

Newton County Solid Waste Management Authority
Newton County Historic Courthouse, Commissioners' Boardroom
1124 Clark Street, Covington, Georgia 30014
Wednesday, April 21, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

The Newton County Solid Waste Management Authority (SWMA) held a Regular Meeting on Wednesday, April 21, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. in the Commissioners' Boardroom on the Third Floor of the Newton County Historic Courthouse.

The following SWMA members were present:

Kent Campbell, Jr., SWMA Chairman
Linda Hanna
Jack (Buddy) Morgan
Phillip Wise
Marcello Banes, Chairman, Newton County Board of Commissioners (BOC)
Stan Edwards, District 1 Commissioner

Also present were:

Laurie Riley, Secretary
Sam VanVolkenburgh, Attorney
Kevin Walter, Solid Waste Manager

Call to Order

Chairman Kent Campbell called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

Moment of Silence/Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Campbell led everyone in observing a moment of silence and then in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda Adoption

Authority Attorney Sam VanVolkenburgh requested to amend the agenda to add Item 11A. "Approval of R042121, a Resolution Setting Regular Meetings for the Solid Waste Management Authority". BOC Chairman Marcello Banes moved to approve the agenda as amended. Mr. Buddy Morgan seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Citizen Comments on Agenda Items

None were offered.

Approval of Minutes from SWMA Regular Meeting on 3/18/21

BOC Chairman Banes moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Buddy Morgan seconded the motion. All voted in favor, except Ms. Linda Hanna who abstained because she was not present at the 3/18/21 meeting.

March Landfill Tonnage Report

Mr. Walter explained the report. (See attached.) He said that paid volume coming into the

landfill has averaged 379.79 tons per day for the month of March. Unpaid tonnage from Convenience Centers averaged 41.14 tons per day. With the budget based on 230 tons per day, tonnage for March was about 60% over budget. Mr. Walter said that the increase was a substantial jump over last month's totals. He reminded the Authority that the pro forma is based on an estimated volume of 275 tons/day. Mr. Walter said that, although the increased revenue is nice, he would prefer to receive less volume and save landfill space. He said that he believes some of the increased volume at the landfill is due to Pratt's (Pratt Industries in Conyers) tightening of rules.

Chairman Campbell asked how many people the landfill turns away (due to being from another County). Mr. Walter estimated about 20% of customers are turned away.

Mr. Morgan asked whether the landfill staff is able to handle the increased volume. Mr. Walter said that the staff could handle the volume because the TANA compactor is back up and running. He said it had undergone two recent repairs—a bearing (under warranty) and an air conditioning unit. He said that the Al-jon compactor is still running as well and that the landfill is using both compactors.

He said that he is hoping and planning for the new cell to be completed by Christmas. He said that when the Closure Project is finished, there will be a new road to the top of the landfill and that removing the old road will increase space and the volume of waste that the cell can accept.

Update on MSW Site 2 Closure Project (Closure Turf Installation)

Mr. Curtis Reynolds with Harbin Engineering gave a PowerPoint presentation detailing the project. He spoke about the closure system which includes the liner and turf as well as sand over a soil cap. He said that the liner and turf have been installed and that progress on slopes is about halfway done. He showed before and after photographs.

Mr. Reynolds said that the sand has not yet been applied to the turf. It will be blown in with an air pump system at the end of May. Chairman Campbell and Mr. Reynolds discussed companies involved in the installation. Mr. Reynolds said that Watershed Geo is not installing the turf, but they have representatives on site overseeing the installation. Peed Bros. has the contract for the closure project but a subcontractor, ESI (Engineering Solutions, Inc.), is doing the installation work. ESI has much experience with similar installations in Texas and Louisiana.

Mr. Reynolds said that the option to install solar panels is still available and that the long-term maintenance of the site will be low because the artificial turf requires no mowing. Also, the drainage system installed will require minimal maintenance.

