

Vernon County Solid Waste/Recycling Committee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 12, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 9:30am by Chairman Richardson. Those present included: Brian Richardson, Ole Yttri, Dennis Brault, John Mitchell, Geoffrey Banta, Scott Reber (Southwest Sanitation), Hooshang Zeyghami, and Gene Edwards.

Proper Public Meeting Notice was confirmed.

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

February Material Volume/Revenue Report

The report was distributed at the meeting. Waste volume continued to be down significantly for February and for the year to date. YTD volume is 9% below last year. Edwards was confident that volume would pick up as soon as the weather moderates.

Recycling also continues to be very slow although four loads of material (two cardboard, one mixed paper and one mixed plastics) have been shipped but do not show up on the report because we have not been paid for them. It is not unusual for payment to be four to six weeks after shipment.

Leachate volume is down approximately 17% but costs are up more than 70%. The higher price is a result of Viroqua's WWTF cost increase (treatment cost per ton went from about \$2.30 to about \$6.50) and more leachate hauling by Southwest Sanitation (the Department's water hauling truck was down during much of February).

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

Performance Evaluations for Department Staff

Edwards had completed the evaluation in January but needed to get the Chairman's signature on the forms before submitting them to the Personnel Office. The current forms are not very helpful in evaluating, or trying to improve, employee performance. A new, more detailed form is being developed by Personnel. All Department employees are meeting or exceeding performance expectations.

Follow-up Discussion of CWE Letter

Edwards repeated the concerns he had expressed at the January meeting regarding the letter sent to Committee Members at the end of December. Following discussion, Mr. Zeyghami agreed he should not have sent the letter to Committee Members and would address any

future landfill concerns with Edwards. The Committee normally need not become involved in landfill operational issues unless Mr. Zeyghami and Edwards cannot agree on how the issues should be addressed.

Continued Work with Johnson Block on Department Finances

Edwards had exchanged emails with the auditor since the Committee's last meeting but still did not have adequate answers to questions about Department finances. Mr. Johanning's attendance at a Committee meeting had been postponed until a later date.

Edwards had collected as much information as he could from old Department records, from the County Clerk's office, and from Viroqua Bank. But he did not yet have the information needed to show how Department capital expenses had been, or would be, depreciated. The amount of undepreciated capital expenses seemed excessive (approximately \$1.5 million). The primary capital cost the Department depreciates is landfill construction, which should be depreciated as the capacity constructed is used—i.e., it should be fairly stable from year to year. But over the last five years, annual depreciation has varied from less than \$50,000.00 to more than \$400,000.00. That did not seem reasonable.

The biggest question continues to be the Balance Sheet line item listed as Accrued Liability—Closure. Previous records clearly show that the balance in this line item (\$2.8 million) has been removed from or charged to the Department's annual cash budgets over the years. Yet the auditor insists the line item does not represent cash or available funds. If the Accrued Liability does not represent funds available to pay for landfill closure, then the Department is in serious financial trouble. If it does represent funds the Department has available, then we are in very sound financial condition. The answer to this question has major impact on the Department's ability to fund any future capital projects, including future landfill expansion.

Review/Approve Vouchers

Vouchers totaling \$25,636.71 were presented for review. Major expenses included: baler wire (\$7085.), diesel fuel (\$4966.), tires for Dan's truck (\$2,660.), waste tire disposal (\$1,804), leachate treatment cost (\$1,489.), and the electric bill (\$1,459.). Following discussion, a motion was made by Yttri, with a second by Brault, to approve paying the bills. Motion approved

February Financial Reports

The reports were distributed at the meeting. These reports are not very helpful this early in the year because most revenues and expenditures have not shown up yet. Edwards estimated that both revenues and expenditures were at approximately 10% of the budget at the end of February. Following discussion, a motion was made by Brault, with a second by Yttri, to approve the reports. Motion carried.

Department Update

Most of Edwards' time over the last month had been spent looking for answers to Department

financial questions, planning spring projects, and pursuing a possible grant to help fund the proposed Leachate Treatment Project. New flooring had been installed in the crew lunchroom and the walls were painted, and the two computers recommended by the IT Department had been ordered.

The grant we (Michele Engh and John Roll are also working on it) are applying for is in response to a Targeted Request for Proposals from the Environmental Research and Education Foundation that specifically asks for proposals involving leachate treatment approaches. It is probably the best prospect for a grant we have seen so far but is also likely to be a very competitive process. One of the things working against us is that projects similar to ours have been completed in other states and that may reduce our chances of success. Any grant offered would need to be approved by both the Committee and the County Board.

The next Solid Waste/Recycling Committee meeting will be held at 9:30am on April 9th.

Motion by Mitchell, with a second by Yttri, to adjourn the meeting at approximately 11:42am.

Motion approve.