

**COUNTY SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
8:00 A.M. THURSDAY, JULY 24, 2025
CLAY COUNTY RESOURCE RECOVERY CENTER
3322 15TH AVENUE NORTH
MOORHEAD, MN 56560
IN PERSON & TEAMS**

Members Present: Kevin Campbell, Jenny Mongeau, Cliff Bang, Roger Richman, Everett Nelson, Joe Pederson, Russ McDougall, Wayne Lepper, Heather Nesemeier

Members on Teams: Chuck Hendrickson, Russ Colson

Others Present: Corey Bang, Mara DeRung, Ashley Magelky, Darren Brooke, Paul Fiechtner, Todd Bratlien

Others via Teams: Julie Kennedy, Mike Earl, Jordan Bang

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

Joe Pederson requested an addition to the agenda of an update regarding the Moorhead and Clay County contract for the RRC. This will be added to the end of the agenda.

On motion by Roger Richman, seconded by Russ McDougall and unanimously carried, the Committee approved the amended meeting agenda.

On motion by Jenny Mongeau, seconded by Joe Pederson and unanimously carried, the Committee approved the minutes from June 12, 2025.

MPCA at Landfill – Corey Bang

There was a violation at the landfill last month. The MPCA was at our landfill the day of our June SWAC meeting and a culvert was discovered on the SE corner of the current working face. This area has historically had an issue with water pooling, and we would pump the water back into the cell during periods of heavy rain. The culvert was draining the water from the cell under the road, out of the liner and out of the containment area. This is a major MPCA violation. A complaint was received 3 years ago and has been being investigated. The MPCA has recordings of radio conversation between County landfill employees regarding installing the culvert. Corey has not heard the radio chatter yet; the MPCA will share with us if they are able to. Brett is identified as one of the employees on the recording. Wayne has also admitted he was involved. We do not know if this violation will result in a fine or cleaning up the area. The MPCA located the culvert due to dead vegetation. The culvert was hidden well, Ella and Corey did not know the culvert existed. The radio chatter mentions being discreet if they install the culvert. Ross and Corey removed the culvert the same day it was discovered and plan to pump any water that pools in the future back into the cell. A long-term solution will be building a trench with Highway and Stantec. Stantec will help ensure we don't damage the liner. Luckily the last couple years have been light on rain. We will likely need to dig out the dead vegetation and see how far the leachate goes.

Kevin asked if Corey has brought this situation to HR. Corey has not, and deferred to Darren Brooke who mentioned that all employees involved are no longer with the County. Corey added that he told all current staff that this is a major violation and any actions like this in the future will be grounds for immediate termination.

Kevin asked Corey if we are confident digging this new trench and Corey mentioned it is much shorter than the prior one we dug, so he has full confidence we can dig it with the help of Highway and Stantec.

Cliff mentioned that he spent a lot of time at the landfill after retiring as landfill manager, and he that Brett was the type of employee that would not do something like this without approval from their supervisor.

Heather asked Corey if we have a timeline for the MPCA's final ruling, and he does not. Aaron from the MPCA made it clear that he would not hold this against Corey or Ella or any current employees as we did not know about the culvert. Clay County is going to offer to test the area where the vegetation was killed and do any cleanup. The holding pond may also be tested.

Dumpsters Purchase – Corey Bang

The demo landfill is no longer taking small or private loads, so Clay County has had to start taking these loads. Our volume has almost doubled and dumpsters are filling much faster. This has caused a scheduling issue as staff need to drop what they are doing to swap dumpsters or haul one to the demo landfill. We do have a couple spare dumpsters at the RRC but have been lending them to the facilities department to offset the costs of renting a dumpster. Joe Olson in Facilities has agreed to pay for half of one dumpster; when not being utilized by Facilities, it will be an extra at the RRC. Corey would like to purchase two 30-yard rolloff dumpsters, one as a spare for the landfill and the other as a spare for the RRC.

Corey has gotten two bids for two dumpsters: Sanitation Products \$18,054.40; Olympic Sales \$17,400, with Facilities paying for half of one of the dumpsters. Olympic Sales has the dumpsters in stock and ready to be picked up.

Roger Richman made a motion to recommend purchase of two 30-yard dumpsters from Olympic Sales, Jenny Mongeau seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously carried and will be brought to the full County Board at the next meeting.

Solid Waste/Landfill Update – Corey Bang

The landfill averages 20 customers a day; 7 private, 4 transfer trailers, and 9 commercial. The RRC averages 45.5 customers per day; 25.5 private and 20 commercial. We did a short survey this week at the RRC for private customers (excluding those just dropping off HHW as there is no alternate site for these materials); there were 46 Moorhead customers and 5 rural Clay County customers over the past two days.

