

## Approved at the June 25, 2013 meeting

Flathead County Solid Waste District  
Board of Directors Meeting  
May 28, 2013 – 3:00 p.m.  
Landfill Office

### 1. Roll Call

Board Members present: Hank Olson, Chairman; Greg Acton, Vice Chair; Gary Krueger, County Commissioner and Wayne Miller, Board of Health. Absent: John Helton, Member at Large; Lorin Lowry, City of Columbia Falls and Alan Ruby, Member at Large.

District Staff present: Public Works Director Dave Prunty, Operations Manager Jim Chilton and Recording Secretary Deborah Morine.

Attendees: Mayre Flowers, Robert Crastra, Josh Brown, Kim & Jera Schwegel, Mary Critchlon and Susie Bouton

### 2. Introductory Remarks from Chairman

Hank Olson noted there were three Board members absent. There were no comments from the Chairman.

### 3. Comments from public

Margaret Davis – Lakeside: Thanked the District for their rapid response during the hazardous substance spill at the Lakeside site a few months ago. She reminded the Board in regards to potentially closing the Lakeside site that the entrance into the Somers site on Highway 82 is still a dangerous situation and should be looked into and solved before expecting Lakeside residents to migrate to that site. She also said that most of the Lakeside residents live rurally off the main county roads and reasoned that service from a private hauler would be difficult if not impossible.

Mayre Flowers said she would take this opportunity to speak during the public comment portion and distributed Recycling Benefits of the Flathead in Many Ways report to the Board. She addressed the increased recycling costs contained in the recent recycling bid and urged the Board to continue to keep the program going. She acknowledged that over the past 15 years that the District has contracted with Evergreen Disposal/Valley Recycling that there has been fluctuations in the market. A stop and start approach to recycling would negatively impact the momentum that has been gained through education and repetition of the recycling program in the Flathead.

Mayre also said she went to the Somers site on Sunday and was amazed at how full to overflowing the garbage containers and recycling bins were.

Wayne Miller asked Mayre if she had contact with Flathead Lake Lodge in relation to their recent events. Mayre stated that during the Spartan event, the Lodge could have used more recycle containers, but has not had the opportunity to get the final tally from them yet.

4. Program Updates from Non-Profits

Mayre Flowers stated there are some teachers coming to speak later in the meeting during the WasteNot Project School Classroom Presentation and Landfill Tours portion of the agenda.

5. Approval of the Board Meeting Minutes for April 23, 2013 - **Action Required**

**Wayne Miller moved to adopt the minutes of April 23, 2013. Greg Acton seconded. Motion passed.**

6. Action Agenda

a. Olney Container Site Construction – **Action Required**

Bids were received and opened on May 13<sup>th</sup> for the Olney Container Site Construction Project. Bids were received from seven firms. They are shown below:

<u>Bidder</u>	<u>Bid Amount</u>
LaSalle Sand and Gravel	\$190,184.80
Sandry Construction	\$215,000.00
Schellinger Construction	\$228,899.50
LHC	\$263,808.11
Schlegel Enterprises	\$275,581.50
HK Construction	\$281,989.00
PaveCo	\$319,220.56

The engineer has reviewed the bids and provided the certified bid table and their recommendation. The lowest, most responsive bid is from LaSalle Sand and Gravel.

**Greg Acton moved to award the bid for the construction of the Olney Container Site Construction project to LaSalle Sand and Gravel and authorize the Public Works Director to execute the contract documents. Wayne Miller seconded. Motion passed.**

7. Director's Report

a. Groundwater Corrective Actions Evaluation

A letter of response from Martin Van Oort, with MT DEQ, regarding our Corrective Actions Effectiveness Report was included in the report to the Board. Staff and our hydrogeological consultant, Scott Mason with Hydrometrics, found the letter to be interesting. DEQ didn't comment on any concerns they had with the contaminant plume movement or any negative comments on the effectiveness of the corrective actions implemented by the District. What Mr. Van Oort took the chance to do was state his desires for the District to install another groundwater monitoring well. About two years ago he wanted the District to install four more groundwater monitoring wells. We discussed his idea with the senior solid waste staff within DEQ and we were not required to install any of these wells.

