

MINUTES
St. Louis County Board of Commissioners Solid Waste and Septic Subcommittee
Northland Office Building,
1st Floor Environmental Services Conference Room #118
Virginia, Minnesota
March 6, 2017

Call to Order: Jim Nephew, St. Louis County Attorney called the meeting to order.

Members Present: Commissioner Mike Jugovich, Commissioner Keith Nelson, Commissioner Tom Rukavina, and Commissioner Pete Stauber.

Others Present: Kevin Gray, St. Louis County Administrator; James Nephew, Assistant County Attorney; Cindy Palm, St. Louis County Auditor's office; Chris Schlotec, Northern Minnesota Recycling; Debra McDonald, Waste Management, Inc.; Dave Fink, Diane Hildreth, JoAnn Newman and Mark St. Lawrence, Environmental Services Department (Department).

On February 21, 2017, the St. Louis County Board of County Commissioners passed Resolution Number 17-118 consolidating the Solid Waste Subcommittee and the Septic Subcommittee and established a new subcommittee, naming it the Solid Waste and Septic Subcommittee, with Commissioner Districts 4, 5, 6 and 7 appointed as permanent members.

The following are the current Commissioners from each district: District 4 - Commissioner Tom Rukavina, District 5 - Commissioner Pete Stauber, District 6 - Commissioner Keith Nelson, and District 7 - Commissioner Mike Jugovich.

Election of Officers of the Solid Waste and Septic Subcommittee: The first order of business was the election of Board Chair and Vice-Chair. James Nephew opened the floor for nominations for Chair. A motion was made by Commissioner Stauber to nominate Commissioner Nelson. Commissioner Jugovich supported the motion. Nephew called three times for any other nominations. There were none. Nephew moved to close nominations. There was a unanimous vote to elect Commissioner Nelson for Chair. Nephew turned the floor over to Commissioner Nelson for nominations for Vice-Chair.

Commissioner Nelson opened the floor for nominations for Vice-Chair. Commissioner Rukavina nominated Commissioner Jugovich for Vice-Chair. Commissioner Stauber supported the motion. Commissioner Nelson called three times for any other nominations. There were none. Commissioner Nelson moved to close nominations. There was a unanimous vote to elect Commissioner Jugovich for Vice-Chair.

Approval of the Solid Waste & Septic Subcommittee By-Laws: This is the first meeting of the newly established Solid Waste & Septic Subcommittee and a copy of the By-Laws was presented to the Commissioners. Commissioner Nelson opened the floor for approval of the By-Laws for the Solid Waste & Septic Subcommittee. A motion was made by Commissioner Rukavina to approve the By-Laws as presented and Commissioner Jugovich supported the motion. There was a unanimous vote for approval of the Solid Waste & Septic Subcommittee By-Laws.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the January 21, 2016 Solid Waste Subcommittee meeting and the Septic Subcommittee meeting will need to be approved separately at this first meeting of the Solid Waste & Septic Subcommittee (SW&SSC).

Upon motion by Commissioner Stauber and second by Commissioner Rukavina the minutes of the January 21, 2016, Solid Waste Subcommittee meeting were approved unanimously as presented.

Upon motion by Commissioner Rukavina and second by Commissioner Stauber the minutes of the January 21, 2016, Septic Subcommittee meeting were approved unanimously as presented.

Director's Update: St. Lawrence emailed the Commissioners the Director's Report.

Ongoing Business:

Regional Landfill/Recycling Facility - Dave Fink reviewed the 10.2 acre Phase 1 and Phase 1A partial closure area at the Regional Landfill with the SW&SSC. The closure of this site is necessary as a leachate management tool as well as a requirement of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) MSW landfill permit for the Regional Landfill. A mandatory pre-bid meeting was held on March 1st with twelve contractors in attendance. The engineer's estimate for the closure project is approximately one million dollars. The bid opening is scheduled for March 17th and the closure project is expected to begin in July.

