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Skagit County  
Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)  
Microsoft Teams Meeting Minutes  
Skagit County Conference Room, 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon, WA  
Wednesday, September 13, 2023

**Members Present**

Carolyn Moulton  
Dale Patrick

Kate Smith  
Leo Jacobs  
Margo Gillaspay  
Nick Harbert  
Olivia Carros

Shelly Jensen

**Representing**

District 1, Citizens, *on-line*  
Environmental Public Health, Skagit County Public Works,  
*non-voting*  
Agriculture  
City of Sedro-Woolley  
Skagit County Public Works/Solid Waste Division, *non-voting*  
Waste Management, Hauler  
Department of Ecology, Regional Planner & Grant Manager,  
*non-voting, on-line*  
City of Anacortes

**Members Absent**

Andy Hanson  
Brian Dempsey  
Marcella Manibusan  
Pinky Vargas  
  
Scott Thomas  
Todd Reynolds  
Torrey Lautenbach

**Representing**

City of Mount Vernon, Solid Waste  
City of Burlington  
Waste Management, Hauler/Public Sector, Manager  
Republic Services, Municipal Relations,  
Skagit County Account Manager  
Town of La Conner  
Skagit River Steel & Recycling, Recyclers  
Lautenbach Recycling, District 3, Citizens

Not Represented  
Vacant  
Vacant  
Vacant

District 2, Citizens  
Town of Lyman  
Town of Hamilton  
Town of Concrete

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**Visitors**

Britt Pfaff-Dunton  
Heather Lopes  
Landon Campbell  
Niles McCann  
Robin Freedman

**Representing**

Skagit County, Environmental Health, *on-line*  
Skagit County, Environmental Health  
City of Mount Vernon, Solid Waste  
Waste Management, Public Sector Manager  
Waste Management, *on-line*

**Introductions**

Margo Gillaspay, requested introductions of all in attendance. Names and business titles were offered by each attendee prior to addressing agenda items.

**Call to Order**

Ms. Gillaspay, called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. at the Skagit Conference Room, Mount Vernon, Washington.

**Public Comments**

Ms. Gillaspay, opened the floor for public comments.

There were no Public Comments.

**Review and Approve Minutes**

Ms. Gillaspay opened the floor to discuss the minutes of July 12, 2023.

Ms. Gillaspay, requested a Motion to Approve the July 12, 2023 minutes as written. A Motion to Approve was made by Nick Harbert, Haulers to approve the minutes as written. The Motion to Approve was seconded by Shelly Jensen, City of Anacortes. By a vote of the Membership, the Motion was unanimously passed. Ms. Gillaspay, declared the minutes of July 12, 2023 to be approved as written.

**Agenda Items**

A Solid Waste Advisory Committee meeting, open to the public, was held on September 13, 2023, for anyone to speak on any topic on the agenda, or items not listed on the agenda:

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**a. 2024 Budget**

First up for discussion is the Budget for 2024. This is the draft Budget; we haven't met with the Commissioners yet.

For your review is also a Fund 401 Solid Waste Roll-Up Summary for the 2023 Projected Expenses. It is expected that there will be a major increase in the disposal cost due to a new contract, which was expected.

The commissioners conducted a Compensation Study for the entire County. Skagit County Public Works received a one-step increase for their salary range with a 3 ½ percent increase in wages. There will be increased salary cost as well.

Putting together the Budget, it was like, it, well, it is what it is.

I didn't know if anyone had questions about the Budget for next year. I didn't really add on a lot of purchases for next year. We do have some required purchases that we had to do for new equipment.

Again, this is still on the Preliminary. Our next step would be to meet with the Commissioners in early October. There is only so much they can do. I just hope they don't interrupt our services. Well, we'll see.

I'm sure you guys are all in similar positions, especially in the Cities, wondering what your rates will go to as well.

**b. Rate Study**

I have an update on the Rate Study. We have chosen a vendor, FCS. I'll send out their Work Plan. I didn't get to it earlier. We chose them because they do have a lot of experience in doing rate studies for other counties throughout the State. I've spoken with other counties that they've worked for. Their plan is, they're going to do financial forecast starting January 1, 2024 through the end of December, 2028. We're going to look at all of our Programs. Obviously, garbage is a big one, but we handle a lot of other materials like our appliances and tires. We have our Street Waste Facility with the vector waste and the street solids. They will be looking at everything and accessing the cost. We have our remote facilities where garbage is handled a lot and do transport for those Facilities. We will be looking kind of comprehensively at everything and making sure that we're trying to get compensated for what we're working on. Especially tires since tires are very expensive for us to dispose of. We just see a lot of them in the County.