It is our plan to again discuss this item via a conference call on May 30<sup>th</sup> with the senior staff at DEQ on this latest request from Mr. Van Oort. After we have that discussion we will have a better understanding of what, if any, required improvements to our groundwater monitoring network may be. He wrote this letter on his last day working for the Solid Waste Bureau and has transferred to another bureau within DEQ.

b. Landfill Expansion Project

On May 16<sup>th</sup>, the Commissioners passed a motion to proceed forward with the purchase of the 14 properties bordering the southwest corner of the current landfill facility. Mike Pence, Tara Fugina and Dave have met with 11 of these property owners over the last four weeks or so. All of them are interested in selling to the District but some will most likely have financial issues that may prevent them from moving forward at this time. Everyone we spoke to is interested in staying on the property after the purchase by the County. We have informed them the maximum amount of time allowed for this will be 20 years or in 2033. If they don't sell immediately, the allotted time to stay on the property will be reduced accordingly. Staff, along with our engineer, is comfortable that this timeline will not have an impact operationally on the District for our use of the property.

Letters to the 14 owners were sent out today to make offers on their property.

*Hank suggested planting larger trees along the highway so the visual buffer is more mature by the time the District needs to start using the southern portion of the landfill. Hank asked that this item be added to next month's agenda for discussion.*

c. Columbia Falls Container Site Hours of Operation

At last month's Board meeting Lorin Lowry provided a letter written by Susan Nicosia, Columbia Falls City Manager, requesting on behalf of the City Council that the District modify the current hours of operation at the site (8 a.m. to 5 p.m., seven days per week) to 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., seven days per week. The Board directed staff to include this item on the agenda for the May meeting.

The District has been slowly gaining control of the container sites throughout the valley over the last eight or so years. With this work we have been able to install fencing and gates on sites that the District owns or has secured long term leases. This allowed us to institute hours of operation which was a significant change to the 24-7-365 operations previously enjoyed by the County residents. Recently with this change the District also has been able to staff our busiest site, Columbia Falls, for the last three years. The Board decided at that time to make the Columbia Falls site hours consistent with the landfill hours.

Staff is concerned that while the Council is not asking for more hours in an operating day, they are requesting those hours be later in the day. That will have a cascading affect on our staffing for the container site program (drivers and attendants) and at the landfill. Our other sites are open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. and a few have no fencing or gated access. If we were to start our driver(s) later in the day we will have issues at other sites where we need

to have trucks on the road at 7:30 a.m. to make room in the cans for the incoming refuse. We also would have concerns that the landfill would need to now modify its operating hours so when the truck came in from Columbia Falls at the end of the day we could dump and process the waste at the tipping face. It is not acceptable to continually leave a load in the truck over night. Hot loads do occur and the District places that truck in jeopardy with refuse left in the truck. This only occurs when a breakdown prevents us from ejecting the load. It also is not allowed under the Solid Waste rules to leave an unprocessed (uncovered) load at the tipping face.

The letter states that our hours of operation do not leave time for citizens to use the site if they are working. It is staffs opinion that our operations are open all seven days of the week and that the vast majority of citizens would have one, or more likely, two days off per week where they could use the site. There is also the option of purchasing the services of the private local hauler (Evergreen Disposal) if a citizen is unable to make the District's hours work with their schedule.

It is staff's desire that in the future if the Commissioners agree to increase our staffing to the other busy container sites in the valley floor (Somers, Creston, Bigfork, Lakeside) they have the 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. hours. These are normal business hours for County operations and the Solid Waste Department should be no different. Changed hours may have some improvements for some residents but there will be others that are unhappy with a later opening that doesn't fit into their schedule.

