

MINUTES  
RILEY COUNTY  
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday, February 4, 2021  
7:00 P.M.

Virtual Meeting

Members Present: Steve Galitzer, Amanda Smeller, Mike Boller, John Ellermann, David Kreller, Gary Rosewicz, Casey Smithson, Perry Piper, Kathryn Focke, Judy Willingham, Greg Wilson, Dennis Peterson, Adrian Self and William Spiegel

Others Present: None

Members Absent: Betty Book, Josh Brewer, Charly Pottorf, Dave Shover and Fran Zerby

Steve Galitzer, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

**Introductions** Introductions were completed.

**Approve the minutes of the previous meeting**

Judy Willingham moved and Greg Wilson seconded to approve the minutes of the March 5, 2020 meeting as presented. The committee voted 14 yays, 0 nays. Motion passed.

**Update on Solid Waste budget**

Gary Rosewicz presented the attached “2021 Solid Waste Advisory Board Report”. He said during March, in an effort to protect scale house personnel from the Coronavirus, the Solid Waste Facility operated for approximately 10 days without charging the general public for municipal solid waste (MSW). After members of the public took advantage of this by bringing in trailer loads of tires and clearing out sheds, the facility stopped accepting MSW and brush from the public entirely and reduced our hours of operation. The facility experienced a \$13,000 loss during those 10 days. Mr. Rosewicz said MSW transactions were limited to credit card only and remains in effect.

Mr. Rosewicz said the Solid Waste Facility processed 42,331 tons of MSW in 2020 which was a decrease from 44,578 tons in 2019. The large part of this decrease can be attributed to the Coronavirus.

He said in September 2020 MSW rates increased from \$50.00/ton to \$55.00/ton with a \$13.75 minimum. Commercial brush and compost remained the same. He said he is going to recommend an increase in items containing Freon from \$10.00/unit to \$15.00/unit.

Mr. Rosewicz stated the contract with Hamm, Inc. expired July 1, 2020. He explained Hamm, Inc. was the successful bidder in but county staff is still in negotiations with them to finalize the contract. One point of contention in the contract negotiations are lithium batteries. Representatives of Hamm’s are dealing with a substantial increase in fires which they are attributing to lithium batteries Hamm is recommending Riley County implement an educational program on recycling lithium batteries.

Chairman Galitzer stated the Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facility recycles batteries.

Mike Boller, HHW Director stated he believes the culprit may be vape pens. He said they are basically mini blow torches that use a lithium battery. Mr. Boller said you very rarely see one of these pens in the battery recycle bins.

Gary Rosewicz stated Hamm has offered to assist with the educational program.

Greg Wilson said Howie's has a lot receptacles and would be willing to assist with the program.

Chairman Galitzer suggested a subcommittee comprised of himself, Amanda Smeller, Gary Rosewicz, Mike Boller and representative of Hamm meet some afternoon to discuss the potential program.

Mike Boller stated there are no longer free recycling sites available for batteries.

Judy Willingham asked if there were any grants available for research and volunteered for the subcommittee.

Chairman Galitzer stated a special project may need to be done just for vape pens.

Mike Boller stated vape pens are expensive to recycle.

David Kreller asked what the ramifications would be if Riley County chooses not to participate in the educational program and if there would be a fire after such a program was initiated.

Gary Rosewicz said Hamm wants the County to be held responsible by placing a per ton surcharge to replace the truck and trailer if a fire happens again.

### **Annual Review of the 2019 Solid Waste Management Plan**

Amanda Smeller asked if there were any issues or sections that needed to be addressed so they could be noted in the next 5-year update.

Casey Smithson suggested putting something in the plan referring to an educational program for recycling lithium batteries. He felt this would help in finalizing the contract with Hamm's.

Chairman Galitzer suggested that Amanda Smeller mention in the cover letter to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) that the committee is concerned with lithium battery fires and putting a subcommittee together.

