

**RECYCLING & WASTE REDUCTION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MINUTES
December 15, 2015**

Members Present: Portage City Council Member Sue Lynch, County Council Member Karen Conover, Kouts Town Council Member James Murphy, Portage Mayor James Snyder, Commissioner Laura Blaney, Commissioner Jeff Good

Staff: Therese Davis, Jeannie McCall, Steve Dolak, Allison Andersen, Donna Stuckert

CAC Members: Walt Breitinger, Duane Davison, Kathy Matthew, Jeanette Hicks

Others: District Attorney David Matsey, Clay Patton, Joe Calhoun, Amy LaValley, Liz Schenck, Barb Kunshek, Raymond Halfman

Absent: Commissioner John Evans

Council Member Lynch brought the meeting to order at 3:30.

Roll call of the **Board** was then taken.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES & FINANCIALS

Minutes – July 2015

Council Member Conover made a motion to approve the minutes. **Mayor Snyder** seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Financials – June 2015

Council Member Conover made a motion to approve the minutes. **Mayor Snyder** seconded, motion carried unanimously.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 2015-03 – Year End Transfer of Appropriations

Ms. Davis stated that the transfers were within the budget.

Council Member Conover made a motion to approve the minutes. **Commissioner Good** seconded, motion carried unanimously.

MASTER RECYCLER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Ms. Davis stated that Liz Schenck was the latest participant to complete the Master Recycler Certification. The **Board** recognized and thanked Liz Schenck for her participation and accomplishment. **Ms. Davis** stated that Raymond Halfman and Barb Kunshek had also achieved their certification. The **Board** recognized and thanked them also for their participation and accomplishment in the program.

OLD BUSINESS

Pines MOU

Ms. Davis stated that the MOU was included in the agenda packet. The MOU was to formalize the agreement with the Pines for the **District** to turn their compost.

Mayor Snyder made a motion to accept the Pines MOU. **Council Member Conover** seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Snyder thanked **Commissioner Good** for putting the MOUs together.

Commissioner Good stated that the commissioners' office was trying to standardize many things throughout the county to create less confusion and standardization of goals.

Electronics Recycling

Ms. Davis informed the **Board** that starting in 2016, there be a cost for the electronics recycling. Residents and small businesses are prohibited from putting computers, televisions, and a short list of other things in the trash. Over the last several years the **District** had not been charged by the electronic waste processor. However, changing commodities markets and the high cost of CRT management have forced the processors to charge for electronic waste recycling.

The **District** put the service out for bid, sending the RFP to about 15 different processors in the area and only three responded. Option 1 would cost about \$205,000; option 2 was from the **District's** current processor and based on current volumes collected that option would cost about \$498,000; and option 3 was estimated to be about \$225,000. Option 3 is with a vendor that was more localized-located in South Chicago and registered with the State of Indiana and the cost projection for them was based on a sample load. All Cost projections are annual costs. Of the three responses vendor 1 and vendor 3 would be about half the cost of vendor 2. Both of those vendors were willing to work with the **District** on transportation issues and cost.

The question was asked if it would be better for the **District** to provide the transportation.

Ms. Davis stated that was something that would need to be studied and worked out. She believed the **District** should receive service in the short term to further study the volumes coming in and the cost structure most beneficial to the **District**.

Mayor Snyder stated the Portage was prepared to help with transportation needs, employment or whatever. He stated he was somewhat concerned about possibly closing the site in Porter. He would rather that remain open and the City of Portage pick-up that material as opposed to more people bringing the material to Portage Street Department because of traffic issues. He stated however they could help to off-set the cost. That is what they wanted to do, as long as everyone was sharing the burden. He wanted to make sure that Bill Oeding, Joe Calhoun and whoever from Porter were involved in those discussions. He stated that Portage had resources for a one day trip; that would be easy for them to handle.

Ms. Davis stated that the question was how the **District** would fund this since it was not in the 2016 budget. Electronic waste collection programs were blindsided by this after budgets had been set. She had put together a second table regarding the HHW processing cost In 2014, there were three collections for a total processing cost of

\$90,000. About 16% of that cost was for landfilling of unusable latex paint. She stated the District either needed to take it and absorb that cost of landfilling the unusable paint or not take latex paint at all and let the homeowner deal with it and put it in their trash or take their good latex paint to Hobart for recycling. If the **District** were trying to re-coop some costs to pay for the electronics, that would be one option. There were more collections in 2015, but the landfill cost remained at about 16%. The difference in the three collections and the six collections in 2015 was about \$94,000 for the processing. If latex paint were eliminated 16% of that \$94,000 would be \$15,000 that could be used to help off-set the cost of the electronics. And going back to three HHW collections would garner another \$94,000 until the **District** could figure out a way to transport the electronics and cut back on the transportation costs. Again, that was more than half of the original cost for vendor 1 and vendor 2 was probably comparable or at least \$90,000 of the cost.