*Since the Columbia Falls representative Lorin Lowry was absent, it was agreed that this item will be added to next month's meeting for discussion.*

d. Recycling Program Request Proposals (RFP)

On May 3<sup>rd</sup> and May 17<sup>th</sup> staff met with representatives from Evergreen Disposal/Valley Recycling (Valley). Our goal was to initiate negotiations on their proposal for the blue box recycling program. Mike Cullinane from SWT Engineering also participated in the negotiating sessions via telephone. Prior to the first negotiating session, staff talked to Tara Fugina at the County Attorney's Office. Since this is a RFP the District is able to "negotiate" costs, terms and conditions within the proposed work. Staff provided Valley the information sent via email to the board members after the RFP was opened. We have included the information in your board packet again for reference. This information summarizes the costs for Valley to service the program along with other pertinent information on the program.

Staff's initial discussion with Valley centered on the costs associated with implementing their proposal. The calculated costs per ton using 2012 tonnages for this program are very expensive as compared to our disposal expense. Since we only received one response, staff doesn't have a corresponding proposal from another service provider to "cost compare" their supplied expenses for their services. We also discussed the duration of the contract and the possible bin configurations at the sites.

With a desire to see if there is another way to provide the service to our citizens and reduce expense, staff asked Valley to determine costs if they were to supply three 30 yard

recycling containers at the Landfill, Columbia Falls, Somers and Creston container sites. We also asked they provide us costs for Albertsons and Super One in Kalispell under this scenario. Plastic, aluminum and steel cans would be placed in one bin; another bin would be for cardboard and one bin for paper products. If Valley wanted a fourth bin we would also be acceptable to this placement, except at Creston due to site size constraints. Our thoughts are that we hoped to reduce the hauling expense by only pulling full bins as compared to the compartmentalized bins we have used in the program. Valley liked this idea and agreed to provide the costs. We also asked them to provide the costs if the contract was to be for three or five years as compared to seven years that was in the RFP.

Valley’s revised annual costs for the base recycling sites plus Albertsons and Super 1 with this revised bin configuration are shown below:

<u>Contract Duration</u>	<u>LF, C Falls, Somers, Creston</u>	<u>Albertsons</u>	<u>Super 1</u>
3 yr	\$53,724	\$51,120	\$38,148
5 yr	\$51,732	\$49,224	\$36,744
7 yr w/o discount	\$50,940	\$48,468	\$36,180
7 yr w/ discount	\$48,396	\$46,044	\$34,368

Valley said that they didn’t find that this revised bin configuration provided any savings to their costs. With the reduction in sites and the costs being on a monthly basis and not a “per pull” basis they couldn’t risk the needed profitability due to not knowing the amount of pulls needed per site per month. The reduction in contract term also increased their costs. Valley did offer a discount of 5% if contamination in the bins was less than 3% by weight for each month.

Staff is struggling with the very high calculated cost per ton for this program for its continuation (three to four times our calculated disposal costs). However, the program also represents a very small part of our expenditure budget. If the Board is interested in continuing the program with a reduced level of service, the cost of the base service option is less than 1% of our expenditure budget. Or another way to look at this is that of the annual assessment amount (\$80.73/unit) this program uses \$1.16 (7 yr contract) to \$1.22 (3 yr contract) from each residential assessment for funding.

The reality is that the District will need to subsidize the continuation of this program and to what level the Board can agree to. We have done this for the vast majority of its existence and is not uncommon for recycling programs throughout the country. At least with this contract set up on a monthly expense we are able to closely budget for our expenditures each year. The Board also has the option to reject the response from Valley and terminate the program.

