

**Approved MINUTES OF A  
HAMILTON COUNTY SOLID WASTE  
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING  
In person & Zoom**

**DATE:** January 18, 2023

**TIME:** 3:00 p.m.

**PLACE:** Hamilton County Environmental Services  
250 William Howard Taft Road, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45219

[Virtual meeting recording can be viewed here.](#)

**PRESENT:** **Policy Committee Members**

Tony DiPuccio, Generator Representative  
Denise Driehaus, County Commissioner, Chair  
Bob Gedert, Public Member  
Craig Davidson, Hamilton County Public Health Representative  
Sue Magness, Largest Municipality Representative  
Domonique Peebles, General Interest Member  
Matt Wahlert, Township Representative

**Staff**

Christin Badinghaus, Business Specialist  
Michelle Balz, Solid Waste Manager  
Gage Bradford, Community Specialist  
Mary Copenbaker, Assistant Manager  
Elise Roalef, Outreach Specialist  
Brad Johnson, Director  
Ali Khodadad, Operations Manager  
Mike Kramer, Assistant Director  
Joy Landry, Communications Specialist  
Cher Mohring, Community Outreach Coordinator  
Susan Schumacher, Assistant Solid Waste Specialist, Clerk

**Others in Attendance**

Landerson  
Madeline Anderson, Easterseals Redwood  
Michelle Ackenhausen, Ohio EPA  
Chet Chaney, Ohio EPA  
Nee Fong Chin, Prosecutor's Office  
Becca Costello, WVXU  
Danielle  
Sally Dannemiller, Sierra Club – Miami Group  
Chuck DeJonckheere, Hamilton County Public Health  
Dean Ferrier, Rumpke  
Ruth Hardy  
Matt Hittle, Ohio EPA  
Kent Huxel  
Kathleen Kennedy, Springfield Twp?  
Mary Knight

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Marie Kocoshis, League of Women Voters  
Oliver Kroner, Office of Environment and Sustainability  
Jennifer Wright Linz  
Karen Luken, EESI  
Tim Mara, Oxbow  
Colleen McSwiggin, Cincinnati Recycling and Reuse Hub  
Rich McVay  
Rob Nicolls  
Deputy Bryan Peak, Hamilton County Sheriff's Office  
Rubossi  
Julie Shifman, Last Mile Food Rescue  
Matt Tietsort  
Kevin Tighe, Hamilton County  
Declan Tom, Cincinnati CM Jeffreys  
Vivian's i Phone  
Molly Yeager, Rumpke

**Policy Committee Member Absent:**

Greg Kesterman, Hamilton County Public Health Commissioner

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Ms. Driehaus called the meeting to order at 3:03 pm and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

**2. PROCLAMATION FOR SUSAN SCHUMACHER**

Ms. Driehaus read a Proclamation recognizing Ms. Schumacher for her years of service.

**3. CLERK'S REPORT**

Ms. Driehaus entertained a motion to approve the November 16, 2022 minutes. Ms. Magness moved to approve the minutes as corrected; Mr. Gedert seconded. Everyone in favor and the minutes were approved as corrected.

**4. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Three public comments were given.

**5. R3SOURCE REVENUE UPDATES/ANALYSIS**

Ms. Balz gave a summary of the revenue report.

**6. PROSECUTOR OPINION**

Ms. Driehaus stated that this was held over from a previous meeting and asked if the Prosecutor's Office was going to comment on this. Ms. Chin stated that Ms. Balz sent out a memo from Andrea Neuwirth and asked if everyone received the email. Ms. Balz stated that if there were questions to email them to her.

**7. POLICY COMMITTEE ITEMS**

**a. Hamilton County Solid Waste Plan Update**

- i. Timeline – Ms. Balz gave a presentation on the Plan Update timeline and stated that there is still one comment from Ohio EPA that still needs to be addressed and that will happen today.

Ms. Balz stated that ratification may happen in March or May and after the ninety-day ratification period, the Plan will be submitted to Ohio EPA for final approval.

Ms. Balz stated that if the Committee wants to go out for ratification at the March meeting, we would need to start the thirty-day public comment period in late January and then there is very prescribed information on when you need to have that public hearing in relation to that public comment period.

Ms. Balz stated that if a lot of public comments were received and the Committee wanted more time to be able to think about those and decide what changes potentially need to be made, then it would be best to push ratification to May.

Ms. Balz stated that if there wasn't a lot of public comments or if the public comments were easily integrated and it seemed that the Committee was happy with where the Plan was, then ratification could start in March.

Ms. Balz stated that she and Mr. Gedert met to go over some of the universal waste, recycling, and composting language and how to best integrate that which is one of the updates that was made.