Mike Boller stated he felt it was important that Gary Rosewicz provide Hamm with the number of pounds of batteries that HHW has recycled.

David Kreller stated that KDHE updated their plan and are there any changes that would impact Riley County's plan.

Lisa Daily is to provide the committee with a link to the 2019 Solid Waste Management Plan.

Chairman Galitzer asked each committee member to review their sections of the plan and the committee will meet again in two weeks to conduct the annual review of the plan.

A virtual meeting will be scheduled for Wednesday, February 17, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:08 pm.

## **2021 Solid Waste Advisory Board Report**

**February 4, 2021**

Along with many other businesses in Manhattan, our facility was affected by the Coronavirus. During March, in an effort to protect our scale house personnel, we operated for approximately 10 days without charging the general public for MSW. After members of the public took advantage of this by bringing in trailer loads of tires and clearing out sheds, we stopped accepting MSW and brush from the public entirely and reduced our hours of operation. This lasted until May when we began accepting from the public again. MSW transactions were limited to credit card only. This policy remains in effect.

The Solid Waste Facility processed 42,331 tons of MSW in 2020. This was a decrease from 44,578 tons in 2019. The large part of this decrease can be attributed to the Coronavirus. As can be seen on the graph, there was a huge drop in MSW during the months of May, June, and October. I speculate this was due to reduced business in restaurants and bars in May and June, K-State football games in October. (I have attached a bar graph showing monthly 2020 disposal volumes compared to the previous 3 year average and a chart showing the monthly volumes 2017-2020).

Residential Brush was down from 3783 tons to 3087 tons with Commercial Brush increasing from 2653 tons to 2786 tons.

Grass decreased from 1001 tons in 2019 to 959 tons in 2020. We sold 628 tons of compost compared to 370 tons in the previous year. Additionally, at the direction of the County Commission, 32 tons were donated to the Community Gardens. Essentially, all of the compost we make is being sold or utilized elsewhere.

The contract with Hamm, Inc. expired July 1, 2020. They were the successful bidder in July, but we are still in negotiations with them to finalize the contract. Until the contract is finalized, we will continue to pay the disposal cost of \$44.94/ton which became effective July, 2019.

In 2020, we were reimbursed by Hamm \$4075.75 for fuel surcharges due to the low cost of diesel through the majority of the year. I consider this to be temporary and believe this will continue to trend upwards and negatively impact our annual revenues.

Budget wise, we began 2020 with a cash balance of in the amount of \$483,589.82 and ended with \$433,031.71, a loss of \$50,558.11, most of which had been anticipated. We had no major expenditures this year outside of the normal costs for maintenance and repair of our equipment and facilities. In the future, I anticipate at a minimum replacement of both sets of scales, the crane in the Transfer Building, and the concrete mount for the crane.

Our charges at the gate were increased from \$50.00/ton to \$55.00/ton for MSW with a \$13.75 minimum in September. \$10.00/ton for commercial brush with a \$5.00 minimum, and \$20.00/ton for compost remain the same.

We have been charging \$10.00/unit additional for items containing Freon. I am recommending this be increased to \$15.00/unit. The cost for Freon removal has gone up over the years and we have not kept up.

Now, I would like to bring up the subject of lithium batteries and the fire hazards they cause. This is something I was not aware of until a few months ago, but the responsibility for fires caused by lithium batteries has become a point of contention in the contract negotiations with Hamm. According to representatives of Hamm, they are dealing with a substantial increase in the number of fires they have had in the last few years. They are attributing the cause of the majority of these fires to lithium batteries. I cannot begin to list the number of devices using these batteries, everything from cordless tools to laptops and cell phones. You can only imagine the number discarded on a daily basis. I would recommend this committee look into creating an educational program concerning the hazards and proper disposal of lithium batteries.

Gary Rosewicz, P.E.  
Assistant County Engineer/  
Assistant Director of Public Works