

**MINUTES**  
**St. Louis County Board of Commissioners Solid Waste and Septic Committee**  
**Virginia Government Services Center; 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Liz Prebich Room; Virginia, Minnesota**  
**May 12, 2021**

**Call to Order**

Commissioner Nelson called the meeting to order at 8:15 a.m. Everyone introduced themselves.

*Commissioners Present:* Commissioner Mike Jugovich, Commissioner Keith Musolf and Commissioner Keith Nelson.

*Others Present:* Dave Fink, Diane Hildreth, Steve Pellinen and Mark St. Lawrence Environmental Services Department; Brian Fritsinger (via WebEx), Kevin Gray, Administration; James Nephew, Attorney's Office (via WebEx); Cindy Palm, Auditor's Department; Jim Foldesi, Public Works (via WebEx); Rick Crum, Northeast Technical Services (NTS); and Brett Ballavance, Wenck/Stantec.

**Approval of Minutes** – Upon motion by Commissioner Musolf and support by Commissioner Jugovich, the minutes of the April 9, 2021, Solid Waste and Septic Committee meeting were approved as presented.

**Ongoing Business - Solid Waste - Regional Landfill Update:**

Interim Director David Fink updated the Commissioners on the proposed cell closures at the Regional Landfill (RLF). Since 2018, Department staff have been working with Brett Ballavance, Consulting Engineer for Wenck/Stantec Engineering on closure of 10.25 acres (cells 1 and 1a) at the RLF. The final project closure was completed in 2021 at a cost of 1.1 million dollars. Department staff continue to work with Wenck/Stantec and have started the engineering and design for the closure process for an additional 8.33 acres (cells 2 and 3). The anticipated cost will be approximately 1 million dollars and should be completed in 2022. The RLF will be utilizing the existing cell 6, which is 5.2 acres constructed in 2012.

**Constructed Wetland Pilot Project** - Fink reviewed the Per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) progress of the storage and treatment pond pilot project at the RLF. NTS staff have been conducting ongoing testing at the leachate pond over the past two years. Leachate has been pumped directly from the leachate pond to a carboy in the testing facility, plants have been added and results of the PFAS compound levels closely monitored. The results are very promising and show three of the five PFAS compounds are being reduced below health risk limits set by the Minnesota Department of Health. NTS staff will continue to analyze, gather additional data, and monitor the results. The Department will be hiring an intern to specifically assist with this project. The results of the finding should be able to be published in scientific journals this year. Department staff have applied for a \$500,000 proposed Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) grant. The project would incorporate data for a demonstration project at a significantly larger scale than what is currently being used as part of a leachate treatment project. Department staff will update commissions as the process develops. Chair Nelson stated that he will be meeting with Senator Baak later today and will be having discussions to be included in a \$20 million dollar bonding bill, of which \$10 million dollars would be designated for developing wastewater initiative at the RLF.

**PFAS Work Plan** - Fink showed a PowerPoint slide detailing the footprint of the southern portion of the RLF leachate spray field monitoring wells and discussed the location of the additional proposed

monitoring wells. Fink updated the Commissioners on the PFAS alternative intervention limits workplan and the current rules of the MPCA. Fink stated the PFAS site specific workplan has been approved by the MPCA for the RLF; this is a three-year work plan to develop site specific limits. PFAS monitoring and testing will be ongoing at this site. Discussion from the group followed.

**Biosolids Land Acquisition** – Fink stated that Department staff attended a recent Biosolids Disposal Site Authority “Authority” board meeting to discuss acquiring an additional 100 acres of land. The land was previously used by the cities of Eveleth, Gilbert and Mountain Iron as a designated biosolids disposal area. The Authority engineering consultant is putting a proposal together that outlines the cost of equipment the three cities anticipate sharing along with cost estimates for upgrades to their existing facilities. The Authority is looking at possibly trading the 100 acres of land to St. Louis County in exchange for biosolids equipment and an agreement to have their biosolids accepted at the RLF.

**Landfill Expansion** – Fink stated that the Biosolids land acquisition would allow the Department the ability to extend and maximize the life of the RLF by approximately 50 years and to better manage leachate at the RLF. Fink showed a PowerPoint slide on the proposed RLF expansion conceptual design layout. The engineers estimated cost for relocating the leachate pond system at the RLF and upgrading to an advanced leachate treatment system would be approximately 8 million dollars. Commissioner Nelson would also like cost estimates on solar farm technology options for the RLF.

