

Vernon County Solid Waste/Recycling Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 9, 2014

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Richardson at 9:32am. Those present included: Brian Richardson, Ole Yttri, Dennis Brault, John Mitchell, Jerry Johnson, Bill Meeks, Hooshang Zeyghami, and Gene Edwards.

Proper Public Meeting Notice was confirmed.

A motion was made by Brault, with a second by Johnson, to approve minutes of the June 11, 2014 meeting. Motion approved.

June Material Volume/Revenue Report

The report was distributed at the meeting. MSW was up by 5% over last June and C/D waste was up by 59%. Year to date MSW is now 2%, and C/D waste 24%, above this point last year. Overall tipping fees are about 7%, or roughly \$28,000, above where they were at this time last year.

June was also a good month for recyclable material receipts. The Department received payment for 95 tons of material with a total revenue for the month of over \$17,000. Total revenues for the year are now higher than last year even though tonnage is significantly less. The numbers are a little misleading because the Department received payment for a load of plastics, which were mostly natural HDPE (milk jugs). Milk jugs, at \$.375 per pound, are currently worth nearly as much as aluminum cans. Unfortunately, we only get enough milk jugs to ship a load about once per year.

Leachate continues to be the Department's biggest concern. We were able to get the remainder of Cell #5 covered by the middle of June but we also received about 8 inches of rain during the month (a total of nearly 20 inches in the last three months). Edwards hoped to get much of the C/D waste site covered during July and possibly get caught up with leachate by the end of the month.

We have been hauling 5 loads per day, 7 days per week for more than two months and 90% of the leachate is going to Sparta. The Department is already \$10,000 over the annual budget for leachate management (both hauling and treatment). Not much can be done other than hoping it stops raining soon.

A motion was made by Mitchell, with a second by Yttri, to approve the report. Motion carried.

Bidding Out Diesel Fuel and Propane Services

Johnson had suggested these services be bid out to see whether some cost savings would result. The average annual cost for these two products is roughly \$40,000. Edwards had prepared a brief Request for Proposals (RFP) for the services but would need to have the

Corporation Counsel review it.

The Department had switched to Heartland Co-op (now Premier) a few years ago because the previous vendor had sometimes been unable to provide diesel fuel when needed and because the winter blend fuel provided by Heartland was better quality (less jelling and engine problems during very cold weather). Edwards expressed some reluctance to switch vendors because he was very pleased with both the services and products provided by Premier.

Following discussion, a couple of changes were made to the RFP and Edwards would forward it to the Corporation Counsel for review after the changes had been completed.

Completion of the Baler Relining Project

The project had taken longer than expected, primarily because almost all of the nuts, bolts, locking pin and other connectors were rusted or frozen in after five years of baler operation. Department crew members started working on the project (primarily cleaning up the work area and beginning baler disassembly) on Friday and Saturday, June 13th and 14th and the work was not completed until June 25th.

Edwards was very pleased to report that total cost for the project came in a little over \$20,000—not the \$30,000 initially estimated. PT Welding charged \$18,800 for materials and labor and the Department spent another \$500 on supplies, small tools, and equipment rental. The crew also put in about 50 hours of overtime on the project. The biggest reason the project came in at such a low price was because of the tremendous amount of work put in by Department staff—especially Mike Paulsrud. Mike, Nick, and Nate saved the County a great deal of money on the project.

During the 8 working days the baler had been down, all waste was sent to the C/D waste site. That aspect of the project was also accomplished without any significant problems. Overall, the crew had performed exceptionally well during the baler repair project.

Volume Based Discounts After 2014

Committee Members had suggested this item be on the Agenda for today's meeting. Edwards continued to feel this discount should be phased out at the end of 2014. He had met with Bill from Southwest Sanitation to discuss several topics last Wednesday and Bill had indicated the discount was not a major issue for him one way or the other.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Johnson, with a second by Brault, to discontinue the Volume Based Discount effective December 31, 2014. Motion approved.

Continued Discussion of Bale Fill Verses Area Fill landfill Operations

Hooshang and Edwards had been looking into the two options over the last six weeks. There are both advantages and disadvantages to both approaches but it is difficult to nail down which approach makes the most sense for Vernon County. Hooshang and Edwards had worked together to prepare a report which Hooshang presented to the Committee.

