

**RECYCLING & WASTE REDUCTION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MINUTES
June 16, 2015**

Members Present: Council Member Sue Lynch, Council Member Karen Conover, Representative James Murphy, Commissioner Laura Blaney, Mayor Jim Snyder

Staff: Therese Davis, Dawn Garmon, Jeannie McCall, Donna Stuckert, Steve Dolak

CAC Members: Walt Breitingner, Duane Davison

Others: District Attorney David Matsey, Tim Huizenga-Huizenga-Vermeer Equipment, Amy LaValley-Post Tribune, Judy Mollway

Absent: Commissioner Jeff Good, Commissioner John Evans

Council Member Lynch brought the meeting to order at 3:33.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES & FINANCIALS

Minutes – May 2015

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

Financials – May 2015

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

MASTER RECYCLER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Judy Mollway had completed the Master Recycler course and her volunteer hours. She was an Ogden Dunes environmental activist and the 2nd in the county to achieve the status of Master Recycler. She was acknowledged and congratulated by the **Board** for that accomplishment.

OLD BUSINESS

Tub Grinder

Ms. Davis stated that the last time the **Board** met it was under deliberation to purchase a tub grinder for use by the **District** and municipalities in Porter County. At that time some concern was voiced by some **Board** members about liability cost and other issues so the matter was tabled at that time. In the meantime, individual **Board** members had conversations among themselves about other options to help the municipalities to get a handle on the cost of grinding. Those conversations had resulted in the Board moving to potentially rejecting the consideration of purchase at that time and entering into some agreements with the cities of Portage, Valparaiso, and Chesterton to assist with the cost

of waste at those compost sites. The agreement with Portage was a little more flushed out as it was expanded to include that site becoming publicly accessible at some time in 2016. She continued that refocusing on some of the goals that the **District** had established, specifically the **District** purchasing/owning and operating a north county compost site in the long run, and the acknowledging the cost for the grinding continuing to increase, especially whenever the county was impacted by a storm. To that end she believed the **Board** needed to look at the motion that was tabled at the last meeting that was out there for the purchase of a tub grinder.

Attorney Matsey informed the **Board** that the vote that was tabled at the last meeting regarding the tub grinder must have a vote to reopen the matter.

Council Member Conover made a motion to put the purchase of the tub grinder back on the agenda. **Representative Murphy** seconded.

Council Member Conover then made a motion not to purchase a tub grinder.

Commissioner Blaney seconded.

Council Member Lynch asked if there was any discussion.

Mayor Snyder answered yes. He stated that he had the agreement in front of him and he was reviewing it while sitting there. One of the things that had been talked about, one of the reasons the fee had been increased, was so that the cost of the grindings would be incurred by the **District**. If the sites were going to be opened up to the public and make them public sites, he believed that the agreement wasn't covering the cost. It was covering a portion of the cost. He read from the agreement "furthermore the District agrees to supplement the cost of grinding allocated to Portage, up to but not to exceed \$40,000." He continued that last year Portage had paid \$200,000. The residents of Portage pay the user fee as well. It was not just a county fee and he was kind of tired of the mantra that they were getting from the county officials that municipalities somehow are not...Municipal residents pay this fee.

Ms. Davis stated that she was not disputing that there was extraordinary cost last year for grinding. However, in 2010, 2012 and 2013 the costs were \$19,000 and then \$36,500 and then \$40,000. Obviously, increasing up, but the average would be \$32,000. Last year was a storm event year and she believed that the **District** would just need to recognize that there could be anomalies.

Mayor Snyder stated that he recognized that, but it says the cost of grinding would be shared by Portage and the **District** based on the percentage of material brought onto the sight by Portage and the general public. He asked if that meant that people outside of the **District** brought grindings that they would have to keep track of what they had brought.

Ms. Davis stated that was what the **District** individual would do.

Mayor Snyder continued with that would be what they would pay for, but if Portage brought in material from Portage residents then Portage would have to pay for their residents and what they bring. That was why they pay a fee. That was why the **Board** raised the free.

Ms. Davis stated she wanted to clarify about how those costs were currently shared at Valparaiso. She continued that every individual resident that drove onto the site and brought material, whether they lived within the city limits of Valparaiso or not, the **District** was paying that cost for grinding. The **District** had a history of doing that for the last ten years with the City of Valparaiso. Because of the fact that the city had opened the site to the public access, certainly some of which live within city limits, but the **District** had historically paid for the public use of the site, for grinding.

Mayor Snyder then asked if that meant that the grinding that took place at the Valparaiso site, that the entire cost was covered by the **District**.

Ms. Davis stated that the **District** did not cover the entire cost.

