

**APPROVED MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
HAMILTON COUNTY RECYCLING AND SOLID WASTE DISTRICT
POLICY COMMITTEE**

DATE: January 20, 2021

TIME: 1:30 p.m.

PLACE: Virtual Meeting using Zoom

PRESENT: **Policy Committee Members**

Tony DiPuccio, Generator Representative, Chair
Denise Driehaus, County Commissioner
Bob Gedert, Public Member, Vice Chair
Karen Hurley, General Interest Member
Greg Kesterman, Hamilton County Public Health Representative
Larry Riddle, Rumpke
Lily Ritch, Student Representative

Staff

Michelle Balz, Solid Waste Manager
Gage Bradford, Community Specialist
Mary Copenbaker, Business Specialist
Brad Johnson, Director
Ali Khodadad, Operations Manager
Joy Landry, Public Relations Specialist
Jenny Lohmann, Community Outreach Coordinator
Brad Miller, Assistant Director
Tom Mohr, Digital/Communications Manager
Cher Mohring, Community Outreach Coordinator
Susan Schumacher, Assistant Solid Waste Specialist, Clerk

Others in Attendance

Lisa Anderson, Budget Office
Chuck DeJonckheere, Hamilton County Public Health
Dean Ferrier, Rumpke
Matt Hittle, Ohio EPA
Deputy Bryan Peak, Hamilton County Sheriff's Office

Policy Committee Members Absent

Sue Magness, Largest Municipality Representative
Raj Rajagopal, Township Representative

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. DiPuccio called the meeting to order at 1:34 pm.

2. CLERK'S REPORT

A. Approval of Minutes – November 18, 2020 Policy Committee Meeting

Mr. DiPuccio asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes and asked if there were any corrections or additions. Hearing none, Mr. DiPuccio entertained a motion to accept the minutes as submitted. Ms. Hurley moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Gedert seconded. All in favor and the minutes were approved.

B. Additions to the Agenda

Ms. Balz welcomed Commissioner Driehaus. Ms. Balz introduced Tom Mohr as the new digital communications manager. Mr. Mohr gave a brief background on himself and stated that he was looking forward to working with everyone.

Mr. DiPuccio asked if Ms. Driehaus had any comments. Ms. Driehaus stated that she was happy to be here and that she had large shoes to fill with Todd Portune, but she would do her best. Mr. DiPuccio stated that every new member adds a new perspective.

3. DISTRICT REVENUE UPDATES/ANALYSIS

Ms. Balz stated that the District has received revenue through November and there is about a two percent decrease in tonnage, but revenue is still above projected revenue from the Plan. Ms. Balz stated that in-district waste is down, and out-of-district waste is up. In-district waste is what the District really can control and what staff is trying to decrease.

Mr. DiPuccio asked Mr. Riddle if he had anything to add. Ms. Hurley asked since Rumpke is now accepting tubs if tonnage was expected to decrease. Mr. Riddle stated that there is a volume difference and that with that light fraction material, it is hard to discern any measurable difference in tonnage.

4. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. 2019 Waste Reduction Rate

Ms. Balz stated the District recently had confirmation from Ohio EPA that the 2019 Waste Reduction Rate was a 56.05% diversion rate overall which is great news. This is an increase from 2018 in which the rate was 51%.

Hamilton county is leading the four largest Ohio counties by population (Cuyahoga, Franklin, and Montgomery).

Ms. Balz stated that Attachment C included a historical overview of Hamilton County's diversion rate (overall, residential/commercial, and industrial).

Ms. Balz stated that these numbers are estimates. The data included in the commercial survey is completely voluntary; industries and commercial entities do not have to fill out this survey. Although staff works very hard to obtain data, it is certainly not a full picture and she imagines the diversion rate is much higher because the waste numbers are very solid but recycling is a different story and gave an example.

Ms. Balz stated that when the spikes and valleys are seen in historical charts, a lot of those would be one big industrial source that moved out of the area or decided to stop reporting numbers to us. The charts indicate just that, and the charts show how much data staff was able to pull in; not necessarily what is happening with the diversion rate.

Ms. Balz stated that staff is happy with our diversion rate but wants to get that missing data as we rely on it.

Mr. Gedert asked Ms. Balz if the pandemic was affecting staff's attempt to measure the 2020 recycling rates.

Ms. Balz stated that staff will not know this until the commercial survey is started which will be in about a month. Ms. Balz stated that staff does now know the impact but has heard indirectly that the residential recycling rate will increase, and the commercial recycling will decrease especially for the second quarter of 2020 when many businesses shut down.

Ms. Balz stated that staff is not too sure what to expect. It will be an interesting year to do surveying and interesting to see if staff receives responses.

Mr. DiPuccio stated that every solid waste district faces this challenge of trying to get accurate data and it is not just unique to Hamilton County.

