

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY SOLID WASTE ADVISORY GROUP (SWAG)

January 12, 2023

ATTENDANCE

SWAG Members:

Present: Richard "Buck" Arvin, Virginia Douglas, James Gestrich, Harry Glasgow, Ned Greene, Lynn Meadows, Keisha Strand

Absent: Mark Bonner, Tiziana Bottino, Will Lintner, Jane Wyman

Solid Waste Division Staff: Monica Gorman, Bernie Osilka, Deborah Campbell

Guests: Nancy Vehrs

OPENING

Ms. Gorman called the meeting of the Solid Waste Advisory Group to order at 7:03 p.m. via Microsoft Teams.

AGENDA TOPICS

INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Gorman welcomed everyone to the meeting via Microsoft Teams.

Ms. Gorman introduced the SWAG's newest member, Lynn Meadows. Ms. Meadows was appointed on October 11, 2022, representing the Coles Magisterial District. Ms. Meadows formerly worked for the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality.

Mr. Glasgow invited Nancy Vehrs to attend the meeting. Ms. Vehrs mentioned she is an Upper Occoquan Service Authority (UOSA) Board member.

APPOINTMENTS

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A quorum was present. The draft minutes of the August 11 and October 13, 2022, SWAG meetings were approved.

OPERATIONAL UPDATES

Landfill Operations

Ms. Gorman stated that the new Landfill Operations Manager (formerly Landfill Superintendent) is Roscoe Coles.

On December 1, filling operations started in the new landfill cell IIIA. The queue line for trucks entering the new cell is a small area but will improve as more waste is placed in the cell.

The Landfill and Balls Ford Road Compost facility closed on Sundays beginning November 6, 2022. This decision was made due to vacancies, overtime impacts, and deferred maintenance needs. The result is busier Saturdays, but we have received few negative comments from the public.

A new contract for tire disposal with PROCO was signed at the end of 2022.

A new contract for Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) is currently being distributed for signature. The contract represents a significant cost increase over the expired contract, as much as a 50% increase. HHW collection service at the landfill was suspended at the end of 2022 to negotiate the new contract. During the temporary service suspension, the floors of the HHW will receive a new epoxy coating. HHW service with the new contractor is expected to resume at the landfill in February 2023. The public collection hours will remain the same, Wednesday and Saturday, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Balls Ford Road Operations

Ms. Gorman stated that the Town of Herndon requested a formal agreement (similar to Fairfax and Arlington) to bring yard waste from the Town to the Balls Ford Road Compost Facility (BFR). The Herndon agreement is on the Board's consent agenda for the January 17, 2023 meeting.

There has been a significant increase in material coming to BFR because the other major private facility in the region stopped accepting material on July 1, 2022. From July to December 2022, BFR received about 35,800 tons; during that same period in 2021, BFR received about 17,600 tons. This increase has put a lot of pressure on the facility's operations.

Mr. Osilka stated that about 10,000 tons were delivered to BFR in November. The facility has never received anywhere close to that amount in a month. The amount received in December was about 5,000 tons. More material is expected to come from Fairfax County in January and February.

Mr. Osilka indicated that the maximum capacity for BFR is 100,000 tons per year. Staff is expecting the amount of incoming material to continue to increase because of the County's new yard waste diversion program. Freestate Farms was staffed and equipped to handle about half of what they are currently receiving, but they have obtained additional equipment to handle the increase.

Recycling/Diversion Programs

Ms. Campbell said the landfill hosted a tour for a dozen U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Global Methane, Climate and Clean Air Forum participants on September 29, 2022.

On December 1, 2022, the U.S. Composting Council (USCC) coordinated a tour of BFR. More than a dozen visitors from federal agencies and congressional offices attended. The USCC is lobbying the federal government to improve composting infrastructure nationwide.

Ms. Campbell shared that for the ninth time in 10 years, a Prince William County entrant won an "I Recycle" pledge contest prize. The County resident won a \$300 REI e-gift certificate.

The clothing and textile bin donation program began again in July and is available at the landfill and BFR. The new operator is Helpsy.

The County's yard waste collection is on hiatus during January and February and resumes on March 1, 2023. Curbside holiday tree collection occurs during the first two weeks of January. Solid Waste staff will send out a reminder about the yard waste program again this year in the tax assessment mailing, which is sent to property owners in the February/March timeframe.

Ms. Campbell provided a list of future events: Future items and events: regional battery campaign in February; landfill Outdoor Discovery Trail hike with The Sustainability Education Program of PWC Schools on Wednesday, February 1 at 10:00 a.m.; Compost Awareness Day on May 6 at Balls Ford Road Facility from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; and paper shred at Pfitzner Stadium parking lot on May 20 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

PROJECT UPDATES

Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP)

Ms. Gorman reported that in December 2022, the adopted SWMP was sent to the towns, and a letter or resolution of approval was requested by February 15. The Towns of Haymarket and Occoquan have already submitted their approval letters. Staff will need to reach out to the remaining towns. These approvals will be included in the SWMP and submitted to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. Based on what we see in Northern Virginia, the agency may take up to a year or more to review and approve the submitted plan.

Division Staffing

Ms. Gorman stated that Scott MacDonald, Recycling Manager, retired on January 1.