Ms. Balz stated that the other update was the public-private partnership. The new language is as follows: *R3Source will follow the US EPA Food Waste Diversion hierarchy when prioritizing strategies to reduce wasted food, focusing efforts on first reducing waste and then supporting food rescue. R3Source will budget \$150,000 to conduct a study to initiate a public-private partnership for an organics processing facility.*

Ms. Balz stated that what needs to be thought about with the public-private partnership is a siting strategy. If there is a possibility that the county would own the land or own the facility, Ohio EPA says that R3Source must have a siting strategy for how we go about that.

Ms. Balz stated that it can be included in the Plan that the Committee intends to form a committee to come up with a siting strategy but all this does not have to happen before the Plan is put out for ratification. Ms. Balz gave examples of what it takes to initiate a siting strategy.

A discussion ensued regarding the siting strategy.

Ms. Driehaus asked if it was true that if we were not to have publicly-owned composting or organics facility, a siting strategy would not be necessary. Ms. Balz stated that this was correct and Ohio EPA is very specific in that a siting strategy is for a government owned facility. Ms. Driehaus asked with the goal of being more aggressive related to food waste and organics and asked if it was a public-private partnership, is it a public doing it, is it the City, is it the County. Ms. Driehaus stated that she feels like these questions have been unanswered. Ms. Driehaus asked if language in the Plan could contemplate all of the above since we are not sure where we are going to head on this.

Ms. Driehaus stated that she didn't mind putting a time frame to it to kind of get it going but she does not want to box us in so we do not have an opportunity to say, for example that the City if doing this, why don't we partner with the City and work with them or the private sector for that matter. Ms. Driehaus stated that she wanted something flexible.

Further discussion ensued about the timeline for the siting strategy. Ms. Driehaus stated that we can have a date to start but not an end date because we don't know how long it is going to take.

Ms. Driehaus encapsulated the discussion by stating, yes, a siting strategy, leave it fairly open ended because we do not know what the nature of it will be, put a committee together in year one of the Plan which is 2024 to start to look at the siting strategy implementation of getting into the collection of organics. Mr. Wahlert added that the siting strategy subcommittee could then come up with a working timeline.

ii. Fee Increase

Mr. Gedert stated that he assumed everyone read Attachment C. Mr. Gedert summarized the attachment. Mr. Gedert stated that to be clear, this is not a rate increase to Hamilton County residents; that is Tier One.

Mr. Gedert stated that the purpose of the fee increase is to try using market forces to prevent waste from coming into Hamilton County due to the fact that Tier II is fifty-four percent and gave examples of what could happen.

Mr. Gedert stated that this will also raise revenues for the District to be used for particular purposes that were not included in the budget because there was not enough funding. i.e., expansion of the HHW program, purchasing land if the siting committee recommends it, etc.

Mr. Gedert moved that the Hamilton County Solid Waste Management District Policy Committee approve revisions to the Hamilton County Solid Waste Management District's Update to the 2024 – 2038 Plan for the purpose of increasing out-of-district disposal fees as follows:

- On January 1, 2025, the out-of-district (Tier Two) fee be increased from \$2.00/ton to \$2.50/ton;
- On January 1, 2026, the out-of-district (Tier Two) fee be increased from \$2.50/ton to \$3.00/ton.
- On January 1, 2027, the out-of-district (Tier Two) fee be increased from \$3.00/ton to \$3.50/ton.
- On January 1, 2028, the out-of-district (Tier Two) fee be increased from \$3.50/ton to \$4.00/ton.

Ms. Magness seconded.

Ms. Driehaus stated that she reached out to the City and have tried to come up with some language that talks about it not in terms of doing it right now with this motion, rather than including something in the Plan that is fairly definitive that talks about contemplating a study that is more comprehensive. Also, getting a better understanding on what we would fund with an increased fee and feels that organics is on the radar for everyone.

Ms. Driehaus stated that she feels that it is premature to raise fees right now and stated that she is not comfortable with it. Included as Attachment D is a draft that talks through some of this. Her expectation is that there will be language that everyone can agree to but the idea is to have this conversation to have it broadly throughout the community to let people have some input about the fee increase and what the money would be used for. She feels that this would help have a broader idea base as to what the money could be used for.

Ms. Driehaus stated that she would continue to work on this and share it with the Committee so everyone's up to date.

Each member gave their comments regarding the fee increase. Mr. Wahlert asked if the motion is defeated, could it be brought back at the next meeting from someone from the losing side. Ms. Chin stated yes.

