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Skagit County
Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 10, 2018

Members Present

Andy Hanson
Brian Dempsey
Britt Pfaff-Dunton
Leo Jacobs
Margo Gillaspay
Matt Koegel
Tamara Thomas
Torrey Lautenbach

Representing

City of Mount Vernon
City of Burlington
Skagit County Health Department, ex-officio
City of Sedro-Woolley, SWAC Vice-Chair
Skagit County Public Works/Solid Waste Division, ex-officio
City of Anacortes, Chair
District 2 Citizens
Lautenbach Recycling, District 1 Citizen

Members Absent

Scott Thomas
Todd Reynolds
Not Represented
Not Represented
Not Represented

Representing

Town of La Conner
Skagit Steel & Recycling, Recyclers
District 3 Citizens
Haulers
Agriculture Representative

Visitors

Diana Wadley
Elena Pritchard
Rick Hlavka
Troy Lautenbach

Representing

Department of Ecology, ex-officio, *present by phone conference*
Skagit County Public Works/Solid Waste, recorder
Green Solutions, *absent*
Lautenbach Recycling

Introductions

Chair Koegel, requested introductions of all in attendance. Names and business title introductions were offered by each attendee prior to addressing agenda items.

Call to Order

Matt Koegel, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. at the Continental Building Crane Room at 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon, Washington.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

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Review and Approve Minutes

Chair Koegel opened the floor to discuss the January 10, 2018 minutes.

Chair Koegel requested a Motion to Approve the January 10, 2018 minutes as written. A Motion was made by Mr. Jacobs, Vice-Chair, City of Sedro-Woolley to approve the minutes as written. The Motion to Approve was seconded by Torrey Lautenbach, Lautenbach Recycling. By a vote of the Membership, the Motion was unanimously passed. Chair Koegel declared the minutes of January 10, 2018 to be approved.

Agenda Items

Chair Koegel moved forward to begin discussion of agenda item(s):

a. CSWMP update

Ms. Gillaspys commented that the Plan has been sent out for approval to all the Cities and Towns for approval. The only approval response thus far has been from the Town of Concrete, WA. Ms. Gillaspys requested everyone to follow up on the progress of the remaining Cities and Towns. The deadline to turn in the proof of approvals to the Department of Ecology is May 11, 2018.

b. Rate Study Preliminary Memo

A draft of the Skagit County Solid Waste Rate Study was compiled by Bell & Associates. A copy was provided to the Committee for review. The next step in the draft process will be to provide Bell & Associates with any feedback from the Committee based on their review.

Ms. Gillaspys discussions with Bell involved cost issues such as Compactor replacement funding and the Whitmarsh Landfill cleanup. There has been growing cost in disposal and labor since the last Rate Study, which was prepared 8 years ago. It is necessary to capture the cost of the increasing volumes of tires brought to the Transfer Station. Also discussed was traffic; in particular managing the number of Self-Hauler counts on the weekends. The summer is the busiest time of the year and the most difficult time to keep up with the incoming volumes. We looked at increasing the minimum fee to hopefully discourage people from self-hauling and instead choose curbside pickup at a lower cost.

Mr. Torrey commented that a fee increase was suggested for their contract with San Juan, for the same reason. The fee increase has been their number one customer complaint. As a result, there has been pressure to implement a per-can charge for those individuals in order to try to mitigate the complaints. The fee increase was somewhat successful as it resulted in some neighbors combining their garbage, minimizing trips, and decreasing traffic.

Mr. Jacobs suggested implementing an increase every year to make it less likely that Self-Haulers will come in, from an operations standpoint. The tipping fee chart on Page

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13 of the draft extends out to the year 2022. It would be nice to do the same for the minimum fee to take into account rising inflation.

Mr. Jacobs requested any recent status available on the Inman Landfill regarding updating the gas burn-off systems.

Ms. Gillaspy responded that a consultant has been hired and is doing that research at this time. There is a good chance that this might be a cheaper fix. There has not been a cost provided at this time, but it may be possible to take away all the equipment and go to a passive venting process. Compost would be piled over the vents. The methane would then travel through the compost and exit as bio-filtered.

The landfills that are currently being monitored are pretty stable. There are many abandoned dumps. Whitmarsh Landfill is a closed site. There are older sites that could possibly blow up (or possibly have further remediation issues). Not all sites are being routinely tested.

Ms. Dunton commented also that not all sites are being routinely tested. They periodically test 30 sites, which are ranked according to risk. Samples are pulled from the higher risk dump sites. Some of those samples pulled in the past ultimately led to the work that is being done right now on Whitmarsh.

Ms. Thomas asked if Whitmarsh is the same as March Point.

Ms. Gillaspy confirmed that it is the same landfill.

