

Solid Waste Advisory Committee Meeting

5/17/22

4:30 PM

Members:

Chair: Councilor Keith Nyhan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Councilor Karen McNamara	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Councilor Gail Matson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Councilor Brent Todd	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Councilor Paula McLaughlin	<input type="checkbox"/>
Councilor Zandra Rice Hawkins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Arthur Aznev	<input type="checkbox"/>
Matt Cashman	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eric Steinhauser	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Michael Nork	<input type="checkbox"/>

The meeting called to order at 6:05.

Minutes of the last SWAC meeting were approved unanimously with Councilor Todd abstaining as he is new to the committee and not present at that meeting.

Next on the agenda was a referral from the Fiscal Policy Advisory Committee. Chairman Nyhan, who serves on that committee as well gave an overview of the inquiry. The question was raised regarding the amount that residential users pay for service as part of the Downtown Solid Waste Management district relative to their use when compared to high volume users such as restaurants.

Director Chip Chesley shared an overview of the district, noting a map of the district and sharing that the area is unique in having dense development of all types of uses; residential and commercial often on the same parcel. The way the assessment works is the contract is procured by the City, City and State parcels are excluded and the cost is distributed by assessed building value to the remaining parcels with a minimum charge of \$15. Higher value buildings pay a higher proportional share of costs.

Chairman Nyhan gave a brief history of the establishment of the district which was designed to limit the amount of trash trucks and haulers in the densely settled downtown as well as narrow the pickup window. Collections are 6 days a week which ensures sitting trash is less likely to attract vermin. Recycling was added to the district when it became viable.

Conversation around the contract structure ensued. It is a fixed price contract. Eric Steinhauser shared that composting rules in the state have just been changed to allow for meat and dairy composting which may spur investment in composting infrastructure. The committee discussed ways in which trash volumes could be lowered.

Staff was asked to look at alternative means of assessment if there are any and look to other municipalities as guides. This may be part of the forthcoming contract bids/negotiations.

Next on the agenda was Chip Chesley providing an update on the contract status with Casella. As the committee remembers, there are significant headwinds in the industry that will make this contract cycle significantly different than the last contract term. This includes landfill capacity/tip fee costs rising dramatically, recycling cost changes, significant collection cost adjustments due to labor and fuel costs rising.

In light of this, the City has looked at the RFP model that Dover, NH used last year in which the City separated the omnibus solid waste contract into two parts; a disposal RFP and a collections RFP to include the DTSWD and transfer station operation.

By doing this the City may be able to engage more disposal destinations, that are not vertically integrated with hauling operations.

The committee discussed this idea and agreed it made sense to move in this direction. Timeline is work on the RFP this summer for review by the group in August. Then the RFPs would hit the streets and responses received which the committee could look at in early fall. This appears like a good timeline to address lead time contractors may need in ordering capital equipment to service the contract.

Chairman Nyhan reminded staff the committee is there to help in any way and to not hesitate calling the group when needed.

With that, a motion by Councilor Matson was made to adjourn, seconded by Eric Steinhauser.