

Vernon County Solid Waste/Recycling Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 5, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 AM by Chairman Richardson. Those present included: Brian Richardson, Ole Yttri, Dennis Brault, John Mitchell, Jerry Johnson, Bill Meeks, Gene Edwards, and (for La Crosse County) Hank Koch, Leon Pfaff, and Maureen Freedland.

Proper Public Meeting Notice was confirmed.

Motion by Brault, with a second by Richardson, to approve minutes of the October 8, 2014 meeting. Motion approved.

Discussion with La Crosse County Solid Waste Representatives

Chairman Richardson asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Edwards indicated that he and Hank had wanted to get the group together to discuss future solid waste services. The two counties have been very successfully working together for several years on the Household Hazardous Waste Program and there may be opportunities to work together on other services in the future.

Hank indicated it was a unique time for solid waste management in Wisconsin. Many of the small, county owned landfills developed in the late eighties and early nineties have closed or may consider closing. In our area, Juneau County Landfill has closed and Adams, Monroe, and Vernon Counties are looking at available options for future waste management. These landfills served a very important purpose in helping to transition from the old city, village, and town dumps to the sanitary landfills required by new federal and state regulations that were developed in the middle and late 1980's. But changing regulations and increasing competition from larger, regionalized approaches to waste management are making these small landfills less economically viable.

The larger, regionalized approaches (whether provided by the public or private sector) have very significant economy of scale benefits as well as a wider variety of approaches to management due to the much larger volume of waste available. The most significant down side for regional approaches is the increased transportation cost necessary to bring the waste to one location.

La Crosse County operates a regional approach to waste management, currently serving all or parts of half a dozen western Wisconsin and eastern Minnesota counties. They utilize a Waste-to-Energy Facility and landfill, as well as a variety of recycling or reuse approaches, to efficiently manage the solid waste. The contract for waste incineration with Excel Energy expires in 2023 but has options for extension. And the current landfill has more than 25 years of remaining capacity. Current fees are \$61/ton at Excel and \$59/ton at the landfill.

La Crosse County Representatives provided a good deal more information about their waste management system. The discussion continued for more than an hour and included discussing possible future use of the La Crosse Program for management of part or all of Vernon County's solid waste.

October Material Volume/Revenue Report

The report was distributed at the meeting. MSW volume was 8% higher than last October and C/D waste volume was 7% higher. Total tipping fees are now 4% higher than at this point last year. The Recycling Program continues to perform about the same as it has all year. Material volume is about 25% lower than last year and revenue is 16% lower. Most of the reduction in material volume was in paper products. Edwards was not certain why paper volume was down so much—the amount of materials collected at town drop-off sites does not appear to have decreased significantly. Leachate volume was significantly lower than last October but both the volume and cost are still higher than at this point last year. Approximately 3.25 million gallons of leachate has been hauled this year. Following additional discussion, a motion was made by Yttri, with a second by Mitchell, to approve the report. Motion carried.

Repairing the Landfill South Slope

Edwards distributed an aerial photograph of the landfill to aid in discussion of this topic. Most of the waste in this section of the landfill has been in place for 12 to 15 years. It has decomposed and settled by 2 to 4 feet over most of the approximately 1 acre area. The Department is required by State approvals, and by the need to maximize landfill capacity, to maintain a 4 to 1 grade on all side slopes. Edwards had had the area surveyed and found that it would take about 4,000 cubic yards of material to return the area to the required grade. The Department's two options were to either: 1) haul in 4,000 yards of clay and spread it over the in-place interim cover to reach required grade; or 2) remove the in-place cover, move waste down from the top of the landfill to bring the slope up to grade, and then replace the original clay cover. Cost of the two options was expected to be about the same and either option would require that the south slope be reseeded and covered with erosion matting. The big difference between the two options was that option 2 would create an additional 4,000 cubic yards (about 2,800 tons) of C/D waste capacity. The 2,800 tons of C/D waste will generate well over \$100,000 in revenue with an estimated net profit of over \$30,000. That should be significantly more money than the entire project will cost.

The Highway Department had agreed to provide a large dozer and operator to complete the work. The work took about 7 days and had been completed on October 29. C & C Landscaping will complete the seeding and erosion matting this week. Money to complete this project had been placed in the 2014 Department budget.

Efforts were also underway to place interim cover over as much of the C/D waste area as possible before winter sets in. The goal is to have less than 2.5 acres of landfill space open when next spring's rains arrive. We had about 4.5 acres open in the spring of 2014. Cell #6, constructed in 2013, accounts for just over two acres of open area and cannot be covered due to balefill operational procedures.

Meeting with UW Stevens Point on Leachate Management

Edwards and Hooshang had met with Assistant Professor Rob Michitsch from the UW Stevens Point Natural Resources School in mid-October to discuss our alternative leachate management project. We talked about the project for approximately an hour and Professor Michitsch expressed a great deal of interest in getting the University involved. We don't have many details about what the University's involvement might be. Some of the things Dr. Michitsch

mentioned included possible assistance in obtaining grant funding, technical assistance in setting up and operating the treatment system (probably using graduate students), and use of the University Laboratory to provide testing and analysis needed to evaluate the effectiveness of the treatment approach. It's far too early to know whether this might all come together but it is clear the University thinks the project is worth pursuing. Edwards will stay in contact with the University and update the Committee on any developments.

Review/Approve Vouchers

Vouchers totaling \$19,748.86 were presented for review. Major bills included: \$7,486 to Accent Wire for baler wire; \$4,790 to City of Sparta for leachate treatment; and \$2,713 to Premier Co-op for diesel fuel (Premier's last bill to us for diesel and propane).

Following discussion, a motion was made by Yttri, with a second by Mitchell, to approve paying the vouchers. Motion approved.

Given the early date of this month's meeting, the Department will probably need to get the Chairman's approval to pay additional bills later this month to avoid late payment charges.

October Financial Report

The report was distributed at the meeting. Overall Department finances are in good shape for this point in the year. We should be at 83% of budget at the end of October. Revenues are at 90%, including some tipping fees charged but not yet received. Department expenses are at 78% of budget but that figure does not include vouchers approved today or October expenses that have not yet been invoiced to the Department. Edwards estimated actual expenses year to date to be at about 83% of budget.

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

Department Update

Edwards and Brault had met with about 15 landfill neighbors on October 20th. Edwards had provided information about current landfill operations but most of the discussion had focused on how County waste would be managed after the existing landfill reached capacity.

Edwards also met with the County Towns Association on October 30th. January 1 tipping fee increases and future waste management options were the topics of discussion.

The next Solid Waste/Recycling Committee meeting will be December 10th at 9:30am.

Motion by Brault, with a second by Johnson, to adjourn at 12:35pm. Motion carried.