Dave Fink updated the SW&SSC on the Recycling Facility Landfill Gas Utilization Pilot Project. The Regional Landfill is meeting the landfill gas threshold limits set by the Environment Protection Agency (EPA). At this time, landfill gas is being passively vented. The Department is in the process of installing an active gas collection and utilization system. To date, gas lines have been installed, the gas collection building has been constructed, electricity has been installed in the main gas collection building, and one of the two auxiliary furnaces has been installed and will be used to supplement the current heating source at the Recyclable Materials Processing Facility. The compressor and filter unit need to be ordered and connected. Approximately \$80,000 has been spent on this pilot project. When completed, the project will reduce the cost of heating the Recyclable Materials Processing Facility significantly. The project is expected to be operational for the 2017/2018 heating season. Department staff will evaluate the success of this project and anticipate heating other buildings at the Regional Landfill in the future. Updates on this pilot project will be presented at future SW&SSC meetings.

Mark St. Lawrence reviewed the history of the recyclables haulage, processing and recycling facility operations activities with the SW&SSC. Northern Minnesota Recycling has been managing the St. Louis County (County) facility since 1998 and the County's recycling facility since 2000. In 2014, the Department hired a consultant to do a full assessment of the recyclables collection and processing program and provide recommendations for cost effective improvements in processing efficiencies and marketed volumes. The consultant recommended the County should consider a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) for hauling and processing services at the time of the next haulage contract renewal to ensure the best possible return on the County's investments. It is simply prudent public policy to periodically solicit competitive proposals for these types of service. The current contract will expire September 30, 2017. There is one (1) additional two (2) year contract extension available. At this time, the Department recommended it would be in the best interest of the County not to extend the current contract and to do a RFP. Discussion from the SW&SSC, Chris Schlotec and Director St. Lawrence followed. Chair Nelson asked the SW&SSC if there was support for a RFP for the recyclables haulage, processing and recycling facility operations. Commissioner Stauber made a motion and it was supported by Commissioner Jugovich. There was a unanimous vote of support of an RFP. This item will be added to the SW&SSC agenda for further discussion after the RFP's have been received.

At this time, Chair Nelson moved item C - Internet/Northern Castings landfill account write-off to be presented before Item B - 2018 Proposed Solid Waste Fees.

JoAnn Newman gave a brief background summary of the Internet/Northern Castings account to the SW&SSC. Internet declared bankruptcy in 2004, the bankruptcy was finalized in 2008 and the Department received a final check for \$2,700 for claims previously filed. There is a balance remaining of \$19,306 for this account. The Auditor's office is requesting this balance be written off. This is the last outstanding charge account balance for the Department. The Department no longer has charge accounts. All sites require payment by check, credit card, solid waste coupon or pre-paid disposal card. Director St. Lawrence would like the approval of the SW&SSC to write off of this account. A motion was made by Commissioner Rukavina and supported by Commissioner Stauber to recommend write off this bad debt to the County Board. Discussion followed. There was a unanimous vote for support for recommendation to the County Board to write off this bad debt due to bankruptcy. St. Lawrence will submit a board letter.

Fink reviewed the land exchange between the Biosolids Disposal Site Authority and St. Louis County with the SW&SSC. The original property transfer agreement was scheduled to be completed at the end of 2016. The Department and the Biosolids Disposal Site Authority have agreed to extend the contract agreement term to December 31, 2018. The Natural Resources Research Institute (NRRI) continues to develop this site as a mine land reclamation research project.

St. Lawrence informed the SW&SSC that Lakehead Environmental (Lakehead) has closed its Cedar Ridge Composting Facility and will not renew its land lease with the Department. The facility was situated on 20 acres of mine overburdened land owned by the County. All remediated soil, general equipment, storage sheds, and other associated items for which the County has no use was removed by Lakehead and the site was returned to pre-existing surface grade conditions. Soils not meeting general land application requirements were transported to the Regional Landfill for disposal. Lakehead paid all associated tipping fees. The MPCA has approved Lakehead's closure plan and closure activities. The County officially owns the site. At the request of the Department, the perimeter fence and cell liners remained in place for possible future use by the County.

Fink updated the SW&SSC on the leachate pond treatment area. The current landfill permit includes an additional 38 acres of leachate land application area. The additional acreage enabled the Department to more than double the volume of leachate applied in 2016 vs. the 2015 season. A total of 6,370,882 gallons of leachate was sprayed in 2016. 2,671,917 gallons on the primary spray field and 3,698,965 gallons on the secondary spray field. A total of 270 (1100 lb.) bales of hay were harvested from the spray fields.

