that allowed consumers to “drop off” batteries and CFLs. Mr. Graham said that the RSWA evaluated the items being disposed and determined that the cost of processing one disposed CFL was equivalent to the cost of buying a bulb, which made it difficult to justify continuing. He stated that the RSWA had also looked at paint disposal and possible alternatives, and along with household hazardous waste day there was EPA guidance on properly disposing latex paints according to its municipal solid waste guidelines.

Ms. Galvin asked Mr. Graham if he felt it was necessary to continue tracking the calls and complaints.

Mr. Graham responded that this was a good question because up to now the Board had not really used the information for making decisions, and he understood the administrative burden Mr. Frederick had noted to continue this effort. He stated that the complaints about the City service fee were included in the reporting with other complaints about solid waste services, and he noted the service fee was initiated because the City was no longer participating in the cost for operating the Ivy MUC. Mr. Graham then added that from his review, there had been little change in the amount of City materials delivered to Ivy since the fee was instituted. Mr. Graham commented that the way the information was being collected now, he was not certain how valuable it was.

Mr. Gaffney asked if it was possible for someone on the RSWA staff to break down the information by type of complaint, so that the Board could determine whether to keep the process or get rid of it.

Mr. Frederick agreed that staff could provide the breakdown for a limited time, but stated that it could also be helpful for the Board to have a broader discussion about the desired services – especially if it was in a regional context with both entities participating. Mr. Frederick stated that the RSWA had done research in the past regarding what other communities had done when faced with these decisions, and he stated that providing a regular convenience center for household hazardous waste was a valuable program. He noted that he did not know of any communities that charged separate fees specifically for use of such a program, as it was usually subsidized by revenues from other programs such as the tonnage received at the transfer station. Mr. Frederick emphasized that if the Board wanted to increase free programs without increasing

government subsidy costs, higher waste tonnage at the transfer station was necessary, and perhaps how to achieve these higher tonnages was something the Board could discuss as part of a larger conversation.

Mr. Graham stated that these were really tough questions, and the RSWA staff did a great job of providing data – but in looking at the information, he could not establish any reliable trends. He added that an explanation for the variability of daily tonnage received could result from factors as simple as whether it had rained that day.

Ms. Galvin commented that perhaps it was an annual trend more than a daily trend, and since the population was growing it seemed logical that the volume would be increasing².

Dr. Palmer stated that for many citizens the Ivy MUC may be “under the radar”, but some citizens used it regularly and depended on it, including many businesses and small contractors. She added that more citizens would use it for paints and CFLs if they knew it existed, but it was not well advertised or publicized.

Mr. Frederick stated that before they left this item, he would like to have the Board’s input on whether the composting pilot program should be extended.

Ms. Mueller stated that she would like to recommend that the pilot program be extended through the end of June. She explained that the City had started a pilot composting program at the farmer’s market, running it for 23 Saturdays in 2015 with very little publicity. Ms. Mueller stated that it started slowly but began to grow, and they began tracking how much of it had come from market merchants versus citizens from the City and County. She indicated that in the 23 weeks of operation, there were three tons of compost provided – so based on Mr. Frederick’s information about tonnage at McIntire, they could possibly deduce that the McIntire Center may be a more favorable location. Ms. Mueller stated that it was easier to find parking at McIntire to carry bags of food waste for composting, and if the composting pilot program continued through June, this would provide the information needed to determine if it was a viable program for the City and the County at McIntire, where people could bring it on days other than Saturdays as the farmer’s market offered. She noted that the program was not very expensive to run, although it had to be staffed, and the public had provided very positive feedback about how helpful the attendant at McIntire had been.

Dr. Palmer asked for clarification of the tonnage received.

Ms. Mueller responded that the farmer’s market had received 3 tons over 23 weeks, and McIntire had received 1.67 tons over 6 weeks.

Mr. Gaffney asked if the use was still growing.

² Editor’s Note: Tonnage at the Ivy transfer station decreased very significantly in 2011 (from 140 tons per day to today’s average of 27 tons per day) when most of the local haulers instituted what was called “single stream recycling” all in one can delivered to a private sector Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in Zion Crossroads. Previously, in 2007, RSWA discussed the idea of constructing a publicly operated MRF as part of its Solid Waste Strategic Plan with public support; however the City and County did not reach an agreement for implementation of the plan.

Mr. Frederick responded that participation had accelerated during the first four weeks and since had remained steady but continued growth had slowed.

Mr. Graham stated that at a previous RSWA Board meeting, he had asked for costs on this program before the Board adopted the new fiscal year budget, and he would support extending the pilot program until June but wanted the cost data before the deliberation on the next year's budget.

Mr. Frederick responded that staff needed more data collection time from the present, but would be able to provide the information Mr. Graham was requesting before the new budget is adopted.

Ms. Mueller asked about the schedule for receiving and deliberating the new RSWA budget.

Mr. Frederick responded that staff would introduce the budget in April, with the Board voting on it in May.

Ms. Mueller stated that she would be willing to hold off on the extension of the pilot program, with the idea of telling the public that there would be a composting program somewhere – either at the City Market or at McIntire – and that the RSWA was still looking at which location would be more advantageous.

Dr. Palmer commented that this was the type of program that would take time to build, and it would take more than just a few months to convince people that it was a good thing to do, so she would not want to cut it off too early.

Ms. Galvin noted that there would be significant construction on Water Street with the Market Plaza project, which would surely impact participation in the farmer's market.

Ms. Mueller stated that the City may need to restructure the composting program, perhaps having citizens go to McIntire and vendors still having some type of service available at the farmer's market.

RSWA Board members agreed to continue the compost pilot program through April and receive a report on program costs in April upon which to base further decisions.

4.0 Items from the Public

There were no items from the public.

5.0 Responses to Public Comments – No Responses This Month

There were no responses to public comments.

6.0 Consent Agenda

a) Staff Report on Finance

- 1) Staff Report on Finance – October 2015*
- 2) Staff Report on Finance – November 2015*
- 3) Staff Report on Finance – December 2015*
- 4) Staff Report on Finance – January 2016*

b) Staff Report on Ivy Material Utilization Center/Recycling Operations Update

c) Staff Report on Ivy Landfill Environmental Status

Mr. Graham stated that he had a question on the Ivy environmental status, and referred to the last page of the report on the item talked about engineering sections of the landfill and costs for post-closure. He asked if the cost was already captured in the budget or if it would need to be added to the FY17 budget.

Mr. Frederick responded that it was in the 10-year plan already reflected in the RSWA budget.

Mr. Jones moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Dr. Palmer seconded the motion, which passed unanimously (7-0).

7.0 Other Business – No Other Business This Month

There was no other business presented.

8.0 Other Items from Board/Staff Not on Agenda

There were no other items from the Board or staff.

9.0 Adjournment

Ms. Galvin moved to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Palmer seconded the motion, which passed unanimously (7-0).

There being no further business, the RSWA Board adjourned their meeting at 2:35 p.m.