

**JOINT MEETING OF THE COMMISSIONERS AND  
RECYCLING & WASTE REDUCTION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MINUTES  
October 3, 2017**

**Members Present:** Portage City Council Member Sue Lynch, County Council Member Karen Conover, Commissioner Laura Blaney, Commissioner Jeff Good, Kouts Town Council President Tim Jones, Commissioner Jim Biggs (arrived at 1:40)

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

**Others:** Clay Patton, Reggie Korthals, Walt Breitinger, Duane Davison

**Absent:** Mayor James Snyder

**Council Member Lynch** brought the meeting to order at 1:04

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ROLL CALL - Board**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES & FINANCIALS**

**Minutes-April 4, 2017, June 13, 2017**

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

**Financials – February 28, 2017**

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

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Program Updates**

**Ms. Haller** explained that in the agenda packet were updates on the **District's** five major programs, providing updates and some questions about future program development.

The information was provided to the **Board** in hopes that it would spur discussion.

**Council Member Lynch** stated that she had spoken with **Ms. Haller** the regarding reaching other people mainly through missed opportunities like events at the parks and that the parks should have in their contracts that all cans and bottles need to be recycled.

That should be in their contracts to encourage people to recycle more because recycling wasn't happening there. She believed that the **District** should have a booth at those events to let people know who we are because the **District** was still associated with garbage pick-up and that was something the **District** had to overcome.

**Commissioner Good** asked about the **District** social media program.

**Ms. Haller** stated that the District was on Facebook and had gone to a lot of digital media platforms as opposed to printed advertising.

**Ms. Stuckert** stated that e-newsletters were emailed to people who subscribe which was more than 3,000 people and that was always changing. She also stated that the **District** was gradually changing the advertising over to digital from print media since the response to print had decreased with the circulation of print media decreasing.

**Commissioner Good** asked how many people were being touched by Facebook.

**Ms. Stuckert** stated that she did not currently know.

**Commissioner Good** stated that the commissioners had employed Curt Ellis for the Board of Commissioners and he was no longer a contracted employee. He would be coordinating the social media effort for the county to have a consistent message and he would encourage the **District** to use that valuable county asset. That might be an area to go in concert with some of the events and a way to use social media to get the message to some of those events. He felt that was an area where the commissioners' office would certainly be able to help the **District**.

**Commissioner Blaney** stated that the **District** had 1,054 followers.

**Ms. Haller** stated that the **District** also had a mobile app for users as well.

**Council Member Lynch** asked if the **District** had success with press releases.

**Ms. Stuckert** stated that she did, however, the newspapers now have a limited space of one page twice a week. She sends them out in advance so the papers have ample opportunity to publish the PSA rather than waiting till the last minute to send them.

**Commissioner Good** stated that it was the perfect time for him to announce that the county would actually be burying a 1,500 gallon tank under the front of the building to catch all of the surface drainage water from the building, storing it, and then using that water to water or irrigate the plants around the building. There would also be an educational piece out front addressing about it as a way of reclaiming the water on the county's own little urban foot print. It would serve as a message to people as to what the county really stood for as a county.

**Ms. Korthals** asked that the commissioners take pictures and enter it in the state contest in May for a special award.

### **Agency Goals**

**Ms. Haller** stated that there was some conversation at the last **Board** meeting regarding the electronics program turning around some revenue. That was one of the questions she had put at the end of the aforementioned report. Some of the questions posed include: should the **District** be charging residents for any of the **District** programs? what affect would that have on participation or illegal dumping? who was the **District** serving - solely households or also businesses because the **District** collects from both? She was seeking discussion because businesses are using District services and driving up costs. The **District** collected a lot of fluorescent tubes especially from large generators. Currently it was almost 20% of the HHW cost. So those were things the **Board** should be aware of and think about. She also pointed out that the **District** continues to discuss the need for a north county compost site. The report provided stated that last year, of the 22,000 visitors to the Valparaiso site, about 800 lived in the north end of the county. Was that a significant enough need to engage in a capital project for a compost site? Those were the type issues she encouraged the board to discuss including what metrics would the **Board** need to when making decisions.

