

**COUNTY SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
8:00 A.M. THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 2024
CLAY COUNTY RESOURCE RECOVERY CENTER
3322 15TH AVENUE NORTH
MOORHEAD, MN 56560
IN PERSON & TEAMS**

Members Present: Kevin Campbell, Roger Richman, Cliff Bang, Everett Nelson, Russ McDougall, Chuck Hendrickson, Jenny Mongeau, Heather Nesemeier

Via Teams: Russ Colson

Members Absent: Joseph Pederson, Wayne Lepper

Others via Teams: Shannon Thompson, Mike Earle, Julie Kennedy

Others Present: Corey Bang, Justin Sorum, Ashley Magelky, Steve Larson, Todd Bratlien, Paul Fiechtner, Ella Holiman

Commissioner Kevin Campbell called the meeting to order at 8:00am and initiated introductions.

On motion by Roger Richman, seconded Jenny Mongeau and unanimously carried, the Committee approved the meeting agenda.

On motion by Everett Nelson, seconded by Russ McDougall and unanimously carried, the Committee approved the minutes from February 29, 2024.

Reorganization of Landfill Structure – Corey Bang

We have advertised for the landfill manager position for a month. We have had five applicants and none of them are technically qualified. The three external applicants were the least qualified. The two internal applicants are each missing a couple requirements. Corey went to PIC (Personnel Issues Committee) last week with three options: wait for a qualified applicant (this may take a long time), lower the requirements (Corey does not want to go this route as it could set a precedent. Also, the CDL is very important at the landfill), or restructure the staffing at the landfill. This third option would eliminate the landfill manager position, with Corey overseeing the landfill and stopping in each morning on his way to work. We would then hire a landfill technician, with the requirements of one year experience, a CDL, and would still cover the duties at the landfill except for management. This includes the testing and technical items. The person we are looking at for this position is Ella Holiman. She has been with the county for a year as an intern and had been working with Brett on the well testing.

Roger Richman brought up the issue of having a professional at the landfill as we historically have. Jenny Mongeau added that hiring currently is challenging, with openings being posted for long periods of time without qualified applicants. Other departments have been flexible in shifting some responsibilities. Jenny recognizes that the professional aspect is important, but some of the professional duties can be contracted with outside companies. Also, the landfill manager position has not had the level of

supervisory duties that other traditionally professional roles would (with only 2-3 employees supervised). This might be affecting us getting applicants with a professional background. The level of supervisory duties does affect the level of pay that a position qualifies for.

Everett Nelson brought up that the landfill manager position as advertised is a hybrid role. We are wanting someone with a CDL, professional experience, and managerial skills. A lot of professionals won't apply for this type of role as they won't want to drive truck or be out in the field as they would want to be in an office setting.

Roger Richman has worries about not having someone on site with a background in geology, hydrology, or chemistry and what would happen with an emergency. Corey responded that Ella will have a degree in Geoscience in May. Corey is also on site when Stantec is testing, and has enlisted Stantec to assist with more landfill items. Also, the management of the two truck drivers has moved to the RRC, so there are only two full time employees at the landfill that Brett was previously managing.

Steve Larson stated that the PIC committee felt confident with this restructuring due to how engaged Corey is with the day-to-day workings of the landfill and sets clear expectations for staff. The second item is the recent addition of Ashley as the office manager at the RRC, which has taken things off of Corey's plate at the RRC to allow him to focus on the landfill more. With the degrees and experience Ella would bring, she is not what you'd think of as a normal intern. She's also already stepped into the role by doing well testing during her internship.

Kevin Campbell asked about the process in place at the landfill if there is an emergency and there is no management on-site. Corey responded that there was a year without a landfill manager before Brett was hired and the site ran smoothly as the staff have been in their positions for years and know what expectations are. Kevin then asked Cliff as the former landfill manager if he thought there were issues with chemical emergencies etc. and if staff were trained and prepared, and Cliff responded that he never had an issue.

Heather Nesemeier agreed that the role is hybrid which can cause difficulties with hiring. She asked Steve Larson if the pay is competitive for similar roles in the area. Steve responded that the pay is competitive, and also mentioned how other County departments have done some shifting of duties between staff recently as well. Heather wanted to stress how valuable the knowledge Ella gained as an intern working with Brett is.

Heather supports the proposed restructuring and suggests that we plan to revisit the staff structuring in a year to ensure the proposed changes are still working.

Steve Larson added that Brett started as an intern and moved up, so the County is able to build leaders internally.

Jenny Mongeau brought up that Brett met the professional requirements of the role but not some of the others, it is hard for one person to cover all areas. Having the flexibility with staff to shift responsibilities to what makes sense is key. Kevin Campbell reiterated how we need to be creative, County wide, to attract applicants. He also added that a large part of the budget is for professional services to be hired out.

Roger Richman suggests putting money towards further education for Ella. Kevin responded that that is something SWAC could recommend to the county board, but it would need to go through HR etc. and have a commitment from the employee on how long they would stay with the county. This commitment is currently required on CDL drivers when the county pays for their training. Corey responded that the CDL for Ella would be paid for by the county (with a two-year employment commitment from Ella otherwise she would be required to pay back the training fees) and she will attend landfill operator training in the fall. Corey stands behind recommending Ella for the landfill technician position.