Ms. Davis further stated it would be her recommendation work with the local vendor to reduce transportation costs and look to engage in a six month contract and go back to three HHW collections until the **District** knew what the costs were for the electronics. Otherwise, the **District** would have to go for an additional appropriation which would cut into what little reserves the **District** had in its general fund and she didn't believe we wanted to put ourselves in that position over electronics.

She continued that the **District** could scrap electronics completely and let Best Buy take it all, but they had limits on the size of the televisions they would take and she suspected that if they became the end-all be-all they would start charging people. Should the **District** charge people for their televisions? The only site that has the means to do that would be if people went to the compost site to drop off their televisions. It would also be a burden for the municipalities that collect at the curb to charge their residents and then give that money to the **District**. That just didn't seem feasible.

Council Member Conover stated that the City of Valparaiso charged residents extra for anything that was outside of their garbage cans. If the communities are going to offer curb side service then maybe someone would have to pay to have that commodity removed.

Ms. Davis stated she didn't know how Portage and Porter felt about that, but that broader discussion could be had.

Mayor Snyder stated he thought that was a good idea to have that discussion. This was a state wide issue and since the **District** was a part of the state lobby if the **District** needed the Board to help on these issues he would be there. The electronics was a pretty large cost. Since the **District** fee was raised last year in part to double the HHW collections, he would have really hard time cutting back on those since that was one of the reasons the fee was raised. That would hurt the **District** overall. He believed we needed to look at every alternative possible. He recommended staff meet with the municipalities to discuss whether or not everyone would be able to charge residents for this service so there was an even playing field for all Porter County residents before cutting services. He felt we should inform all residents that we wanted them to pay a little more, they got more service from paying a little more now there is an unfunded mandate. The Board needed to go to the lobby with the **District** and do everything possible at the state level to get help on this issue.

Ms. Davis stated that she appreciated that.

Council Member Conover stated that the District needed to speak with Matt Evans and Bill Oeding from Valparaiso to see if there were a way to charge at the curb, but she believed there was. Besides, cutting back on the service would cause people to throw more stuff in their trash or along the road.

Ms. Davis stated that there were currently two pieces of legislation pending at the state house. Sen. Charbonneau is the chair of the environmental affairs committee at which the **Districts** made a good presentation last year about their services and viability as part of a mandatory five year review. That conversation went really well. During this session, legislation is being proposed that would make **Districts** an optional agency. Currently, the **Districts** were mandatory, however in a way they were optional at the local level because the **Board** determines what the **District** does. The proposed bill would let the County Commissioners decide if their **District** was no longer a value and disband the **District**. Board members should share their opinion about such legislation with Sen. Charbonneau.

Ms. Davis continued that regarding the whole issue with electronics, she has heard the possibility of allowing the CRT monitors to go into the landfill. That goes back on the 50% diversion rate set by the state. They are saying we need to divert 50%, but let's get rid of some agencies that might help to accomplish that state goal and let's allow televisions and computer monitors to go back in the landfill. That is an imbalance of thinking.

She also stated that when **Districts** were established, for every ton of waste that went into a landfill the state got money that went into a solid waste fund. However, when the economy collapsed those funds were frozen. The **Districts** used to receive grants for capital, education and to offset costs for HHW collection. Those funds have been frozen and grants are not available to **Districts**. There are solid waste funds out there that had not been released to aide **Districts**. Those funds could be used to help off-set the electronics recycling program.

Mayor Snyder asked that **Ms. Davis** send the **Board** e-mails on those legislative matters.

Commissioner Good expressed that the **District** was also being tasked with security issues in taking computer towers and laptops that residents may not have removed their personal information from.

Mr. Davison encouraged the **Board** to go on any of the periodic tours to the facility that the **District** offers. He stated that a lot of those concerns do get addressed. The electronics facility in Indianapolis that the **District** currently uses has metal screening of their employees and they stress that they know the burden to protect any information left on a computer was their responsibility. He also stated that he echoed **Mayor Snyder's** concern about just asking for an increase to the fee and then to regress would not be a good thing, especially with electronics and HHW where there were fewer options for disposal.

Ms. Davis stated that she would ask the **Board** to direct the staff to work with the municipalities to find transportation opportunities, if any, as well as possible fees.

Mayor Snyder stated that the **District** had that directive.