**Council Member Lynch** asked if other counties throughout the state had their own compost site.

**Ms. Haller** stated there were some but not all counties own their own compost site. The **District** wanted to be proactive and find solutions but didn't want to chase something that

didn't need a solution. She continued that she had spoken with Andy McKay at the County Highway Department and he did not feel there was an overwhelming need for the highway to find an outlet for yard wastes but he stated that if there were a north county compost site that they would certainly use it.

**Commissioner Good** stated that looking forward he had some thoughts, but it was hard to talk about things forward looking, but from an overall concept stand point he felt his vision would be to have a single source physical plant located in the center of the county and then have some satellite locations in the north and south ends of the county.

**Ms. Haller** stated that she had put together information over the last 5 years' window where measurements were able to be taken of participants served, tons collected in a program or total served and then it was analyzed for each year based on the 2015 census data. In the last five years the population reached has increased on education and composting. HHW collection still only reaching about 1% and that was the **District's** most costly program. Should there be a cost study for having a permanent facility to take HHW for a year round program? These were the types of goals she was referring to. She was willing to do a cost study on that and come back to the **Board** with those results. Is there a way that the **District** could develop a direct clear stream to Pratt Industries? That would take some infrastructure on the **District** end. Was that something the **District** wanted to look at to reduce that travel time and cost? As mentioned earlier, should the **District** be helping to establish recycling at all Porter County public venues? The **District** could suggest it but there would be a cost to the venue so how involved should the **District**. She further stated she would like to get the **Board's** permission to take a survey in the municipalities to see what their needs were and what did they want from the **District**. She believed the **District** was at a plateau. The **District** was doing good things but she knew the **District** could probably be doing more. What direction did the **District** want to go in at this point?

**Council Member Lynch** stated that there had been discussions about the **District** losing the Portage recycling site. She had spoken with **Ms. Haller** about the matter and where would the site go. If there were a central location maybe there wouldn't have to be all of the drop-off sites because those were expensive too.

**Commissioner Good** replied that the **District**, at this time, had to develop a strategy to make those locations work, then if something else starts becoming more realistic then the **Board** would need to put a plan together and talk about those things. Looking at the short term future of three years, the **District** was who it was and needed to message better and do different things with the satellite locations. Then if the **District** needed to be more creative with the drop-off locations and maybe have more that were smaller it would need to be addressed then.

**Commissioner Good** stated that a year ago the county had a very static highway department social media page. Last year the county tried some new things and put a video of how the roads were plowed and around the mail boxes. It was a pretty cool interactive video and it was played this past winter when the department was plowing the roads. Overnight, comments went from negative on snow plowing to great support for the plowing efforts of the county. He stated he was sort of looking at the **District** problem the same way. With outreach to let people know what the **District** was doing he believed that mentality could be flipped.

**Ms. Haller** stated that the **District** was on track with video feeds as well. **Ms. Stuckert** would be videotaping what happens at the various district programs.

**Council Member Lynch** recognized **Mr. Davison**.

**Mr. Davison** stated that he was encouraged to hear that the commissioners were looking for efficiency in a centralized site and it would be a great opportunity to provide year round HHW collection and the satellite drop-off recycling site. He further stated that he would like to see the commissioners put in their contracts that contractors must recycle all appropriate material. He also stated that the City of Valparaiso chose not to use the **District** event recycling containers this year for Popcorn Fest and instead used their toters and no recycling was collected at the event because of contamination.

#### **Electronics Recycling Contract Extension**

**Ms. Haller** stated that the staff would recommend extending the contract for one more year through the end of 2018, unless the **Board** wanted the **District** to go out for bids for that program. She stated the **District** was comfortable with the service currently being provided.

**Council Member Conover** made a motion to approve the extension of the electronics contract. **Council Member Jones** seconded, motion carried unanimously.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Next Board Meeting-December 12, 2017 1:00 PM**

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business **Commissioner Good** made a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Council Member Jones** seconded, motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:50.