Fink updated the SW&SSC on the Highway 53 realignment as it affects the Landfill Road intersection. The Highway 53 realignment project is scheduled for completion in the fall of 2017. The section of the landfill road affected by the project has been paved and a temporary access provides easy transition to the landfill road. Minimal delays are expected when the new entrance is constructed this summer.

Fink informed the SW&SSC that the MPCA will require significant changes to the current method used for placement and storage of demolition material at the Regional Landfill and in the near future, the four transfer stations. Currently, demolition material is stockpiled at these locations. The new MPCA permit will state that demolition material cannot be stockpiled at any of these sites after August 3rd. Department staff will continue to have discussions with the MPCA regarding this matter. Staff will update the SW&SSC at the next meeting on the outcome of these discussions and will also present a recommendation.

Mark St. Lawrence updated the SW&SSC on the current Community Sanitary Sewer Projects.

Department staff continue to provide assistance to the Joint Powers Board related to the Crane Lake, Kabetogama and future Ash River community sanitary sewer projects. Crane Lake will be starting Phase 2 this spring which include connections and extensions along Handberg Road as funding dollars allow. Completion of the Kabetogama project is planned for late spring/early summer 2017. Focus will then turn to Ash River and the tasks needed to initiate that project. Funding is one of the key reasons the Ash River project has not gotten underway. The Ash River project is in an unorganized township which makes the County Board the local governmental unit. Department staff conducted an initial site evaluation and the County hired a soil scientist to do an assessment of a Department of Natural Resources parcel and found the soils were ideal for onsite treatment and disposal of wastewater. A public hearing was held in July of 2016. The next step in moving forward with this project is the establishment of a sanitary district. A Community Assessment Report (feasibility study) will need to be done either independently or through the MPCA. St. Lawrence recommended applying for grant monies through the State of Minnesota for a feasibility study. There is a maximum of \$60,000 available in State funding for such a study. The goal of the County Board will be to help establish a sanitary district that will be independent of the County and residents and/or private entities will manage their own sanitary sewer district. This will be an ongoing issue with updates to follow at future SW&SSC meetings.

St. Lawrence updated the SW&SSC on the proposed Sand Lake community sewer project. A Community Assessment Report (feasibility study) was conducted last summer as part of the Sand Lake sewer project. Several meetings were held with the Community Sewer Committee and the Sand Lake Association with discussions focusing on the need for a community sewer around the developed area of Sand Lake. The next steps to move forward on this project would be to have the Sand Lake Association write a letter to the County Board requesting the County Board petition the Minnesota Office of Administrative Hearings for the creation of the Sand Lake Sanitary District. County Board action will be required given Sand Lake is located in Unorganized Township 60-18. The Sand Lake Association will be meeting with the Community Sewer Committee in April. A public meeting is scheduled to take place in July. Discussion from the group followed. St. Lawrence will provide additional updates the SW&SSC as information becomes available.

Mark St. Lawrence updated the SW&SSC on the 2018 proposed solid waste fees. St. Lawrence gave a brief history of MSW tipping fees and Minnesota Statute 115A.919 (919 fees) to the SW&SSC. St. Lawrence stated that the Solid Waste Division has been significantly underfunded for the last several years. Department staff reviewed the solid waste program costs and have determined that a tipping fee increase for Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) is needed. Discussion followed. St. Lawrence will bring the Department's recommendation to the next SW&SSC meeting.

Public Comment Period: Debra McDonald with Waste Management (WM) updated the SW&SSC on the Voyageur Landfill facility in Canyon. Waste Management is in the process of converting the Voyageur Landfill site from a demolition industrial landfill to a MSW facility. WM staff will be looking at available options and will update the SW&SSC on future developments at this facility.

Scheduling Next Meeting: The next SW&SSC meeting is tentatively scheduled for May. St. Lawrence will set up quarterly SW&SSC meetings for the remainder of this year.

Adjourn

Upon motion by Commissioner Stauber and second by Commissioner Jugovich, the meeting was adjourned.