

Approved at the August 27, 2013 meeting.

Flathead County Solid Waste District
Board of Directors Meeting
July 23, 2013 – **3:00 p.m.**
Landfill Office

1. Roll Call

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

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

Attendees: Paul Mutascio, Charlotte French, Lloyd and Faith Brynie, Kim and Jera Schwegel, Bob Krause, Susan Nicosia, Lynn Stanley, Mary Critchlow, Robert Crastra, Caleb Soptelean, Charles Hubbard, Mayre Flowers and Helen Pilling.

2. Introductory Remarks from Chairman

Hank Olson thanked everyone for attending and noted that John Helton and Lorin Lowry were absent. Hank also read a short article he snipped from the paper regarding recycling.

3. Comments from public

Paul Mutascio – Bigfork: Stated he appreciated Hank’s comments. He said he is willing to spend \$0.17 per month to keep the current recycling program. He believes the long term benefits outweigh the short term costs.

Helen Pilling – Kila: Complimented the Board on the wonderful job educating the youth on the value of recycling; it’s sad they are considering reducing recycling. She asks that more education needs to be explored; the Board can figure this out!

Lynn Stanley – Kalispell: Stated she applauded the county’s recycling efforts and is sad to see it might be going backward instead of forward. She said the population is only going to get greater and we need to try and continue diverting recyclables from the waste stream. Perhaps a recycling pilot project could be enacted in a test neighborhood to test the viability of changing the way the program is run.

Mary Critchlow – Kalispell: Stated that since the recycle bin was placed at Glacier High School, the bin has gone from being called in once a month to needing emptied every two days. She would like to keep all the recycling sites operating.

Mayre Flowers – Kalispell: Stated that recycling is a valuable service and encourages the Board to continue with recycling efforts. She has talked with business owners who are

successfully recycling cardboard and plastics in great quantities. She reminded the Board there are other companies out there doing the same, we just haven't heard of them yet. She is encouraged that the Board is considering a workshop to hopefully work forward effectively.

Susan Nicosia – Columbia Falls: Stated she is in favor of keeping the recycling. She is the City Manager of Columbia Falls and would also encourage the Board to consider extending the hours of operation at the Columbia Falls site to stay open later. She stated there's been a lot of illegal dumping in the outlying (mostly) unoccupied neighborhood of Cedar Creek. There has also been some illegal dumping in streets and alleys.

Hank encouraged those who are in attendance from Bigfork to speak at this time as they will not have opportunity to speak during the action agenda.

Paul Mutascio – Bigfork: Thanked the Board for giving them the opportunity to trouble shoot and problem solve the Bigfork site issue. They had 3 meetings with the Solid Waste Staff and several other meetings among themselves. There were some possible solutions identified; expanding the current site south & east, leasing land from the neighbor for additional expansion of current site or moving the entire site east of its current location onto the neighboring property providing the current land owner agrees to either selling or leasing the land. He asked for more time (preferably six more months) to continue working with the neighbor and hopefully move to the next phase.

Charles Hubbard – Bigfork: Said he supports Bigfork's efforts and asked for more time.

4. Program Updates from Non-Profits

Mayre Flowers updated the Board on the Pill Take Back Program. She said the Northwest Drug Task Force is pleased with the volume collected. In January there was 131.1 lbs. of pills disposed of. In July 2013 there was 349.8 lbs from the Sheriff's pill receptacle, 25.6 lbs. from the City of Columbia Falls Police Dept. receptacle and 14.4 lbs from Whitefish Police Dept. receptacle. She also updated the Board on the Community Event Recycling project. They are in the process of fabricating bins for the upcoming Dragon Boat Races at Flathead Lake Lodge. She also stated that she is continuing to explore the Bio Reactor landfill option and that she has discussed it with Ric Thompson at DEQ. She said DEQ is interested in learning more and she has procured a \$5,000 grant to further explore the alternative. Hank stated that in the past, this type of new technology has been cost prohibitive for smaller markets like ours. Mayre stated there are funding streams to help sustain a project like this.

Mayre also reported that while speaking with a business owner in Whitefish, she learned they are the ones who volunteer through the Adopt a Highway campaign and pick up trash along highway 93 between Happy Valley and the landfill. She mentioned they are concerned that there's no one responsible to pick up debris left over from traffic accidents.

There were discussions regarding Flathead Electric Co-op potentially expanding the generation plant and how the Bio Reactor might come into play with this decision. Alan Ruby stated the Board and the FEC Board need a level of understanding of how this might affect their decision to expand.

5. Approval of the Board Meeting Minutes for June 25, 2013 - **Action Required**

Wayne Miller moved to adopt the minutes of June 25, 2013. Alan Ruby seconded. Motion passed.

