

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

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Richardson at 9:32am. Those present included: Brian Richardson, Dennis Brault, John Mitchell, Hooshang Zeyghami, Scott Reber (Southwest Sanitation), and Gene Edwards. Ole Yttri and Jerry Johnson were excused from the meeting.

Proper Public Meeting Notice was confirmed.

A motion was made by Mitchell, with a second by Brault, to approve minutes of the September meeting. Motion approved.

Potential Meeting with La Crosse County Solid Waste Representatives

Hank Koch, the La Crosse County Solid Waste Director, and Edwards had been trying to arrange a joint meeting between the Committee and La Crosse representatives but the second Wednesday of the month was not working out for La Crosse. Committee Members indicated changing the November meeting date to accommodate the meeting with La Crosse was okay, with either the first or last week of the month being the best.

Hank had indicated the primary purposes of the meeting were to update us on what La Crosse plans are (they will be developing a new Solid Waste Management Plan) and to discuss possible ways the two counties could work together in the future. The two counties currently work together to provide Household Hazardous Waste services and that program has been very cost effective and successful. La Crosse County may also be able to play an important role in managing Vernon County waste after the current landfill closes.

September Material Volume/Revenue Report

The report was distributed at the meeting. Both MSW and C/D waste volumes were significantly above last September's volumes. Total waste volume year to date is about 4% higher than last year. Edwards expected the Department to end the year with about 17,500 tons of total waste, which would be about 12% above the amount budgeted.

The Recycling Program is still not performing as well as last year—both volume and revenue are down significantly. The Department does have quite a bit of material on hand, primarily because paper and plastics markets continue to be very poor. However, the Department has been able to keep costs down so recycling overall should perform above average for the year. Leachate volume for September was exactly the same as last September but cost was 50% higher because all of the leachate had to be hauled to Sparta. Leachate issues will be discussed in more detail under a later Agenda item.

Motion by Brault, with a second by Mitchell, to approve the report. Motion carried.

Landfill Closure and Long Term Care

WDNR has recently assigned a new staff member (Dennis Gawronski) to the Financial Responsibility Section—the section that manages Landfill Closure and Long Term Care (LTC) Programs. Mr. Gawronski and Edwards had exchanged a couple of emails and telephone calls over the last two weeks regarding the County's financial responsibility.

WDNR is still using information provided to them by CWE in 2005. According to this information, the landfill would be closing in 2017—Edwards revised this estimate to 2021. The much more distressing part of the conversation was the dramatic difference between the estimated costs for closure and LTC used by WDNR and those used by CWE. WDNR's estimate for closure cost was \$959,500 and CWE's most recent estimate was \$1,692,141. The difference between the two estimates is even greater for LTC—WDNR estimates a cost of \$1,468,630 and CWE's recent estimate is \$2,427,856. And the estimates came from the same information. Using WDNR's estimates, we already have \$450,000 more money set aside than we need to cover both closure and LTC costs. Using CWE's estimates, we need about \$1,224,438 more money than we currently have available to cover these costs. Obviously there is something very, very wrong with someone's estimates. Edwards questioned whether both estimates might be wrong. WDNR's estimates are far too low and CWE's estimates seem very high. He would work with CWE and WDNR to try to get accurate numbers for these future costs.

There is one additional concern with the Escrow Account for these future financial responsibilities. There is approximately \$150,000 in the Escrow Account that is not insured by state or federal programs and not protected by pledged municipal securities. Edwards will discuss this concern with Viroqua Bank.

Ongoing Leachate Concerns

The situation with leachate management continues to be a major concern. We began looking into alternative leachate management options three years ago because of concerns about increasing costs and a growing concern that waste water treatment facilities (WWTF) might stop accepting landfill leachate. Those concerns were well founded. In the last two years, Sparta has increased their treatment fees by 60%. A year ago in July, Viroqua increased their charges for leachate by 180% and beginning in June this year, they have refused to accept any leachate. Hopefully, Viroqua's refusal to accept leachate is only temporary.

The alternative leachate management approach we were looking at might still be feasible; however, WDNR's requirement that we complete a small scale Demonstration Project to prove the approach works before we can implement a full scale project dramatically increased the cost of this alternative approach to leachate management. Going forward with this approach would require grant funding and/or other assistance from another party.

There are other WWTFs (Elroy, Prairie du Chien, or Richland Center) that might accept our leachate but transportation costs would make them more costly than what we are doing now.

Review/Approve Vouchers

Vouchers totaling \$61,626.81 were presented for review. More than 60% of the total (\$37,616.) was going to WDNR in third quarter landfill fees. Other major expenses included: about \$11,000 in leachate management cost; \$3,043 to CWE for groundwater monitoring; and \$3,866 to C & C Landscaping for seeding, erosion mat and other minor landfill repairs. Following discussion, a motion was made by Mitchell, with a second by Brault, to approve paying the vouchers. Motion approved.

September Financial Report

Edwards indicated that he and Jayme had been working together off and on over the last couple of months to put together a brief report that would provide the Committee with up to date revenue and expense information. The draft report distributed at the meeting included all major revenue and expense categories and was up to date as of the end of September. Revenues in this current draft are based on sales (i.e., tipping fees charged but some of which have not yet been received) through September 30th. And expenses include the vouchers that were approved at today's meeting (all of which were incurred last month). Committee Members seemed well satisfied with the report format and information. A motion was made by Mitchell, with a second by Brault, to approve the report. Motion carried.

Department Update

Edwards had completed his Asbestos Inspector recertification on October 2nd. He also needed to submit information listing the County as his employer.

The Ag Plastics Workshop in Waupaca had been interesting but was also disappointing in that we don't seem to be much closer to having realistic markets for getting rid of this material. The biggest obstacles continue to be adequate separation/collection and cleanliness.

The proposed meeting with landfill neighbors will be October 20th at 6:30pm.

The Department had about 125 vehicles at the Fall Clean Sweep on September 12th and 13th as well as about 40-45 vehicles on the two Saturdays prior to the event (for paints only). We accepted more than 1,000 pounds of hazardous materials and 3 to 4 times that much paint. Plans for the 2015 Clean Sweep are already in place.

The next Committee Meeting will be scheduled with La Crosse County based on a mutually acceptable date and time.

A motion was made by Mitchell, with a second by Brault, to adjourn the meeting at 11:07am. Motion approved.