In general, recruitment continues to be a challenge. There is an insufficient number of external candidates applying, no-shows for scheduled interviews, and candidates declining to interview or accept positions when offered due to starting salaries are common issues. These challenges have provided opportunities for existing County staff to be promoted internally with salary increases. Recently two administrative staff transferred to other departments for promotions. A fiscal position employee responsible for landfill billing moved to Prince William County Schools. One of the Assistant Superintendents at the landfill filled the Landfill Operational Manager position, so his old position will have to be filled.

Ms. Gorman reported success in filling driver and heavy equipment operator positions. Hopefully, not working Sundays and working only alternating Saturdays will help with recruitment and retention. We continue to struggle with hiring temporary laborers. Historically, we could get 5-10 people from temporary agencies, but these agencies are no longer able to provide staffing. We are

currently advertising for three permanent positions under the Maintenance and Operations Worker job classification at \$22 per hour.

Current job recruitments in the Solid Waste Division include Landfill Administrative Specialist, Senior Environmental Program Manager, and Fiscal Specialist. All Scalehouse Operators positions are filled except for one. A former Scalehouse Operator was recently promoted to Administrative Technician.

A discussion was held with SWAG members about creative ways the public sector recruits during tight labor markets and other potential options for hiring.

Financial Analysis Project

Ms. Gorman reminded SWAG members that a presentation about the financial analysis project was given at the August SWAG meeting, and notes and PowerPoint slides were included in the meeting minutes. A consultant analyzed the Solid Waste Fund. Based on expenditure and revenue projections, the fund balance will be exhausted around 2026. A hybrid fee increase system was recommended to the Budget Office and will be included in the FY24 budget for the Board's consideration. The recommendation will include a slight increase in the solid waste fee billed on property taxes and a tipping fee at the landfill for business and commercial users. A landfill tipping fee could help incentivize more recycling and deter out-of-county waste.

Draft 2023 SWAG Work Plan

Ms. Gorman stated that the Draft Work Plan presented for review is based on the previous year's plan. Last year, the primary task was completing the Solid Waste Management Plan. The major project this year, if the Board approves an FY24 budget request for revenue increase, will be assisting with the public outreach/communication plan for the changing fee structure.

SWAG MEMBER GENERAL QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Mr. Gestrich asked about the status of the electrical plant and if the electrical generators will be decommissioned. Ms. Gorman replied that our partner OPAL Fuels is still operating the electrical plant at the landfill. OPAL has broken ground on the renewable natural gas (RNG) facility and is waiting on the final building permit before starting construction. Once the RNG facility is completed, the electric plant will be shut down. The decommissioned generators will belong to the County.

Mr. Gestrich asked about the impact on the landfill of wildlife coming across the street from development of the Kline project. Mr. Glasgow requested exploration of the issue.

Mr. Gestrich asked if staff is working with the Rangers patrolling the landfill property. Ms. Campbell replied that Solid Waste has been working with the Parks Department. Mr. Gestrich stated there have been problems with ATVs and hunters in the area. Mr. Gestrich noted that the Rangers have been patrolling the area more frequently.

Ms. Vehrs asked if there will be a Recycles Day this year. Ms. Campbell responded that the event is usually in October, but we have yet to decide if it will be held this year.

Ms. Douglas asked if the County has a program to hire based on employee referrals, which has worked for her organization. Ms. Douglas also asked if the County has a relationship with the local schools to fill entry-level positions. Ms. Gorman stated that County Human Resources has strict

processes for hiring, which gives us less flexibility than the private sector. The County does allow hiring temporary employees, either directly or through contracted agencies.

Mr. Arvin asked staff if it would be helpful to have an endorsement from the SWAG on the recommended fee changes. Ms. Strand suggested that staff could draft a memo to the Board with the SWAG's recommendation, which the SWAG would review.

Ms. Douglas asked what the annual revenue increase would be needed to offset deficits. The consultant must finalize the report, which will be distributed once issued. She also asked if the fee increase would cover long-term costs or just meet immediate needs. Ms. Gorman stated that the proposed fee changes will include incremental increases over time.

Ms. Douglas asked for a list of contact information for SWAG members.

Ms. Vehrs discussed planting native meadow perennials on the landfill rather than grass. Ms. Vehrs stated that a landfill in Shenandoah County and the Fairfax County I-66 landfill are using meadow plants on closed cells.

Mr. Gestrich shared his concerns about sufficient options for the disposal of solar panels and electric car batteries.

Ms. Strand shared that Keep Prince William Beautiful started the Green Business Council, and the first conference will be held on March 21 from 8:00 to 4:00.

ADJOURNMENT and NEXT MEETING

The next SWAG meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 11, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. The discussion items include a presentation on waste conversion technologies.

Ms. Gorman adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Attachments:

- Draft 2023 SWAG Work Plan

**Prince William County
CY2023 Solid Waste Advisory Group Annual Work Plan**

1st Quarter

January 12, 2023	February	March 9, 2023
Draft Work Plan Review and Discussion	No meeting	Waste Conversion Technology Update Solid Waste Fee Proposal

2nd Quarter

April	May 11, 2023	June
No meeting	FY24 Division Budget Review	No meeting

3rd Quarter

July 13, 2023	August	September 14, 2023
Communication Plan (tentative)	No meeting	Annual Picnic and Landfill Tour

4th Quarter

October	November 9, 2023	December
No meeting	Annual Recycling Program Update	No meeting