Mr. Walter added that the turf is more expensive than grass to install, but it saves four to five times the cost of grass because it eliminates the need for mowing. He said it will pay for itself in maintenance savings. He said the turf system also minimizes erosion and sedimentation problems.

Financial Status Report for Solid Waste for Month 9 of FY2021

Mr. Walter referred members to the attached report. He said that revenues continue to be higher than projected because of high tonnage coming into the landfill. Net income is at \$3,129,274—much higher than last month due to receipt of \$1 million for the Solid Waste Hazardous Trust Fund). Expenses are significantly below budget projections with landfill expenses at 58.3% and

Convenience Center expenses at 64.5% (when expected to be at 75%). Equity in pooled cash is \$5,682,721.88 and projected to go up to \$6 million by the end of the year.

Approval of Changes to Task Budgets for Professional Engineering Services—FY 2021

Mr. Reynolds summarized the task budget discussion at the last meeting and said that he had worked to reduce costs. He said he is now requesting \$22,500 in additional funds.

He accomplished the reduction by pushing some work to the next fiscal year. He asked staff to limit consultants' time and trips to the landfill. He also incorporated some savings from environmental services. He requested a \$22,500 increase to compensate for longer than expected construction time for the Closure Project. He said the timeframe was extended because of problems with rain and rocky soils.

Mr. Walter said that the rocky soils presented challenges in meeting the EPD-required high compaction rating for the closure project. He said that Peed Bros. tried using several different machines to try to meet the standards. He said that the landfill budget includes funding to meet the requested increase.

Mr. Reynolds said that another problem that pushed the timeline on the closure project was difficulty in locating the base liner. He said the work crew found gaps in the liner between cells that had to be closed.

Mr. Walter said the closure project includes wrapping the entire landfill cell in HDPE and installing an additional pipe into the leachate drainage system. He said it included many unexpected repairs because of gaps in the old liner.

Mr. Phillip Wise asked whether the requested increase would push Harbin Engineering over their "not to exceed" amount of \$750,000 for the fiscal year and asked whether the Authority should expect another increase before the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Reynolds said that this increase would not push them over the limit and that he was not expecting to ask for any more increases in the current fiscal year.

BOC Chairman Banes asked whether there is a contingency budgeted for the project. Mr. Reynolds said a construction contingency was included in the budget. Mr. Walter said that he usually figures in a 10% contingency, so for this project it was about \$300,000. Mr. Reynolds said that \$50,000 is remaining in contingency for the closure project and that he expects it will be needed to complete the liner and drainage work. BOC Chairman Banes asked from where the requested \$22,500 would come. Mr. Walter explained that funding is already budgeted.

Mr. Reynolds explained how he and Mr. Walter projected the budget for the closure project. He said they looked at budgets from construction firms and change orders. They used anticipated and historical expenses and they anticipated the scope of work. Mr. Walter said that they estimated the quality of the dirt under the old recycling processing center building, but they did not do borings because of the high costs. They expected higher quality dirt but instead found it to be rocky.

Chairman Campbell called for a motion. Mr. Wise moved to approve the requested increase of \$22,500. Mr. Morgan seconded the motion. All voted in favor except BOC Chairman Banes who voted in opposition. The motion carried 5-1.

Introduction of Draft Solid Waste Budget for FY 2022

Mr. Walter presented the proposed FY 2022 Budget. (See attached.) He said he will seek approval from the Authority next month. He said the proposed budget is similar to this year's budget. The total proposed FY 2022 budget will be \$6,820,134 for the landfill and Convenience Centers. The proposed landfill budget includes \$124,512 in income over expenses. The proposed Convenience Centers budget includes \$124,512 in expenses over income. He said that the Authority would need to charge \$23 more per hang tag in order to break even on Convenience Centers. The proposed budget is based on collecting tipping fees for 275 tons of waste per day.