Major advantages of the Bale Fill approach include:

- Better waste compaction (by about 5%) which consumes landfill space more slowly.
- Reduction in the amount of daily cover (sand) needed.
- Reduced wind-blown litter.

Major disadvantages of the Bale Fill approach include:

- Additional cost of operating and maintaining the Baler and Log Truck (labor, utilities, repair and maintenance, baler wire, etc).
- Increased leachate cost because a much larger open landfill area is needed.
- Baler operation inside the building creates a very ugly work environment and utilizes space that could be put to other uses (recycling or Ag plastic management, for example).
- The baling operation becomes the bottle-neck in the waste handling process. This is of particular concern because the facility is operating above designed capacity already.
- A great deal of litter is generated by the Log Truck delivering bales to the landfill.

The biggest advantage of an Area Fill approach is that it avoids the disadvantages of the Bale Fill approach. This approach also dramatically reduces waste handling, which dramatically increases the amount of waste the Department can handle.

Major disadvantages of the Area Fill approach include:

- The cost of acquiring and operating a larger landfill compactor and end loader.
- Requires more daily cover to address wind-blown litter and scavenging by animals.
- Reduced landfill life (about 5%).
- The cost of preparing and getting DNR approval to change to this approach.

This topic was discussed for several minutes. Making the change-over would be a major decision and it is difficult to predict exactly what the result would be. It was suggested that it might be practical to lease the necessary equipment and change the operation on a trial basis. Edwards would look into that option.

Review/Approve Vouchers

Vouchers totaling \$99,630.74 were presented for review. Major bills included: \$20,500 to C & C Landscaping (covering cell #5); \$18,880 to PT Welding (baler reline); \$17,072 to Southwest Sanitation (leachate hauling); \$12,531 to City of Sparta (leachate treatment); and \$6,650 to Poynette Iron Works (two new recycling roll-offs). Edwards also indicated the Department owed WDNR \$36,143 for the second quarter fees but the paperwork had not been received. Following discussion, a motion was made by Brault, with a second by Johnson, to approve paying the vouchers. Motion carried.

May Financial Reports

The reports were distributed at the meeting. The June reports were not received in time for the meeting. The Department is in about the shape it should be at this point in the year, with the exception of leachate management cost being MUCH higher than expected. Edwards estimated expenditures were at about 40% of budget and revenues were at about 48% of budget. Both numbers are very close to the Department's experience in recent years. Following discussion, a motion was made by Yttri, with a second by Mitchell, to approve the reports. Motion carried.

Department Update

Edwards reported that the leachate was creating an unusually large amount of foam. The reason is not known at this point but a de-foaming agent is being used to control it. There have been a couple of instances of Department staff responding unprofessionally and unacceptably to waste haulers in the last two months. Edwards felt part of the problem was stress—we are having trouble keeping up with the waste volume. Steps will be taken to address the issue.

The Treasurer has or soon will combine the two Department restricted funds and rename them Landfill Closure Fund. The balance will be approximately \$644,000. These funds, combined with the bank Letter of Credit, put us in compliance with state requirements for closure. If we want to pursue return of the \$103,000 the County took from the Department budget in 2009, that will require going to the Finance Committee and probably the County Board.

The Department has completed two of its planned four major projects for this year (covering of cell #5 and relining the baler chambers) and the other two (asphalt driveway and covering the C/D waste site) should be completed by our next meeting.

With the 2015 budget approaching, Edwards encouraged the Committee to consider raising both the C/D waste and MSW tipping fees (currently \$48 and \$58 per ton). The only time the fee has been increased in the last 20 years was in 2010 and that increase was necessary to pay new fees to DNR. Costs have gone up a good deal, especially in the last 4-5 years, and the auditor had recently suggested an increase of \$5 per ton. Edwards felt that amount would be difficult for landfill customers to deal with and suggested an increase of \$2.00 per ton. That increase would generate an additional Department income of approximately \$34,000 per year. That amount will not cover cost increases incurred over the last few years, but it will help.

The next Committee meeting will be August 13th at 9:30am.

Motion to adjourn at 11:15am by Johnson, with a second by Mitchell. Motion carried.