Mr. Jacobs commented that the Table 20 Cost Components of the Skagit County Tipping Fee on Page 13 was based on a \$89.00 per ton fee, with a \$1.00 per ton discount for Cities. What cost can the Cities expect relative to the \$94.88 Proposed Tipping fee.

Ms. Gillaspy responded that Bell's draft does include offsetting and maintaining the current discount of \$1.00 per ton in the Rate Study.

Mr. Jacobs inquired whether Bell considered raising the commercial rate to discourage commercial haulers from by-passing the counties system by hauling out of our city.

Ms. Gillaspy responded that she recalls past discussions regarding this issue. This item will be added to the list of additional matters to be discussed with Bell during the draft review process.

Mr. Jacobs commented that everyone can expect to hear comments from the Mayor regarding rate increases in the city. County citizens don't have to sign up for services, so it feels like it's not fair when everyone in the cities are paying for mandatory services, yet the county does not have to do that. The litter pickup services seem like they are always out in the County and not in the City.

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Mr. Torrey commented that increasing the minimum fee may also encourage people to dump on the roadside.

Mr. Jacobs inquired whether enforcement cost was added to the Rate Study.

Ms. Gillaspay responded that it was not added to the Rate Study draft.

Ms. Dunton commented that the Health Department will add a sur-charge which is not included in the Rate Study. The cost is currently \$1.00 per ton and has not increased since 1999.

Mr. Torrey asked for a breakdown on how the Health Department uses the \$100,000 they receive for enforcement.

Ms. Dunton responded that it is used for illegal dumping follow-up, illegal dumping and accumulation around household property, major dumps on private property, education, outreach, site work and cleanup including chemical and hazardous waste, work on permitted facilities, closed facilities such as landfills, landfill annual reports and monitoring, technical systems to businesses on their SQG waste materials with this particular program covered under the CPG grant. There is not sufficient Health Department staff to cover some of the minimum functions.

Ms. Thomas commented that it is obviously just a part of the overall departmental budget, but does it go to fund a particular position or put into a slush fund and pulled out?

Ms. Dunton responded that it funds the environmental public health section, and of that it funds activities with solid hazardous waste. It includes everything dealing with solid and hazardous waste, including education enforcement, planning, monitoring, all of those activities.

Ms. Thomas wanted to know how it works. Is it just like a portion of the budget for that department, how does it actually go?

Ms. Dunton responded that there are specific line item functions for enforcement and planning. We literally have line items keeping track of every single hour we spend on solid waste, hazardous waste and enforcement and planning activities. It is not just a general slush fund that goes to the Health Department. It goes to the environmental health section to fund the staff and the training.

Ms. Thomas, is that the only fund that goes to those line items besides the CPG?

Ms. Dunton responded that they also have the CPG grant and the local source control program. It is, probably now that some CPG funding is back, it is almost half and half.

Ms. Thomas, so all of your solid waste activities are funded either through that \$100,000 or a CPG?

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Ms. Dunton, there is a small amount for permit fees. They are only permitted facilities. There are a lot of facilities that are not permitted. If there is no annual permit, there is no permit fee there. The permit fee does not cover all of the work associated with those individual facilities. It doesn't cover all of the work like being involved in a Solid Waste Management Plan, or keeping up on doing a code re-write. All of that is funded by those CPG dollars and by the tip fee surcharge that are charged.

Mr. Jacobs, why wasn't that included in this Rate Study?

Ms. Dunton, it needs to go in there to go into those dollar amounts because we definitely need more than \$1.00 per ton.

Mr. Torrey pointed out that the draft does not include the Recycling Coordinator position.

Ms. Gillaspay stated the Health Department needs to provide what amount they need before it can be put in the draft, and that number will be needed pretty soon.

Mr. Torrey, are there going to be some enforcement mechanisms put in this draft, or does it fall under the Health Department responsibility like the code enforcement for flow control, etc.?

Ms. Dunton, we need to look at the time involvement with Planning Departments and permit centers to get them to incorporate things into their application process. Once it's in an application packet, that would be born by those permit techs and the work involved to get various Municipalities on board with including that type of information material in their packets and contracts. That would be shared work between Public Works and the Health Department.

Ms. Gillaspay commented that there is plenty to bring back to Bell & Associates to discuss. Another draft will be needed very soon to present to the Governance Board. She envisions that we will vote on a proposal, which will need to be presented to the Governance Board soon.

Mr. Torrey inquired about what the expected time line would be to get the proposal pushed all the way through to where there is actually an increase.

Ms. Gillaspay responded that the increase could possibly be effect in January, 2019. Everyone needs to budget for it now. The Governance Board will vote and then it will be presented to the Commissioner's for a Hearing.

Mr. Jacobs commented that Bell & Associates did a really good job in preparing the draft. They did a fantastic job and that everything was explained very well.