Mr. Walter said the proposed budget includes a 10% pay increase for temporary workers, who have not received raises in four years. It also includes \$225,000 for Convenience Center improvements: \$125,000 for equipment (mostly compactors); and \$100,000 for buildings (roof, paint, steps, etc.). The proposed budget also includes a 4% step increase in pay for County personnel.

Increases in health insurance costs are not included in the proposed budget. BOC Chairman Banes said that insurance costs are expected to increase by 8%.

Mr. Walter said that the BOC is expected to approve the budget in June.

Ms. Hanna had several questions. She asked whether amounts included for rent and royalties from filming were known or anticipated. Mr. Walter said they were an estimate based on history. Ms. Hanna asked what assets he anticipated selling. Mr. Walter said he wanted to get rid of worn out equipment by selling it on GovDeals, a website that offers a place to bid on government surplus items. He said he anticipated selling old pick-up trucks, compactors (for scrap), and an old zero-turn lawn mower. Ms. Hanna asked why there was an increase in line item 522210 Repairs and Maintenance from \$175,000 to \$225,000. Mr. Walter said the increase is based on history and anticipated expenses for keeping the Al-jon compactor in service. He said it is hard to guess what will break and gave an example of a D-5 bulldozer that was recently overheating. He said he plans to focus on preventative maintenance, and he feels it is a realistic estimate of what will be needed.

Mr. Morgan asked whether the proposed budget included funds to open another Convenience Center, possibly at the Cook Road site. Mr. Walter said there is enough funding in the budget to open an additional center for a partial year for limited hours. He is waiting to see how many hang tags sell to have a better estimate of funding.

Ms. Hanna asked about an analysis of costs to run each Convenience Center. Mr. Walter said that it costs a total of \$1,552,512 per year to run all of the Convenience Centers but costs for each center vary because of differences in volume accepted. (This figure includes \$420,000 in expenses to landfill unpaid tonnage—from Convenience Centers, accepted with no tipping fees.) He said the Oak Hill Center receives the most volume, with Stone Road and Piper Road receiving the second most. Stewart receives the least. Mr. Walter said he wants to make a proposal to open another center using actual costs.

Ms. Hanna said to estimate increased income with each new center because additional people would buy hang tags depending on their proximity to the center. Mr. Walter said that currently,

about 20% of households in the County buy hang tags and use the Convenience Centers. He plans to make a presentation to the Authority in early Fall about reopening Cook Road. Ms. Hanna said that a study of the growth around Cook Road could help him estimate the cost.

Mr. Wise asked about sales of hang tags. Mr. Walter said that 5600 hang tags have sold for the current fiscal year, and he is projecting to sell 6000 by the end of the year. He is also projecting to sell the same amount next year.

Mr. Wise said that with curbside fees expected to go up, hang tag sales should increase next year.

Chairman Campbell asked whether the BOC had seen the proposed budget. Mr. Walter said he presented it to the BOC last week with three Commissioners present, and that the BOC would be looking to the Authority to approve it.

Mr. Morgan asked if the Authority could consider extending Convenience Center hours if it chose not to open an additional center. Mr. Walter said that the Authority could certainly consider doing so. He said that extra hours would mean extra costs.

Report on the use of Stickers vs. Hang Tags for the Convenience Centers for FY 2022

Mr. Walter passed out samples of stickers to place on vehicle bumpers and stickers to place on the inside of vehicle windshields. He said he investigated three options: stickers—bumper and windshield; photo ID cards; and hang tags. The “pro’s” of the stickers include being simple, cheap, and easy to install. The “con’s” of the stickers include problems using multiple vehicles, with a printing a second sticker and charging an additional \$25 per customer. Pro’s of a photo ID card system include that the cards could be transferred between two cars and that the Authority could offer two cards for one household. Con’s of a photo ID system include the high cost to buy the printer (approximately \$10,000) and creating a slow process to check ID’s at the gate. Mr. Walter said he recommended sticking with the existing hang tag system because the number of people cheating the system has declined. He said that he believes the photo ID system would be overkill and it is too expensive.