We have our kick-off meeting with them at the end of this month and we have kind of an accelerated timeline. So, we are hoping we can have a draft report in December. Hopefully, we can bring that draft report to the SWAC to discuss in November or

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December, whenever we have it ready. And they understand the pressures that we're under. That would at least give the Cities what the rate would be for planning purposes, I'm sure you're being asked about it.

Let's say that if the draft is ready in December, and it's acceptable, what's the other processes that the County has to go through?

It would be approved by the SWAC, maybe by the end of December. Then we would go to the Governance Board, and they would vote to approve it. Then we would have a Public Hearing. Then there is the length of time to advertise it, I feel like would take a month. We would prepare a Resolution to Accept. Then the Commissioners would determine when they want the rates to start.

So it would take about 2 -3 months to get through the approval process. I'm hoping that in the Spring we would have it start. But then again, we would have to notify our customers, right? And that's 75 days to 90 days.

The Hauler has to notify the UTC.

And that's assuming that everything lines up well in the beginning. And we might have questions and the draft might come back. They might be available to present their project and we will be able to ask them questions directly. Hopefully, that will be our December meeting.

### **c. Long-Haul Update**

The Commissioners did approve of the contract with Waste Management; they signed it on Tuesday. So now it's official; the contract has been signed.

Waste Management has signed a lease for a receiving facility that is very close to the Transfer Station. That site is being prepared.

I was going to call you to see what the status is of that site. I don't know if you know what's going on there.

We are fortunate with the vendor that we work with. The main equipment that we need are chassis and so we are going to start receiving those within the next few days. We couldn't really commit to the contract we signed, so the vendor worked with us on that, so we are in pretty good shape now. We combed over the property with the property owner because there are other tenants there. We have everything lined out as to where everything is going. We still have a few odds and ends to do, such as getting better lighting because it's a 24/7 operation. We installed cameras for security. We also discussed tracking the containers. We've heard from Hayden that he's identified who the on-site Manager will be.

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We're working with Republic and Waste Management on kinda that transition, when we're going to stop using Republic equipment and getting that out from our system and bringing in the Waste Management equipment. The contract ends over the weekend and kinda of a little bit tricky. We should be ready on Monday morning and hopefully there won't be any impact and it should run smoothly. It should be the same procedure for everyone coming in, it will be different on the back end of how we move the garbage out.

We always keep empty bins and chassis from the weekend on our site so we'll just move those out and bring in the new ones.

We are looking forward to it. It was very nice to get his process done. We appreciate everything that you guys did on the SWAC. The end of Republics contract is September 30, 2023. Waste Management's begins their new contract on October 1, 2023, Sunday.

Just a follow-up question. Now that the new Long-Haul contract has been signed, was there any report back on what the Commissioners was interested in looking at before signing on what was expressed as concern for increased greenhouse gas emissions with the vendor switch and the impact to the Skagit Climate Action Plan?

The Commissioners did not address that directly. They were more concerned with the reliability of the service.

Commissioner Janicki had said that she wanted that she directly wanted that looked at, but there was no follow-up on that before the signing?

Was that at the Public Hearing?

Yes, in the Public Hearing.

I should follow back up with her on that.

I'd just be interested in hearing something. And, I am also very appreciative that everything has been successful and come October there will be continued service. I do understand the concerns for continued service.

That is reminding me that we did start working for the Climate Action Plan in 2010, and a lot of that language is kinda of out of date, so we started looking at it like we really need to update that part of our Strategic Plan. It was something we really needed to look at. It certainly is something that we're working on. There was quite a bit of Solid Waste language in there that needed an update, like, we've already on this, but we still need to do that, that still needs to be addressed. We are working on that internally.

I think that's all of everything on the Long-Haul update. There's a couple of things I wanted to note. I know that Anacortes just had a free dump day last Saturday.