*Discussions speculating why the proposal was so high concluded in acknowledging Valley Recycling was not making enough profit to sustain their business. Wayne asked if we turn down the proposal, would they “walk”. Dave said he did his best to negotiate and bottom line, they have to make a profit. If the District ceases supplementing recycling costs, Dave believes true core recyclers will still drive to Valley Recycling directly.*

*Discussions included if the program were to continue, there will be dedicated bins by product type (plastic, paper, cardboard, tin/aluminum).*

*Wayne asked Dave a series of questions regarding his opinion; if this (landfill) were a private business, would you continue the recycling program? Dave stated on a pure cost per ton; no, but we've put a lot of effort advancing recycling in the Flathead. He believes this will become more cost effective in the (unknown) future.*

*Regarding landfill capacity, would you continue the recycle program? Dave stated if there weren't many years of capacity left, he would be in favor of doing everything possible to save airspace in the landfill. Recycling; yes. But, that argument isn't as much of an issue in our current situation as we have more than 50-100 years of capacity. Recycling; not as pressing of an issue.*

*If we could drop the recycling for now, but add it again a few years down the road, does that make your support for this any stronger? Also, recognizing that the continuation of the recycling program is going to require a subsidy of some sort from the District. Dave said he is a believer in reuse of products. It's beneficial to recycle where possible, but as far as the point of the "District", it's probably less so from an environmental point of view as the commodities have to be transported 600 – 800 miles to market, which is using fossil fuels; a piece of the puzzle that people don't think about.*

*Wayne pointed out that if people are truly interested in recycling, they can take their commodities to Valley Recycling or Pacific Recycling themselves. The option to recycle is still available. Dave stated yes, assuming those (recycling) businesses are still here.*

*Since several Board members were absent, Wayne recommended revisiting the recycling contract next month in order to obtain their insight.*

*Greg related that the City of Whitefish has been through similar struggles keeping a recycling program afloat. He said if people were asked to pay even a minimal amount, they were opposed, therefore Whitefish also subsidizes their recycling efforts.*

*Gary asked if cardboard has a market close by. Dave said it used to go to Stone Container in Missoula, but since that plant has shut down, the cardboard markets are further away in Spokane or beyond. Pacific Steel & Recycling is only a "broker" for the commodity as is Valley Recycling.*

*Josh Brown, District Manager Evergreen Disposal explained the logistics of the financial/bidding process and how they arrived at the costs associated in the bid. He stated that rural recycle locations are typically not profitable. Markets are far away and transportation costs are high. He stated that the District's recycling program accounts for 60% of their business and if it goes away, it will be quite challenging to keep their recycling operations in Flathead County.*

*Hank stated that raising the assessment fee might be an option in order to help subsidize the increased costs of recycling.*

*It was agreed to revisit this item at next month's board meeting. Hank asked that a reporter from the Daily Interlake be asked to attend the next meeting so the public can have more information about what's going on regarding this recycling issue.*

e. WasteNot Project School Classroom Presentations and Landfill Tours

Hank requested that Mayre provide some information on the school classroom presentations and landfill tours that are provided from February to early June to students in schools in the County. These programs are in full swing again this year and Mayre will provide a synopsis of the training program. A couple of teachers who have participated through the years have been invited to the meeting to inform the Board about their experience with the program and how it works within their teaching curriculum.

*Mayre Flowers gave an overview of the WasteNot project which began back in 1995 to help educate and organize the public in the proper disposal of hazardous wastes and to encourage recycling efforts across the county. She stated that in 2000 they began outreach into schools and has grown the program reaching over 2000 students each year. Classroom focus has been on student understanding of reduce, reuse, recycle and redesign. She outlined the classroom presentation, and stated that the landfill tours complete the educational cycle by the students physically experiencing the landfill operations as well as the composting garden.*

*Mary Critchlow – Glacier High School: Teaches 9<sup>th</sup> grade PE. Acknowledged that this is the only exposure to recycling education that the kids get. It would be a shame if this program were to cease. She noted that since the recycle container has been placed at Glacier High, its use has increased from being full once a month to filling up every few days.*

