

Vernon County Solid Waste/Recycling Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 8, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am by Chairman Richardson. Those present included Brian Richardson, Ole Yttri, Dennis Brault, Geoffrey Banta, John Mitchell, Alan Berg, Bill Meeks, and Gene Edwards.

Proper public meeting notice was confirmed.

Motion by Mitchell, with a second by Yttri, to approve minutes of the December 11, 2013 meeting. Motion approved.

Alan Berg gave a brief description of his previous work in cleaning up and improving the fields on the County Farm and his interest in working with County landfill staff to make similar improvements on landfill property. There are several acres near the landfill offices that could be used for hay production or other crops if rocks or other obstacles were removed and eroded areas were repaired. Alan also thought the old tobacco shed located north of the landfill would be useful as a storage building. And he mentioned the shop his sons had constructed at the intersection of highways Y and LF, which included a heated floor truck wash area. He felt the County should consider constructing such a facility for washing and maintenance of landfill trucks. Committee Members thanked Mr. Berg for his suggestions.

Enter into Closed Session

A motion was made by Banta, with a second by Mitchell, to enter into Closed Session in accordance with the published agenda. The motion was unanimously approved.

Return to Open Session

A motion was made by Banta, with a second by Mitchell, to return to Open Session pursuant to Section 19.85(2) Wisconsin Statutes for possible action on matters discussed in Closed Session. The motion was unanimously approved. Chairman Richardson presented the completed performance evaluation to Edwards.

December Material Volume/Revenue Report

The reports were distributed at the meeting. Waste volumes for December, especially for C/D waste, were much higher (97%) than for December 2012. MSW volume was also up by 11%. As a result of these unexpectedly higher volumes, total waste tipping fees for the year would be approximately \$65,000 above budgeted revenues. Tipping fees for recyclable materials continue the decline that had been experienced over the past 3-4 years.

Although recyclable material volume ended the year 20% higher than for 2012, revenues from the sale of this material were 4% lower than last year due to continuing poor markets.

Leachate volume for the month was significantly higher than usual for December but the landfill and tanks were essentially empty at the end of the month. A total of over 3,500,000 gallons of leachate had been hauled in 2013 at an estimated cost of \$137,683. This was the highest volume since 2008 and highest cost ever experienced by the landfill (partly due to increases in both transportation and treatment cost over the last few years).

Following brief discussion, a motion was made by Banta, with a second by Yttri, to approve the report. Motion carried.

Response to Letter From Hooshang Zeyghami, CWE

Edwards began the discussion by expressing surprise that Mr. Zeyghami would send the letter to Committee Members without discussing it with him first. Issues brought up in the letter are somewhat technical, open to interruption, and, in Edwards' opinion, not accurately presented in the letter. Edwards also felt part of Mr. Zeyghami's motivation for the letter, and for sending it to the Committee, may have been a result of Edwards' recent criticism of CWE's very high engineering fees related to construction of the last landfill cell.

Edwards distributed an aerial photograph of the landfill for Committee use during the discussion that followed. There is a problem with the interface between the northwest-most landfill cell and the cell immediately east of it. The problem began when waste placed in the northwest-most cell slide several feet to the east in 2008 (based on information provided by the Landfill Manager). Although Mr. Zeyghami stated that the problem resulted from settling following a fire in that area, landfill staff that have worked at the site for more than 15 years have stated that no fires ever occurred in that area. When asked by a Committee Member what caused the waste movement, Edwards stated that the cause was not clear but that use of a smooth, rather than textured, landfill liner on the north and west slopes of the landfill may have contributed to the problem (state regulations now require that textured liner material be used on all landfill slopes).

When the waste slid to the east, it spread out over a wider area, which reduced the elevation of the waste. As a result, additional cover material had to be added to the area to facilitate drainage and reduce leachate generation.

However, contrary to Mr. Zeyghami's statements, this action to correct drainage problems had not resulted in the loss of some \$76,000 in landfill capacity. When the Department moves back into this cell, the cover material will be excavated and the "lost" capacity will be recovered. And, in Edwards' opinion, even though significant money had been spent to cover the area, and even though there will be cost involved in uncovering the area, the repairs were necessary to reduce leachate generation and cost. He had no doubt the money saved exceeded the cost. Edwards pointed out a number of other comments in Mr. Zeyghami's letter that he felt were either inaccurate or misleading. He ended his comments on Mr. Zeyghami's letter by stating

that he had a high level of confidence in the Landfill Manager's skills and abilities and an even higher level of confidence that the Department was doing an excellent job of operating the landfill, especially in regard to efficient and cost effective use of available landfill capacity. That is part of the reason the Department's estimate of remaining landfill capacity is 3 to 5 years greater than CWE's estimate.

Following a good deal of discussion, the Committee instructed Edwards to place this item on the next meeting agenda and ensure that Mr. Zeyghami be present to explain his letter.

Proposed 2014 SW/R Committee Meeting Schedule

Committee Member Mitchell had requested that Edwards prepare a calendar of 2014 meeting dates for Committee use. The calendar distributed showed all Committee meetings being held on the second Wednesday of each month. That has been the standard schedule over the last couple of years and the timing works out well relative to other committee meetings and to the schedule for submitting voucher payment requests to the Finance Committee. Meetings dates can be rescheduled if, or as, needed.

Volume Based Discounts for 2013

The only major hauler meeting the requirements for the discount in 2013 was Southwest Sanitation. Their waste volume was 1,436 tons higher than their 2012 waste volume. Mr. Meeks was present and agreed the number sounded correct. He also requested that the discount be applied to his next invoice rather than being paid by check.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Yttri, with a second by Brault, to authorize payment of the discount. Motion approved.

Custodial Services at the Landfill Offices

Chairman Richardson had requested this agenda item following a discussion he had had with Gwen Young. Edwards would have a follow-up discussion with Gwen about her services to the Department.

Review/Approve Vouchers

Vouchers totaling \$22,056.71 were presented for review. The largest bills included another \$5799.37 to CWE for services related to the last cell construction; \$7171.62 in leachate management costs; and \$3536.18 for disposing of two loads of waste tires. Following discussion, a motion was made by Yttri, with a second from Banta, to approve paying the bills. Motion carried.

December Financial Reports

The reports have not yet been received by the Department.

Department Update

Edwards distributed a recently updated County Recycling Guide that would be sent to

participating municipalities. The only change related to cost impacted tractor tires. These tires vary so much in weight (based on the size of the tractor) that the only accurate way to charge for them is by weight. That change went into effect on January 1st.

One of the waste haulers hit the overhead door to the waste room about two weeks ago and did significant damage. Swenson Doors is waiting on the necessary part to fix the door. An invoice for the repairs will be forwarded to the hauler involved. The very cold weather over the last couple of weeks has caused some concern with both personnel and equipment working in the waste room.

Dan Martin had surgery on Tuesday and will be away from work for an uncertain amount of time.

Edwards had talked to the County Clerk, Corporation Counsel, Nursing Home Administrator and others in following up on a Capital Purchase Policy of some type and would also seek input from the Department's auditing firm as part of the process of developing a policy. It may be better for the Department to have its own policy rather than a County policy.

We have started placing baled waste into the landfill cell constructed last year but also still need to place additional waste in the previously active cell (between now and spring) so the rest of that cell can be covered.

The next Solid Waste/Recycling Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 12th at 9:30 am.

Motion by Brault, with a second by Banta, to adjourn the meeting. Motion approved.