Mayor Snyder stated that the reason the fee was raised was so that grinding was covered by the **District**. That was why the discussion to get a tub grinder. So the cities and the county would no longer incur the cost, it would all be taken care of by the **District**. So, the only people based on that agreement that were getting the benefit of the fee were people who did not live in a municipality and that was what they were trying to get away from on the **Board**. That was the reason for the discussions. He continued that in Portage residents put their limbs on the edge of the street and Portage picked them up, and the municipalities incurred that cost of taking the truck and paying the workers to pick that up and then to take it to the site. All he was asking for was that the county residents and the municipal residents get the same benefit for the fee that they pay and that was that the **District** covers the cost. That was what he would like to see and that was what was relayed to him that was going to happen. He stated that the county executives were pushing the fees off on the municipalities when everyone pays the same fee. The municipal residents paid the same fee that the county residents paid. He then asked why the municipalities had to incur the cost of the grinding for what they picked up. It wasn't fair to Valparaiso, it wasn't fair to Kouts. It's not fair to Chesterton. It wasn't fair to anyone.

Commissioner Blaney stated that they had all of these discussions already. She knew that **Commissioner Good** had talked this through with **Mayor Snyder**.

Mayor Snyder stated that the understanding he had was that the cost was going to be incurred by the **District**. That was why the **Board** raised the fee, and why the discussion of buying a tub grinder. The residents of Portage and the residents of Valparaiso and the residents of Chesterton should not be treated different than the residents of the county. He stated that they all paid the same amount. He continued that Portage already gets material from Ogden Dunes and other municipalities.

Commissioner Blaney stated that she believed it was a fair agreement and it had been talked through and her understanding was that everybody was on board.

Mayor Snyder stated he was asking, why are Portage residents being treated differently.

Commissioner Blaney stated she didn't see that they were.

Mayor Snyder stated that Portage had to pay to grind their branches and wood material. Why did Valparaiso, Portage and Chesterton residents have to pay for what gets picked up.

Commissioner Blaney stated that was the stuff that was picked up on the street and that was part of the service the municipality residents were paying for in their taxes. County residents did not get that service.

Mayor Snyder stated that the city of Portage did not get any of the **Recycling District** money.

Commissioner Blaney stated that they would with this agreement.

Ms. Davis stated that \$40,000 was what she was familiar with in prior discussions.

Council Member Conover stated that she worked for the City of Valparaiso and she had discussed the agreement with some of the city leaders and they seemed pretty thrilled about the \$40,000 that they would be reimbursed. However, if there were some sort of disaster and many storms then the **Board** may need to revisit or amend the agreement.

Mayor Snyder stated he would have the same conversation with Mayor Costas and the municipal leadership in Chesterton. All he was saying was that the **Board** was trying to change the culture somewhat of what was being talked about here. The residents of Portage were county residents. They were not outcasts because they were located within city limits and they should get the same service the Porter County residents get in the grinding. That was all that he was asking for and he had already started to let **Commissioner Good** know that he wanted to have a discussion with him. That was what the **Board** was trying to accomplish here was that everybody was treated the same when it came to solid waste, everybody was treated equally. He continued that he was being asked to open up his compost site because he was getting help from the residents that pay the fee county wide and he believed they should do that. He was 100% in favor of that. He thought that was a great service to offer to everyone. He further stated that the City of Portage had taken their first load of compost to the street department that residents would be able to take home. It was a long time in coming and they had worked hard to get there. But the residents of Portage should not be treated differently than the county residents and county residents that bring their limbs to the sites get it ground for nothing, they don't have to pay an extra tax to have it ground. Portage residents did and that was the whole purpose of the tub grinder, so the entire cost was incurred by the **District**, not just a portion of it.

Commissioner Blaney stated that she thought it was all hammered out.

Council Member Lynch asked what **Mayor Snyder** suggested.

Mayor Snyder responded that he would like to get an understanding of how the commissioners believe Portage, Valparaiso, and Chesterton residents should pay for their grindings, and Porter County residents should not pay to have their stuff ground. He didn't understand since everyone pays the fee. He asked **Representative Murphy**, since he had been around for a long time, if he understood.

Representative Murphy stated that if his stuff gets to the compost site it is by him putting it in the back of his truck and taking it there.

Mayor Snyder replied that it then gets ground and taken where ever it was to go by cost of the user fee. All he wanted was the same treatment for his residents that the people of Kouts get. He didn't know how that wasn't a fair question.

Commissioner Blaney stated she was willing to talk about it; she didn't want to treat any resident differently than others.

Ms. Davis stated that from a budgeting perspective, just as the city makes out its budget, the **District** made some projections on cost. If the matter was continued, from a **District** perspective, it needs to say a dollar amount. She stated that it currently stated up to \$40,000 but not to exceed that amount. She asked if there were any consideration to massaging the language as it was, or did the **Board** need to step away from it and have some individual conversations.

Mayor Snyder gave a two-fold suggestion. Number one was to not have to separate what the municipalities bring to the site and what the residents bring to the site. It should be all ground by the **District** and then to put a dollar limit on what the **District** felt was budgetable and then the municipality would cover what was in excess. He stated that if the number were \$80,000 and the actual cost was \$100,000 then that would be where the municipality would pick up the remainder of the cost, but not the separation part.