*Susie Bouton– Columbia Falls Glacier Gateway: Teaches 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Has been teaching recycling and taking her students on landfill tours through the WasteNot Project for over 10 years. She's helped about 800 students go through the program. It's a valuable resource to help educate the kids who in turn educate the parents. She thanked the Board for their service to the community.*

*Mayre Flowers also read a letter from Mary Jo Gardner 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher from Fairmont Eagan School citing her support for the WasteNot projects recycling education and landfill tours.*

f. Highway Litter Awareness

Wayne Miller prepared a letter to be forwarded to Sheriff Curry regarding the enforcement of Ordinance No. 8. That draft was forwarded to all the Board members via email in late April. There were a couple of very minor edits but after discussions with Hank, staff said we would include it in the Board packet and see if any other edits or discussion points were brought forward by any of the Board members.

Staff included a Daily Interlake article regarding a desire by Yellowstone County (Billings) for a work program with their inmates in the County jail. This item has been discussed

with previous Sheriff administration's but was not pursued due to the associated costs. In this program the inmates pay for opportunity to serve/reduce their jail time by providing community service, one of which is litter pickup and help reduce overcrowding in the Yellowstone County jail. The article states that they are modeling this possible program off other jurisdictions that have the program up and running.

*It was agreed that the letter to Sheriff Curry go out this week.*

g. Container Site Rules and Regulations

Hank asked staff to research and see if any rules and/or regulations have been instituted for the container sites for the District. We are unable to find any such documents in the archive but the issue was discussed in late 2006 to early 2007. We included the information that was prepared and minutes from the January, 2007 board meeting. At that time the Board decided to wait until the container site consolidation work and staffing issues were decided upon.

The Board did approve some requirements for the Columbia Falls container site regarding the dropping off of green wastes. With staffing, their citizens were confused as to what wastes were allowed and any size requirements. Staff prepared and the Board reviewed the memo and it was forwarded to Columbia Falls. They stated they were going to send it out in their city newsletter.

h. Refuse Operations

Operations proceeded well for the month. Tonnage/Volumes are shown below:

<u>April</u>	
Total MSW to landfill	7,689.91
Total Appliances Collected	521
Junk Vehicles Collected	1
Truck Trips to Container Sites	449
Refuse tons/trip	6.42

The District landfilled 4.6% more waste in April, 2013 as compared to April, 2012 and our refuse trucks hauled 8.9% less waste comparing the same time frame.

Gate revenue for fiscal year 2013 was projected to be \$750,000. Through April the gate has generated \$741,999.06 or 98.9% of revenue through 83% of the fiscal year. Last year at this time the gate has generated \$620,777.20 for ten months of FY2012.

i. Budget and Financials

Dave reviewed the Budget and Financials with the Board

8. Comments from Board Members

Gary Krueger said he's researched the WasteNot Project and suggests outreach to the students is lacking. He recommends the program be part of the Curriculum Cooperative so it can be included the common core teachings for all students in all schools. He feels we are duplicating a service that is already out there; we should steer that program (WasteNot Program) to the Curriculum Coordinator.

Hank Olson said he had a neighbor complain that they couldn't dump grass in the grass pile. Dave said since we haven't any market for our wood chips we are currently diverting brush to be landfilled. If a mixed load of grass/brush come is, it will be diverted to the garbage.

Wayne Miller asked for clarification of Gary's remarks; he understands that the WasteNot Project provides classroom instruction. Gary explained his position is to interlace the program with the Curriculum Cooperative so the program is spread across all schools.

There were discussions regarding the core curriculum's current recommendations, as well as the benefit of having someone outside the school system give classroom presentations. It was also noted that the Columbia Falls School District is not part of the Curriculum Cooperative. Gary reiterated that the outreach should be directed to all the schools, not just a few.

9. Adjournment

**The meeting was adjourned at 4:56 p.m.**