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There were 255 residents that came through that morning. I think that afternoon, probably sent 4 of our garbage trucks to the Transfer Station. On Monday, there were a couple of roll-off containers with furniture, wood debris. People were allowed to bring in household furniture, chairs, mattresses, vacuum cleaners, things that do not fit in the litter garbage cans. We allow a Spring and Fall Cleanup each year. We check their ID to make sure they live in the City limits. We have employees come in on Saturday. Everyone is so appreciated and happy in that day. We don't have clutter in our allies or curbside. No recyclables were accepted.

Mount Vernon has a free dump day in October.

Skagit County Solid Waste is doing another tire roundup, with some changes from last year, it was huge, blocked traffic, and was a nightmare. This year, we're hosing it at a different location on October 5 and 6, 10:00a.m.- 2:00 p.m. There is pre-registration required. The event runs four hours each day. People can bring in up to 12 tires. The location will be at the Skagit County Fairgrounds in a gravel parking lot with secure fencing to avoid traffic backup. Residents are required to sign up on-line. If you visit the Skagit Count Home Page, there is a Tire Round-Up graphic. It can be found on the Face Book Page as well. One of the problems from last year was some people were not able to unload their own tires and we didn't have the staff to do it. Also, some residents brought in 30 tires, some for their neighbors as well. Every household needs to be registered. No tractor tires will be accepted.

The County is contracted with Liberty Tires out of Tacoma, Washington.

### *Announcements/New Business*

The Department of Ecology (Carolyn Bowie) has a few announcements on radar that might be of interest to the group.

#### *Rate Study from FCS*

There will be a WSRA Webinar Event on November 6, 2023. Features King Counties Rate Restructure in a presentation format and will include Matt Hobbs from FCS, who was their consultant. A link to the page will be sent out. Ms. Bowie is helping to coordinate this event.

#### *Grant Funding*

There are two funding programs open now for application:

\*Waste Reduction and Recycling Education Grants Program, available for local governments and non-profit programs.

\*Waste Not Washington School Awards, funding up to \$15,000 for schools and School Districts. There is particular emphasis for this award cycle to encourage schools to pivot from disposable utensils to durable utensils.

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Legislation Bills

In the last two weeks, Bills from the most recent Legislation Session have been codified in the RCW.

HB1033 – Compostable Product Usage in Washington.

HB1085 -Reducing Plastic Pollution.

There is a film “Blocks and Docks Law” that will be effective this January 2024, which prohibits exposed and expanded polystyrene over water structures, to prevent pollution in those waterways.

SB5124 – Battery Stewardship

The City of Mount Vernon Fall Cleanup Event will be held on October 7 and 14, from 9:00a.m. – 4:00p.m.. Garbage, Recycling, Yard Waste, Batteries and Paint will be accepted. Check the website for current acceptable materials.

Public Comments

I would like future meetings to address the topic of the organics in the businesses and getting more information on what Cities play a part /role to help facilitate the new Laws that come out in 2024.

The Department of Ecology would be happy to talk about that, and what Cities are required to do.

It would be good to know more about that and the development of the Outreach Plan for the County in supporting businesses and farm businesses as well. Also, the Compost Reinforcement that’s coming up, which is external from the Organics Waste Management but ties in really nicely because WSD is offering 50% compost reimbursement to \$10,000 for farmers. It will be released any day now. The only way you can sign up is on the WSDA to get the e-mail announcement. It’s on a first come first served basis for farm businesses.

Is there a requirement that it must be locally produced from food waste, or is it just general compost?

Its general compost. I don’t think so, its general compost. It would be great knowing a little bit more about Outreach and Support.

Do you know how that works? Does the farm buy the compost from a composter at whatever that price is when they submit it?

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Yes, they submit the receipt. So, they can buy up to \$20,000 in compost and submit the receipt and get reimbursed for up to 50% of that. This applies to compost only, and not spreading or any other downstream service as well?

As far as I know, it just applies to the compost. I think it will be offered annually as the compost facilities and organic waste goes more to compost, that will be able to support local purchasing.

WSU Extension is promoting the UN Designated Waste Food Awareness Month on September 29, 2023, and we will be doing social media posts. We will be sending those out to others that might be interested in posing for Food Waste Awareness and Food Waste Prevention.

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**Adjourn**

Ms. Gillaspie, thanked everyone and called the meeting to an end.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:05 p.m.