Ms. Davis stated that to give the **Board** some history, in general, the **District's** share of the grinding cost at the City of Valparaiso in 2011 was \$14,000, 2012 was \$11,000, and 2013 was \$20,000, and 2014 was \$31,000. **Ms. Davis** went on to explain that in saying that if we said \$80,000 then it would be almost comparable to that \$40,000/\$31,000 share.

Mayor Snyder stated that he felt that Valparaiso, Portage and Chesterton should be the same and that the residents shouldn't have to cover the grinding cost. The county residents don't have to cover the grinding cost, then Portage residents shouldn't have to cover the grinding cost. What should be done to help the **District**, in the event that there was an epic year, was that then the municipalities would be the ones to come in and help with the fees that they charge or with the taxes, and the county should help cover some of the cost as well when there was an epic year. The **Board** should petition the county officials to say we had an epic year, the limit was \$100,000, we had \$140,000 and the **District** wanted to share that cost equally among the residents. He stated that he would be happy with a discussion between Council Member Lynch, a representative from the commissioners, Ms. Davis, Joe Calhoun from Portage, Bill Oeding or other representative from Valparaiso, and a representative from Chesterton to hammer out and review and make changes to the MOUs that everyone agrees on.

Commissioner Blaney stated that she was open to looking at something that made everyone more happy. She really didn't want to get back to looking at purchasing a tub grinder again because of the liability and maintenance costs that would end up on the **District**.

Mayor Snyder stated that he understood that, but he was not willing to throw the tub grinder discussion away, because in having the tub grinder everyone was treated equally. So if that discussion was lost, then it treats the Portage residents the same as Porter County residents and that was what they were. That was what they wanted to see. He continued that Portage was going to work emphatically, and this discussion has helped to give them a kick in the seat of the pants, to get their facility open to the public and he felt that was a really good thing that had happened.

Council Member Lynch stated that there was a motion and a second on the table to not purchase the tub grinder. She stated that first a vote needed to be taken on that. The vote was taken by roll call. The motion passed by a vote of four to one, with **Mayor Snyder** voting against the motion.

Mayor Snyder stated that he wanted a discussion that included a commissioner representative, Ms. Davis, Council Member Lynch, he volunteered Joe Calhoun, the Portage city administrator, Mr. Oeding or a representative from Valparaiso and Chesterton to hammer out the agreement and then the **Board** come together and vote on it as soon as a meeting could be put together.

Council Member Lynch stated that a motion would be needed to table the matter.

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

Mayor Snyder made a motion to form a group of the above mentioned representatives to review the MOUs, hammer out the agreement, and make any changes necessary. **Council Member Conover** seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Snyder stated he would make himself available as soon as the agreement was ready to be voted on by the **Board**.

Attorney Matsey reminded the **Board** that the committee being formed could not be made of a majority of the Board members, which it would not be.

Ms. Davis stated that with the exception of the storm event last year she did not know that the numbers were off, when comparing the amounts spent in prior years, but that was for that sub-committee to digest.

Mayor Snyder stated he believed the agreement was close to what he was looking for, but he felt it wasn't there yet.

Council Member Lynch instructed **Ms. Davis** to get meeting memos out to those involved in the committee.

NEW BUSINESS

2014 Annual Report

Ms. Davis stated that included in the agenda packet was the 2014 annual report. It was basically a recap of the **District** activities in 2014 compared to the previous four years.

Council Member Lynch asked if everyone had a chance to look at the report or had any questions for **Ms. Davis**.

Members of the **Board** commented that they liked the graphs and that it was a nice report and nicely done. **Council Member Conover** made a motion to accept the report. **Commissioner Blaney** seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Strategic Plan - draft

Ms. Davis explained that the last thing that was included in the agenda packet that the **Board** had received was the strategic plan draft and where the **District** was with the process. The goals had been previously discussed but the **Board** had not yet agreed upon them. Once that was done the next thing would be to then devise a financial plan to achieve those goals. She continued that once an agreement was reached on the grinding, then we would need to get on the strategic plan so everyone could agree on how the **District** should spend its dollars.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next **CAC** meeting – July 14, 2015 at 5:00 pm

Next **Board** (joint CAC) meeting was rescheduled from July 21, 2015. **Mayor Snyder** suggested that the meeting be moved to July 7, 2015 at 12:00 noon. However, it was decided that **Ms. Davis** would reach out to everybody and let the **Board** know what worked out for the majority of the **Board**.

Ms. Davis informed the **Board** that the next HHW collection would be June 27 at Portage High School. The **District** was working with Portage Police Department and the high school to hopefully control traffic flow better than last year's event.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, **Council Member Conover** made a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Mayor Snyder** seconded, motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 4:16.