Council Member Lynch asked that if anyone had questions regarding these facilities that they communicate that to **Ms. Davis**. She wanted to know if the **District** started doing this itself does the **District** then have to sort televisions from radios, etc.

Ms. Davis replied just the current vendor which the **District** uses now, Option 2, would require that if awarded a new contract in 2016. The other vendors would keep the program as is and would not require that items be separated.

Council Member Lynch asked if that applied even if the **District** were delivering the material to the facility or would the **District** be charged for throwing it in one Gaylord.

Ms. Davis stated she would find out the answer to that question, but to the best of her knowledge the proposal was for mixed material. She would clarify that.

Council Member Lynch stated that she would also hate to see the number of HHW collections reduced if that could be avoided since the **District** fee had just been increased.

Ms. Davis asked about the Board's feeling regarding the latex paint.

Council Member Lynch stated that was something that the municipalities would need to think about and discuss further.

Ms. Davis stated she asked about that because of the cost savings and if the **District** were to change its process, **Ms. Stuckert** would need to get on her education platform to inform the public of that change.

It was agreed that the issue would be revisited in January.

Mr. Calhoun stated that he would like to discuss further with **Ms. Davis** the charges for the landfilling of paint from the HHW collections. It may be more beneficial for the Portage Street Department to park one of their trucks at the collection and for them to take the paint or other things that need landfilled to the landfill.

NEW BUSINESS

Logo

Ms. Davis and **Ms. Stuckert** worked with an artist to refine the logo, along with feedback from **Council Member Lynch** and **CAC Member Davison**. In general the **District** wanted to emphasize recycling in the **District** name. The **District** was a stand-alone agency that was a political subdivision of the state, but Porter County is what the **District** was affiliated with as a county service. Thus, the new logo for **Porter County Recycling and Waste Reduction** was explained as; the hand was representative of the human involvement in the recycling. Blue represents water, green land, and yellow was sort of the sky. The website revamp has been in the works, but was waiting on the logo revision.

Commissioner Blaney stated she loved it.

Mayor Snyder made a motion to approve the new logo. **Council Member Conover** seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Contracts

Ms. Davis explained that since the Executive Director position for the **District** was established there had been a contract for that position. In the past it has worked well in both the employee and the **District** prospective. The contract proposes salary based on the current salary with the stipulation that if increases are not given at the county level then that salary does not increase. It was the current budgeted amount of \$63,877 and 2017 was left the same. The **District** follows the county structure and the employee manual mirrors the county so whatever their vacation, sick, etc. those structures are exactly the same. So if the **Board** was so willing she was asking that they renew her contract for two years.

Council Member Lynch made a motion to accept the contract. **Mayor Snyder** seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Legal Services Contract

Ms. Davis explained that the contract for legal services was currently with Osan & Patton. She considered the **District** had a very good attorney in Clay Patton and a very good relationship. She noted that the contract fee did increase. The monthly retainer had remained the same for the last five years, so it was recommended in the contract that the fee be increased by \$50 per month and the hourly rate go from \$120 to \$150. She stated the in 2015 the total fee paid to Osan & Patton was \$9,000 and there had not been an hourly fee in 2015 and didn't believe there had been in 2014. She further stated she was comfortable with the increased fee, but that the Board needed to make that determination.

Commissioner Good made a motion to accept the new contract. **Commissioner Blaney** seconded, motion carried unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next Board meeting – January 2016, at 3:30 pm

Ms. Davis stated that in the past the meeting had been on the third Tuesday of the month, because the commissioners had their meetings on the first and third Tuesdays of the month. The meeting was at the county building at 3:30 pm. She stated that now was the time to think about changing any of that. **Council Member Conover** adjusts her schedule at work to be able to attend the meetings and **Attorney Patton** with court cases can sometimes have a problem with attending the meetings, so the **Board** may want to entertain another time of the day or any other day of the week.

Council Member Conover asked if the meetings weren't set up that way for the convenience of the commissioners because they were all present at the time for their meetings.

Commissioner Good stated that going forward was kind of a moving target for the commissioners but for at least the first three to four months of the year the current

schedule should be fine. The plan was to have the Commissioners meeting, then Plan Commission meeting, followed by the new Storm Drainage Board meeting, which all three Commissioners sit on. It was decided to discuss the issue at a future meeting if it seems that the meeting times would need to be changed due to the new Storm Water Board meeting schedule.

Ms. Schenck announced that her family had set up a scholarship fund for environmental study through the Porter County Community Foundation in memory of their son. She felt that this meeting was a good place to announce that opportunity if anyone on the Board knew of someone who may be interested.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, **Commissioner Good** made a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Commissioner Blaney** seconded, motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 4:35.