

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

DATE: July 19, 2023

TIME: 1:30 p.m.

PLACE: Hamilton County Environmental Services
250 William Howard Taft Road, 1st Floor
Cincinnati, Ohio 45219

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

PRESENT: **Policy Committee Members**

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

Staff

Michelle Balz, Hamilton County ReSource
Ashley Dove, Hamilton County Environmental Services
Brad Johnson, Hamilton County Environmental Services
Ali Khodadad, Hamilton County Environmental Services
Abigail Miller, Hamilton County ReSource
Cher Mohring, Hamilton County ReSource
Tony Staubach, Hamilton County ReSource

Others in Attendance

Crystal Courtney, Cincinnati Parks
Sam Dunlap, Carbon Harvest
Dean Ferrier, Rumpke
Kevin Tighe, Hamilton County
Tom Turchiano, Rumpke

Virtual

Christin Badinghaus, Hamilton County ReSource
Gage Bradford, Hamilton County ReSource
Chuck DeJonckheere, Hamilton County Public Health
Joe Jay, Secretary to the Public
Jennifer Lus Ekey
Howard Miller
Elise Roalef, Hamilton County ReSource
Dave Stevenson, Hamilton County Prosecutor

Molly Yeager, Rumpke

Policy Committee Member Absent:

None.

1. INTRODUCTION

Ms. Driehaus called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m. and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

2. MINUTES – Attachment A

Approval of the minutes from May 1, 2023. Ms. Driehaus entertained a motion to approve the May 1, 2023 minutes. On motion of Ms. McSwiggin, seconded by Ms. Magness, the minutes were approved unanimously.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were given.

4. RESOURCE REVENUE UPDATES/ANALYSIS – Attachment B

Ms. Balz provided an overview of Attachment B.

5. POLICY ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

a. 2024 Budget Overview -Attachment C

Ms. Balz discussed the summary and proposed 2024 expenditures with a display of the various expenditure changes for 2024 which are included in Attachment C of the meeting packet. Ms. Balz discussed the inclusion of an electric vehicle which has not been able to be purchased in years past. Ms. Balz explained the details of the Impact Grant Program that would be included in the 2024 budget. Ms. Balz answered all questions from the committee.

Ms. Driehaus entertained a motion to allocate \$500,000 for a large 2024 Impact Grant Program. On motion of Mr. Wahlert, seconded by Ms. McSwiggin, the allocation of \$500,000 for a 2024 Impact Grant Program be included in the 2024 budget was approved unanimously.

b. Biochar Project

Sam Dunlap, Founder of Carbon Harvest LLC, explained that the Biochar process is an ancient technology with modern relevance. Mr. Dunlap noted how the Stockholm Biochar Project was an example of how this would be implemented. The City of Cincinnati is 1 of 10 cities in the world to participate in replicating the Stockholm project. The effects of adding Biochar to the soil would produce healthier, more resilient plants and landscapes in the area.

Mr. Dunlap noted that Biochar production would contribute to the Green Cincinnati Plan with waste and emissions reduction and other benefits. Biochar's production will produce carbon credits and generate money for the project with external sales. Biochar will also produce renewable energy by utilizing heat and generating electricity on Cincinnati parks property.

The current project site is located at the Warder Nursery in Springfield Township. Mr. Dunlap shared numerous partners that have already signed up to assist in this project. Mr. Dunlap also showed that Biochar can help solve problems such as tree survival, drought resilience, and assist in stormwater infiltration. Biochar and compost work together. Biochar also can increase the speed of production, reduce odors, and lead to long-term soil structure. Some unique advantages of Biochar are it can eliminate PFAS/PFOS (feedstock dependent).

The equipment needed for this project is a Bobcat Skid-Steer machine to help transport the Biochar. Crystal Courtney, of Cincinnati Parks, reported the tentative total cost of the project is \$2.2 million with eventual energy savings coming. Ms. Courtney explained there is an anticipated \$600,000 return on investment from energy savings. Ms. Courtney described the various interested partners that are already interested in purchasing the Biochar when it is operational.

Mr. Dunlap and Ms. Courtney answered all questions from the Policy Committee. Mr. Dunlap stated there are several other cities that are beginning to implement Biochar in their cities as well. Ms. Courtney described once the negotiations continue with the water and energy companies, they will have a more detailed proposal spreadsheet.

6. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

a. Hamilton County Solid Waste Plan Update Ratification Status

Ms. Balz reported a 95% ratification status which is over the required percentage of 60%. Once the ratification process is over, they will send the Plan to the EPA.

b. Environmental Enforcement Update – Attachment D

Postponed until the next meeting due to Deputy Peak not being in attendance.

c. Senate Bill 119 Informational Overview

Ms. Balz described some of the details of the Ohio Senate Bill 119. Including a provision that would change how Solid Waste Districts would separate. The other provision in the bill is ways Solid Waste Districts could collect fees on C&DD waste and pass those funds to the Health Department. The bill is currently being held while the Ohio House is in recess and could change with future amendments.

7. UPCOMING DISTRICT MEETINGS

The next scheduled Policy Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, September 20, 2023, at 3:00 p.m. at Hamilton County Environmental Services, 250 William Howard Taft Road, 1st Floor, Cincinnati, Ohio 45219.

Ms. Driehaus proposed an outdoor venue for a future meeting. Ms. Balz will look into a future venue for a future date.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Driehaus entertained a motion to adjourn. On motion of Mr. Wahlert, seconded by Mr. Peebles, the meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.