A. 2019 Waste Reduction Innovation Grants

Ms. Balz stated that the Committee expressed interest in hearing back from these grants and Attachment D showed all the grants given in 2019 and their one-year update. Ms. Balz stated that members could read about their projects at their leisure.

Ms. Balz stated that the District requires a two-year reporting period for the grantees because staff found that some grantees would receive their funds early in the year and they wouldn't start their project until November preventing staff from receiving good data on how much of an impact the project was making.

Ms. Balz stated that the two-year reporting period was an effort by Ms. Mohring to try and get that data from grantees. Another report will be received from the grantees in a year to get a full year of data.

Ms. Balz stated that in the Attachment, you will see a lot of the organizations were impacted by COVID-19; many of them were schools, outdoor public recycling, and events were not happening, etc. so a lot of numbers are lower than staff was originally hoping.

Ms. Balz stated that a nice thing about these grants is that a lot of this is seed money, so the District is giving organizations funds to start a project. This infrastructure is going to be in place for the next ten years or more so when you are looking at the cost per ton, you must project that out further than just this one year of data.

A brief discussion ensued.

B. 2021 Workplan

Ms. Balz stated the 2021 Workplan, as provided in Attachment E, is a realization that staff must be flexible and adapt so this is a draft workplan. As staff is able to open programs or move into working in the office, some items may be able to be adjusted. Ms. Balz stated that right now, staff is planning on working remotely until the end of May.

Ms. Balz stated that there is a slight difference this year in that there is now a column for the 2020 benchmark so a comparison can be made to the goals that were set for this year. Many of the programs are continuing and some are not; the container loan program, public recycling are on hold as no events are happening at least the first half of the year.

Ms. Balz stated that staff is still planning the compost bin sale and household hazardous waste event and they will be done the same as last year with social distancing and people wearing masks.

Ms. Balz stated that the workplan is just a guide and staff will be flexible when they can. Mr. DiPuccio complimented staff on doing such a great job with the household hazardous waste program and gave examples of what was done.

C. Environmental Enforcement Program

Deputy Peak stated that complaints increased a lot in the calendar year and stated that he thinks communities are aware of the program or becoming aware and has received a lot more referrals.

Ms. Hurley stated that Deputy Peak mentioned that he was receiving more complaints and more people seemed to be aware. Ms. Hurley stated that she wondered if there was any way or any value in trying to keep track of the contacts; whether they have resulted in investigations or not and thinks it is an interesting public awareness measure.

Deputy Peak stated that even if it is something he cannot follow up on or within his realm, he keeps every complaint, phone call, and email monthly in a file in case he needs to revisit it.

Ms. Hurley stated that if some reporting on that month to month might be interesting so a comparison can be made. Ms. Hurley stated that she just threw this out as a question and wondered if other members would find this useful in addition to the enforcement activity.

Ms. Balz stated that staff could provide the monthly numbers if that would be valuable.

Deputy Peak stated that cases otherwise dealt with or resolved monthly, he has itemized based upon whether it is something he can follow up on, or if it was something that really wasn't in his wheelhouse and he had to refer it to someone else.

Deputy Peak stated that if that helps Ms. Hurley, he can provide this data. If Ms. Balz or Mr. Johnson gets this at the end of the month; if there are other topics or parameters we wish to include based on what Ms. Hurley is looking for, we can do that as well.

Ms. Hurley stated she did not want to cause more work for Deputy Peak; it just caught her attention that the number of people calling seeking him out is going up and to her, that sounded like good news. We must be doing a good job in getting out the word about illegal dumping and that Deputy Peak is the point person which is where her comment came from; she does not want to push the point.

Mr. DiPuccio stated that what doesn't show up in the stats which he thinks has been a real key to the success, is that Deputy Peak has done a great job and the Sheriff's department has been cooperative and enthusiastic about this program. Also, Deputy Peak has developed a great network with Hamilton County, the communities, elected officials, prosecutors, court system, etc. not just pulling them together but educating them on the importance of how to best get issues resolved.

Mr. DiPuccio thanked Deputy Peak and stated it was a great program.

5. TENTATIVE FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

There were no future agenda items at this time.

6. POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBERS' COMMENTS

Mr. Kesterman gave a brief update on Covid-19 vaccinations in Hamilton county. A brief question/answer session ensued.

Ms. Hurley asked if there was an update on the District's rebranding. Ms. Balz stated no but there is a contract set.

Mr. DiPuccio asked if we would be using Zoom in March. Ms. Balz stated yes and that the March meeting would be the first discussion for the District's Plan Update that staff will be starting this year.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments at this time.

8. UPCOMING DISTRICT MEETINGS

Policy Committee Meeting

January 20, 2021

Page 5

The next Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste Policy Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 17, 2021. The meeting will begin at 1:30 p.m. via Zoom. Meeting information will be sent at a later date.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. DiPuccio asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Hurley moved; Mr. Gedert seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 2:09 p.m.