Chairman Campbell asked whether the bar code on hang tags could be scanned. Mr. Walter said a scanning system would require that operators have cell phones and would take operators’ time to scan. He and Chairman Campbell discussed scanning only suspected cheaters. Mr. Walter said that the supervisor, Mr. Audray McClay has the capability to check when cheating is suspected but the operators do not. Mr. Walter said that he thinks it is too complicated for operators to scan tags.

BOC Chairman Banes asked how many operators are working at the Centers. Mr. Walter said that there are about 10. BOC Chairman Banes said that he believes it is easy to scan with a smart phone. Mr. Walter said that the problem would be the amount of time it would take to match the drivers’ licenses with hang tags and that it could potentially create a line of cars waiting to enter the Centers. He estimated that Mr. McClay spot checks about ten to twenty people per week, and said that people do not like being checked.

Chairman Campbell said that if the bar code could be linked to cars’ license plates it would be an easier process than having to match with drivers’ licenses.

Mr. Walter said he does not think a lot of people cheat with hang tags. He said a bigger problem is commercial users, which operators try to control by watching volume. He said there is also a problem with landlords using hang tags for multiple properties. He said that despite these problems, he recommends keeping hang tags.

Mr. Wise agreed. He said that there is some fraud but not enough to justify changing the system. He recommended sticking with hang tags and having operators request spot checks of unusual cars and people.

Mr. Wise moved to keep the hang tag system in place for the next fiscal year. Ms. Hanna seconded the motion.

BOC Chairman Banes said he agreed and added that he felt there was not enough time to implement a new system before July.

Chairman Campbell asked whether it would be feasible to have citizens put their license plate numbers on hang tag applications. Mr. Walter said it would be easy and agreed that it is a good idea.

Ms. Hanna said that the Authority needs to be sure people know about changes ahead of time, and she agreed that hang tags are better than stickers. Commissioner Edwards agreed that publicity about price increases and purchasing hang tags is needed.

Mr. Walter said that last year, because of Covid-19, he had a temporary employee on the Courthouse steps explaining policies to people in line to buy hang tags. The employee informed them about requirements and made sure they had all necessary documentation, reducing wait times. BOC Chairman Banes said that having the employee there made a good difference and he recommended doing so again. He said that the biggest thing to be sure to let people know about is the request for license plate numbers.

Ms. Hanna asked whether workers could accept photocopies of license plate numbers and registration forms. Mr. Walter confirmed that they could.

Mr. Walter said he recommended linking license plates to hang tags next year. He said setting up a bar code system would have high costs. He said he could put a proposal out to bid for equipment and a database. He said that he would research options and put together a presentation in time for implementation in June 2022.

All voted in favor.

Approval of R042121, a Resolution Setting Regular Meetings for the Solid Waste Management Authority

Mr. VanVolkenburgh presented the resolution. (See attached.) He explained that it was to ratify the regular meeting date of the Authority. Ms. Hanna moved to approve the resolution. BOC Chairman Banes seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Citizen Comments

None were offered.

Executive Session

Executive Session was not necessary.

Remarks from Authority Members

None were offered.

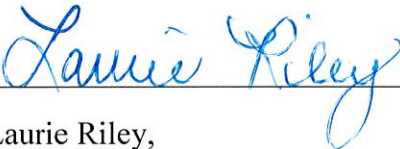
Adjourn

With a motion to adjourn from BOC Chairman Banes and a second from Commissioner Edwards, all voted to approve, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

Attachments:

- March 2021 Daily Tonnage Report
- March 2021 Financial Reports
- 3-16-21 Letter from Harbin Engineering (FY 2021 Budget Adjustment)
- 540 FY 2022 Budget
- R042121, Resolution Setting Regular Meetings of the SWMA

Attest:



Laurie Riley,
Secretary



Kent Campbell,
Chairman