Ms. Driehaus stated that all those in favor on the motion indicate by saying aye. Mr. Gedert, Ms. Magness, and Mr. Peebles voted aye and Ms. Driehaus, Mr. DiPuccio, Mr. Davidson, and Mr. Wahlert all voted no.

iii. Aspirational Diversion Goal

Ms. Balz stated that she really pushed to include the aspirational goal in the Plan but it is not required by Ohio EPA. R3Source has exceeded the state mandated goals for a while now and felt it was important to have a goal that we are working towards in this Plan.

Ms. Balz stated that the goal is a thirty percent increase in diversion which works out to one percentage point per year. Ms. Balz stated that she is going to change this wording since she feels it's not worded very well.

Ms. Balz stated that she thinks there are areas where the diversion rate could be increased. The diversion rate has been broken into residential, commercial, and industrial. In her presentation, the first column is where R3Source was in 2020 which is the baseline year of the Plan (the industrial is sixty-eight percent which is without the flue gas desulphurization).

Ms. Balz stated that that she is working on increasing these numbers and thought that the commercial sector had the most potential.

Ms. Balz stated that much of the growth from the residential sector is based on communities that do not have automatic recycling; increasing their access.

Ms. Balz stated industrial will be more difficult. R3Source has industrial programs but does not think it is a sector that significant increased diversion will be seen. What would change this is anaerobic digestion.

A brief question and answer question ensued.

iv. Household Hazardous Products (HHP)

Ms. Balz stated that R3Source will be doing the regular HHP Event but staff has added a pilot community component and explained what this was.

Ms. Balz stated that also staff has been talking with Rumpke and the Recycling and Reuse Hub about a lithium ion battery drop-off. This would target materials we know have caused fires.

Ms. Balz stated that all the credit goes to the Hub as they have been doing all the work on this. R3Source could be a potential partner with helping to fund this.

b. Ohio EPA Market Development Grant

Ms. Balz stated that staff has been approached by Rumpke to apply for a Market Development Grant on their behalf which is how Ohio EPA's Market Development Grants works for private companies; they must have a passthrough organization.

Ms. Copenbaker stated that Rumpke's project is to do some equipment modifications at their St. Bernard Recycling Facility so they can better target PET plastic bottles to make sure these are being baled in a purer PET bale versus a more general 1 – 5 plastic bale that is not as marketable and the market that is a little more volatile.

Ms. Balz stated that they have a letter of support from the Village of St. Bernard.

Ms. Balz stated that a vote from the Committee is needed in order to apply for this grant.

A brief question and answer session ensued.

Ms. Magness moved to approve. Mr. Wahlert seconded. All in favor and the motion was approved.

c. Impact Grants

Ms. Balz stated that as a result of a motion from Karen Hurley earlier this year the Impact Grant has been created for \$500,000; each request up to \$100,000. Almost two million dollars' worth of applications have been received.

Ms. Mohring summarized the review process and gave an overview of each organization recommended for funding.

Ms. Driehaus suggested for next year to potentially increase the budget for these grants.

Mr. Peebles stated that many were asking for the same thing. Ms. Driehaus stated that next year, we can have a conversation regarding this.

Mr. Gedert asked if, under eligibility, he is concerned with replacing equipment and asked if this was allowed in this grant and if so, this may want to be reviewed in future rounds to not allow replacing existing equipment.

Mr. DiPuccio moved to approve the staff's recommendation for the Impact Grants. Mr. Wahlert seconded. All in favor and the motion was approved.

d. Public Member

Ms. Driehaus stated that a subcommittee of two Committee members was formed to evaluate. Ms. Magness stated that she and Mr. Wahlert interviewed five candidates.

Mr. Magness stated that Ms. McSwiggin was selected as the recommended new Public Member and gave background information. Mr. Wahlert also spoke of her background and why they agreed to select her for the new Public Member position on the Committee.

Members spoke of Mr. Gedert's impacts on the Committee. Ms. Driehaus stated that she would like to have a report on a collection of changes due to Mr. Gedert's impact on the Committee.

Ms. Balz reminded the members that only the four statutory members could vote.

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Ms. Magness moved to nominate Colleen McSwiggin for the Public Member position on the Policy Committee. Mr. Wahlert seconded. Ms. Driehaus and Mr. Davidson were also in favor so the motion was approved.

**8. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

Ms. Balz stated that Attachment F was an overview of the Waste Reduction Innovation Grants received since the last meeting and the Committee could read about them at their leisure.

**9. UPCOMING DISTRICT MEETINGS**

The next Policy Committee meeting will be Wednesday, March 15, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. at Hamilton County Environmental Services, 250 William Howard Taft Road, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Cincinnati, Ohio 45219.

Mr. Gedert said a few final words and thanked everyone.

**10. ADJOURNMENT (Target Time – 4:30 p.m.)**

Ms. Driehaus entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. Davidson moved. Ms. Magness seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 4:47 p.m.