Cliff Bang motioned to move forward with proposed landfill restructuring, to be reviewed in one year. The motion was seconded by Heather Nesemeier and unanimously carried.

Corey mentioned that he would usually bring items like this to SWAC first, but due to timing and wanting to get staffing filled ASAP, he met with the PIC committee last week.

The landfill restructuring recommendation by SWAC and PIC will be brought to the county board at next week's meeting.

Landfill Activities – Corey Bang

Corey has been covering the desk at the landfill, as well as Ross, the truck drivers, Shannon, and Ella. It has been running as usual.

This week, DEF was put in the loader. The fuel system was flushed and filters changed. No damage was done.

Monday and Tuesday the landfill shut down due to wind. Garbage was stored at the RRC, and the truck drivers have caught up already.

The Hawley elevator burned, we will be getting those burned materials (grain and structure) starting in April.

Roger Richman asked about the multiple buildings being torn down in Moorhead. Corey responded that they are being directed to Kent Severson to obtain permits and to take materials to the demo landfill whenever possible.

Everett Nelson took the PFAS testing idea to the Hawley board. They approved two sites: Ekres and the Weavers stock pond. At this point, these tests are coming out of the Hawley budget. The funding from the County to Hawley for hosting the landfill is being addressed as the payments have been missed the past two years and these funds could be used for PFAS testing.

Solid Waste Updates – Corey Bang

April's SWAC meeting will need to be moved forward a week or cancelled as the RRC is hosting landfill operator training the week of April 25. It was decided to move the April meeting to April 18 at 8am.

Ella will not be able to take this April landfill operator training, as she has to be employed for 6 months. The requirement is that she is trained within a year, so she will attend training offsite in the fall.

The second tanker for leachate was purchased and should be picked up today.

March 1 our annual report was turned into the MPCA by Stantec.

On March 4, Julie, Shannon, and Corey did an interview with NPR radio on battery disposal, which led to a March 19 interview with WDAY, which then led to an interview with WCCO.

Bids for the landfill hay land will be opened on April 10.

On March 26, a City of Moorhead truck hit one of the bollards at the RRC. We are working to get this replaced.

Corey is meeting with Stantec tomorrow to finish the comprehensive calendar of what the landfill needs throughout the year.

The garbage “door to dump” video has been completed and is up on the Clay County website.

Perham Update – Kevin Campbell

Plant is in its shutdown since last Wednesday, all haulers have been cut off while major needed work is done.

Through Feb we were still above our projected tons processed at the facility for the year. The shutdown will of course affect this but it was also planned for in the numbers.

Clay County is only 15 tons short as of Feb 29, which is an improvement from being 1600 tons short at one point.

The budget is doing well, there is nothing out of the ordinary. Cash balance: \$1.7million last year, \$1.55million this year.

Legislative activities: SCORE funding is still a big topic. There is a MN amortization bill, House file 4231, Senate file 4316. Chris McConn believes if these pass, our facility will be shut down. There is also Senate file 4802, House file 4953 which would equate to a \$6million carbon tax on our facility. The Solid Waste group in MN is opposing these two bills.

There are two proposals for ash management. The first is to try using the ash in a road in Ottertail County. It would require clean ash. The amount of ash needed equates to about how much ash comes out of the Perham facility in a year. To clean the ash and truck it would cost around \$246,000. We currently budget \$400,000 per year to put that ash into a landfill, so this would save money. We would still need time to see the longevity of this solution. With only 6-7 years left in the OTC landfill that the ash currently goes to, we want to continue pursuing expansion of that landfill as well. The second proposal is regarding \$850,000 grant that is available. This would be used for a building to store clean ash in preparation for future road projects. Total cost would be \$1.3million. With the grant, cost would be \$444,000 but we would have a permanent building. The Prairie Lakes board greenlit moving forward with the grant application at their February meeting.

There are five facilities in MN wanting to do our own testing of our air emissions in relation to PFAS. There is science stating that at a certain temp, 95-100% of PFAS is destroyed in the burning process. The proosed cost for these tests is \$250,000 total, shared equally between the five facilities. The Prairie Lakes Board approved this. Not all five facilities will be tested, we will want to test a front-loaded facility and one that is not. The Perham plant may not be tested. Barr Engineering is the company that will do the testing, which is the company the landfill uses for testing.

The OTC administrator was at this week's meeting and spoke on personnel policy and incorporating Prairie Lakes into OTC's policies. This will be worked on over the coming year.

Discussion on the website continued. There are two things being looked at: an intranet for employees to view policies and forms etc, and a public website. The OTC website has a page on the Perham plant. It was suggested to build off of this OTC page, having a public domain for the Perham plant that links back. There was a proposal to have a website built with a cost of \$5000. The public website is important for residents to learn more about the facility (and dispel misinformation), as well as legislators.

Heather Nesemeier brought up SCORE funding and SWAC providing a letter of support to the legislature for increased funding for SCORE eligible activities. She believes that having residents of Clay County showing their support would be impactful, and that all members of the SWAC committee are Clay County residents.

Heather Nesemeier motioned to draft a letter signed by the SWAC committee in support of increased SCORE funding percentage for the legislature. The motion was seconded by Roger Richman and unanimously carried.

The letter will not be physically signed by SWAC members, but rather include each member's printed name and jurisdiction they represent.

Meeting adjourned.