**Voyageur Landfill Update – Fink / St. Lawrence / Crum/ Ballavance:**

St. Lawrence stated that Department staff have been working with the MPCA on the feasibility of permitting, developing, and focusing on on-site leachate management at the Voyageur Landfill in Canyon. St. Lawrence discussed the County’s possible future acceptance of closed dumps and landfills and believes the re-permitting of this landfill to MSW also provides a unique opportunity to expand MSW collection in the region. Department staff will be having a follow up meeting with high level MPCA staff to go over the conceptual design plans for the Voyageur Landfill before aggressively pursuing funding options. Discussion from the group on American Rescue Plan monies and other Federal funding sources followed. Commissioner Nelson would like a projected timeline to keep this project moving forward presented to the Commissioners of this Committee. In the future, Commissioner Nelson would like the project referred to as the Canyon Development Project.

At 9:25 a.m. a short break was taken. Commissioner Nelson called the meeting back to order and at this time upon motion by Commissioner Musolf and support by Commissioner Jugovich, the minutes of the April 9, 2021 Solid Waste and Septic Committee meeting were approved as presented.

Rick Crum, NTS gave a brief update to the Commissioners on the Environmental Review Assessment of the current Waste Management (WM) facility in Canyon. Crum stated there are three phases related to the purchase of the WM Canyon facility. Phase 1 assessment is the industrial compliant audit which looks at the engineering and physical aspects of the site in order to make recommendations with regards to regulations in the future. Phase 1 has been completed for this project. Phase 2 consists of collecting data from the site to better understand the environmental impact. As of this meeting, Phase 2 is not done. NTS is waiting for approval from WM to allow site access. The Commissioners would like to see this project move forward and would like the testing to begin tomorrow. WM has had ample time to give their approval. The Commissioners also discussed giving approval to NTS to start testing on the County-managed land that borders the WM property. Crum will have that message conveyed to the WM attorney.

Crum gave a PowerPoint presentation of the Facility Planning and Preliminary Feasibility Study at the Canyon Integrated Solid Waste Management Facility and briefly went over the outline with the Commissioners. Crum stated the purpose of this preliminary feasibility study is to evaluate the feasibility of the essential components of the integrated waste management facility with respect to the site conditions, anticipated waste volumes and anticipated leachate volumes. A conceptual design which will show the overall site layout, base-grade and liner design, ultimate grade and cover design, leachate management and treatment options and gas management will need to be created. The Environmental Review is an important part of the process and will reveal any problems or potential problems. NTS staff will also be reviewing the permit criteria for this landfill site and will work with the MPCA through the review process. Another part of the review process will be to lay out a timeline schedule and compile a preliminary cost estimate spreadsheet. Discussion from the group on the approximate 890 acres of potential land acquisition land for the Canyon Development Project followed.

Fink showed a PowerPoint slide and discussed the Closed Landfills and Dumps in St. Louis County with the Commissioners. Staff will create a map showing the breakdown of the MPCA closed landfills/dumps, municipal-owned dumps and other private landfills/dumps. The potential consolidation and cleanup of closed landfills/dumps and hauling the MSW to the Canyon Development Project is a priority of this committee. Commissioner Nelson would like one map, broken down by Commissioner District, that includes information on the eleven MPCA closed dump sites tested for PFAS and the PFAS levels at these sites.

St. Lawrence showed a PowerPoint slide of the conceptual Canyon facility design/layout site map. St. Lawrence stated that Phase 1 after acquiring the Voyageur Landfill would be to accept waste from the closed landfills/dumps, approximately 15 million cubic yards, from the NEWAC area which includes Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake and St. Louis Counties and the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District. The Voyageur Landfill including all the land in the acquisition area in Canyon would have enough capacity for about 60 to 75 years of MSW from the NEWAC area. Commissioner Nelson would like a scenario for a footprint of the Canyon Development Project that does not include the purchase of the Waste Management Voyageur Landfill. Discussion from the group followed.

Administrator Gray would like to see a presentation given at an upcoming County Board meeting to bring all the County Commissioners up to date on the progress of this committee on the potential expansion of the Regional Landfill and the Canyon Development Project.

**MPCA Update** - St. Lawrence stated that St. Louis County would be providing an option to dispose of closed landfills/dumps by developing the Canyon Development Project. At this time the MPCA does not have ~~any good~~ alternative solutions to address the PFAS issues associated with closed landfills/dumps.

**Public Comment Period:** None

**Scheduling Next Meeting:** The next Solid Waste and Septic Committee meeting will be scheduled as needed.

**Other Business:** None

**Adjourn** - Upon motion by Commissioner Jugovich and second by Commissioner Musolf the meeting was adjourned.