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Mr. Dempsey inquired about the rate increase timeline. Is the projection for 4 years only, or would it be continuous? It is good that it is a short projection and not for 10 years or more. A double digit percent increase annually could have some pushback.

Mr. Gillaspay responded that Bell chose to project through this 4 year term because it covers the same date timeline as the long haul contract which ends in 2023.

Mr. Jacobs inquired if it will be an RFP this time or extension signing?

Ms. Gillaspay responded that it will be an RFP.

c. Recycling Update

Todd Reynolds of Skagit River Steel and Recycling will no longer be taking the Transfer Stations mixed #1 and #2 plastics. They are currently being dumped until there is another alternative. She spoke with Waste Management regarding their taking the Transfer Stations mixed plastics. The increased cost will be \$75/ton for disposal and \$47/ton for hauling to Woodinville. The total would be \$122/ton versus \$60/ton to Skagit River Steel and Recycling. Last year the Transfer Station collected 99 tons of mixed plastics, or \$12,000 for the year. The County is currently working with Waste Management to put a contract in place. Waste Management also suggested a monthly variable pricing be included in the agreement. Variable pricing would be based on the market rate. That option is undetermined at this point.

Mr. Jacobs stated that he is currently considering other possible contract options with Allied, Rebanco and Waste Connections.

Mr. Hanson stated that the City of Mount Vernon just entered into a 3 year extension through 2021 with Waste Management for curb side recycling, as part of their original 2015 contract. Price increases went from \$3.40 per can to \$5.68 per cart per resident. They are considering City collection or an RFP process as another alternative for when the 3 year extension expires.

d. Skagit Bag Bank Wagon

This is a group in Skagit County that wants to ban plastic shopping bags in the Cities. They have approached the City of Burlington, but it is unknown if other Cities have been contacted. At this time, it is unknown how to ban plastic bags in a City, and if there is authority to do so.

Mr. Hanson commented that the group approached the Mayor of the City of Mount Vernon and they are in discussions with the Mayor to ban the plastic bags. Mount Vernon is moving forward with their Spring Clean Up day by handing out free recyclable grocery sacks over the next two weeks to the City residents in the City of Mount Vernon.

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e. New Meeting Time

Some of the SWAC group has suggested the idea of making a change to the monthly meeting time, preferably earlier in the day versus the current meeting time of 5:00p.m-7:00p.m.

It was commented that there is very little public attendance at the SWAC meetings. It is believed that the late afternoon time frame could have been set to give the public access to attend, although, there is very little to no public attendance.

Ms. Gillaspay suggested that she could move the time up to 3:00 or 4:00 which would still accommodate a time in place towards the end of the day.

It was proposed to try an incremental change, starting at 4:30 and moving the time up.

Ms. Gillaspay stated that the SWAC meetings have been held on the second Wednesday of the month, but that date is up for discussion also.

Ms. Thomas inquired whether there has been more public meeting notice posted on the County web site for those who may be interested in attending the SWAC meetings.

Ms. Gillaspay responded that there has not, but the postings can be increased. She still needs to address the posting of announcements to fill the Committee vacancies that had been addressed in a previous meeting. She confirmed with the group that the second Wednesday of the month should remain in place, and everyone was in agreement.

The current room reservation block is for 5:00p.m. – 7:00p.m., or a two hour block. The following times were suggested:

3:00p.m. – 5:00p.m. Mr. Hanson
3:00p.m. – 5:00p.m. Mr. Koegel
3:00p.m. – 5:00p.m. Mr. Jacobs
4:00p.m. – 5:30p.m. Ms. Thomas

Ms. Thomas asked if she could make a motion to re-schedule the meeting to 4:00p.m. She asked if anyone would second her motion.

Ms. Dunton said that she would second the motion since a time too much earlier would discourage citizen participation.

Mr. Koegel, Chair asked if there was any opposition to changing the meeting time to 4:00p.m.-5:30p.m. Three people were counted as being opposed to the new proposed time, those being Mr. Jacobs, Mr. Hanson and Chair Koegel.

Mr. Torrey asked whether anyone had read or checked the SWAC By-Laws to confirm that the proposed change is allowed. The meetings need to accommodate the public and so the By-Laws need to be clarified.

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Ms. Gillaspay commented that she will check the SWAC By-Laws to verify what changes, if any, are allowed and present the outcome at the next meeting.

Announcements/New Business

Chair Koegel, opened the floor to address any announcements or new business.

Public Comments

Chair Koegel, opened the floor to address any public comments.

There were no public comments.

Unfinished Business

Chair Koegel, opened the floor to address any unfinished business.

There was no Unfinished Business.

Adjourn

Chair Koegel thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:45p.m.