6. Action Agenda

a. Bigfork Container Site Citizen Working Group Extension – **Action Required**

In January the Board authorized the creation of a citizen working group to meet with staff and exchange information regarding the District's proposal to eliminate the Bigfork container site following the District's consolidation work. To date the group has met three times. There was a large volume of data provided by staff to the group and many ideas have been vetted in the process. The group came to understand the District's issues with the size of the current site and staff learned of the passionate desire of the citizens to keep a container site. Over the last few months the group has been working with the adjacent landowner (Connolly) to see if she and her family might be interested in either leasing or selling a three to five acre parcel immediately east of the current leased MDT site. These discussions will take some time to make sure both parties in the possible purchase or lease protect themselves and their interests, assuming the Board and the Commissioners agree with this course of action. Members of the committee will be at the meeting to update the Board and answer any questions.

The original time frame of the working group was for six months. The Board noted that if more time was needed it would most likely not be an issue for an extension.

Wayne Miller moved to extend the time frame for the Bigfork Container Site Citizen Working Group for up to six months. Alan Ruby seconded. Motion passed.

There were discussions regarding the different scenarios that have been proposed. A retaining wall for the southern portion would cost around \$180,000. Purchasing acreage and developing a new site is also an expensive proposition.

Greg Acton said that one of the reasons for the consolidation was to staff the sites, and with this plan (2009 Strategic Plan), we are actually increasing the number of sites since Bigfork was labeled as one to eliminate.

Wayne Miller also stated that from a procedural standpoint, he doesn't want the people of Bigfork to go away expecting a new site is inevitable.

b. Columbia Falls Container Site Hours of Operation – **Action Required**

At the April 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. Since Lorin was not available for the May meeting the Board delayed discussing the item until the June meeting. The Board then asked that the item be placed on the Action Agenda for July.

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 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 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 seven days per 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.

Greg Acton moved to affirm the current hours of operation for the Columbia Falls container site from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. seven days per week. Wayne Miller seconded. Motion passed.

Discussions included hours being consistent with landfill operations, not leaving garbage in trucks overnight, illegal dumping off premises, staffing and potential overtime issues as well as setting precedence.

Gary Kruger suggested shifting the hours (open later; close later) to try to work with the community. Perhaps it could be done in summer only. The Board might be agreeable to try on a temporary basis then analyze. Discussions centered around trying this next summer in the May 1 to September 30th range.

7. Director's Report

a. Recycling Program Request for Proposals

After discussions with the Board of Commissioners and Board Chair Olson, staff is recommending the Board of Commissioners and the Solid Waste Board hold a workshop to discuss the Recycling Program. There are concerns from the Commissioners side that the program is too expensive for the volume of recyclables removed and concerns from the Solid Waste Board's perspective of reducing the program or elimination. The workshop should be held at the earliest convenience, sometime in mid to late August.

Staff has updated Valley Recycling on this latest direction and they are agreeable to continuing with our month-to-month agreement for the current program. They did have concerns that if a direction is not determined in the next few months there may be the need to discuss the rate structure we are utilizing currently.

Wayne Miller moved to take the item from the table to resume discussions. Greg Acton seconded. Motion passed.

Discussions included keeping the program status quo down to eliminating the program. Having a workshop will help find / create different ideas as the Board is willing to make changes. Workshop will be August 13th or 20th; Dave will confirm the date with Board later.

Wayne Miller asked who will participate in the workshop. Dave stated Solid Waste staff, a Valley Recycling representative as well as Solid Waste Board members who are able to attend and possibly others. Gary Kruger is hopeful the District will be able to reinvent this program.

b. Olney Container Site Expansion

The construction project to expand the Olney container site is proceeding well. The contractor is nearing completion of the gravel pad. Topsoil and fencing are the next phases to be completed. The project is on schedule and should be completed by mid August.

c. Container Site Rules and Regulations

A DRAFT policy for the operations of the container sites is included in packet. We utilized information that was previously prepared but configured the document to match other County policies. Until staffing is approved for the busiest container sites much of these policies will not be enforceable. That was a concern multiple years ago when the Solid Waste Board discussed this idea.

Staff is looking for input from the Board and will modify the document after the Board's review.

d. Refuse Operations

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

<u>June</u>	
Total MSW to landfill	9,810.40
Total Appliances Collected	655
Junk Vehicles Collected	0
Truck Trips to Container Sites	485
Refuse tons/trip	7.75

The District landfilled 12.3% less waste in June, 2013 as compared to June, 2012 and our refuse trucks hauled 5.3% more waste comparing the same time frame.

Gate revenue for fiscal year 2013 was projected to be \$750,000. Through May the gate has generated \$849,617.39 or 113.3% of revenue through 92% of the fiscal year. Last year at this time the gate has generated \$707,547.89 for 11 months of FY2012.

Jim also updated the Board that on July 12th, the aerial photograph was taken of the landfill which helps determine the dirt to garbage ratio.

e. Budget and Financials

We do not have June financials yet since the Finance Department is finalizing the close of the fiscal year.

8. Comments from Board Members

Wayne Miller stated he was sympathetic to the business that has volunteered to pick up trash along the roadside. He hopes the Sheriff's Department would get more involved in giving out more warnings and tickets to help alleviate the roadside trash problem.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:16 p.m.