Mediation for the RRC was postponed to August. On 6/23, Corey, Mara, and Ashley attended a Teams call for a survey on recycling in the state. On 6/24, Corey attended a closed session for the RRC doors. We also had the staff picnic that day and most staff were able to attend. On 6/25, Corey attended the Perham meeting. Corey and Ella also met with Heidi from the MPCA to go over our Certificate of Need that will be due shortly. On 6/26, Corey, Ella, and Ashley attended a tabletop exercise with other local authorities regarding immediate and long-term response after a tornado. On 6/27 Corey attended the AMC SW work

group call, which was the MPCA going over rules and procedures. On 6/30 we met with Heidi and Stantec on our Certificate of Need.

On 7/7, we delivered 74 mattresses to Becker for recycling; Furniture Mission has also taken 30 mattresses to be used by people in the community, as well as 20 box springs and 26 other pieces of furniture. This partnership has been very successful. Jackie in Communications will be here tomorrow to do a story on this new partnership for our internal Clay County newsletter. Furniture Mission comes to the RRC every Friday to look at usable items.

On 7/9, Corey met with several county staff to discuss the Moorhead contact for the RRC. We have a meeting today after SWAC with Moorhead and Clay County to discuss further.

On 7/11, Corey and Mara attended Government Day at the fair. The day was rainy and the bottle rockets were missed, so we will make a note to bring them next year. On 7/14 Corey attended the Perham managers meeting, and the big topic was shredded garbage as some compactors shred their garbage to fit more in a truck. Once it is shredded it cannot be processed at Perham. Corey asked Moorhead and they do not have any shredders or plans to purchase. He also talked to Fuchs and requested they do not purchase shredders.

On 7/16, Mara attended a township meeting where she met Senator Rob Kupec. He came to tour the RRC the next day and discuss needs in Solid Waste and any ways he can assist. On 7/22 Corey attended a webinar for the Barr PFAS study. Stantec will attend SWAC next month to present the findings. There were 48 landfills tested in MN and we know that liners are working. On 7/22 we had WDAY at the RRC to do a story on the Reuse Room. On 7/23 Corey attended the Perham meeting.

Kevin Campbell added that a benefit of waste to energy facilities is that PFAS is destroyed.

Perham Update – Kevin Campbell

Cash balance is within \$17,000 between now and this time last year, so that's doing well. We withdrew from the Internal Service Fund, \$400,000 for work on a burner. Another one will need to be done. There was a budget subcommittee meeting which talked about the concern with steam sales to Tuffy's being down \$500,000. With the economy as it has been, the plant has been shut down for some periods. The Paid Family Leave Act will go into effect in January 2026, with a tax to employees, and at least 50% needs to be paid by the employer.

We made some adjustments on how some line items are tracked on the budget so it is easier to track. The 2026 proposed budget was approved yesterday, adjusted to account for the reduction in steam sales and COLA for employees. We needed to raise an additional \$377,000 over previous years. Thus, the Clay County portion increases by \$1400 per month.

We are continuing to work on the ash plant. 4000 tons of ash were used in a pilot road project in Wadena County. Out of the 54,000 tons that go through the plant, it generates about 10,000 tons of ash which we have been landfilling but need to find alternatives. We are hoping MNDot continues to follow this project and that ash becomes a valuable resource for roads in the future. Kevin expects the test process for MNDot could take up to ten years, but in the meantime they will be gathering valuable data on ash used in road projects. Jenny added that the ten-year timeline is for pavement projects, and there are discussions on integrating ash into the gravel base as well, with this study timing being much shorter. At this point, the

ash cleaning is being hired out to an outside company. There are talks of building a building with concrete walls and a tent roof to store the cleaned ash as it needs to stay dry. There may also be a second phase with a second building for our own equipment. Roger asked about the profitability of cleaning and using the ash for road projects. Kevin responded that we need to focus less on the profitability and more on getting rid of ash that will free up landfill space/slow down the filling of our ash landfill. Recently we were discussing purchasing land for an additional ash landfill, it would be better to clear space in the current landfill.

Heather asked if there is funding in the Internal Service Fund for work on the second burner that Kevin mentioned earlier. Kevin responded that the Internal Service Fund is not on track to cover expenses over the next five years, but we have some bond payments that will be finishing up and can hopefully allocate those funds to the Internal Service Fund instead. Kevin wanted to stress that when we invest in upkeep of the burners, it increases their efficiency which is a good investment.

The numbers of waste supply are pretty good overall. We have a lot of confidence in the plant manager telling each entity what they can bring when to keep everyone on track. Corey mentioned that Brian has been giving us daily goals on truck deliveries, and Brian has worked with Corey to make the scheduling make sense for Clay County drivers.

Corey mentioned that we got a grant for \$1.2million for the ash project from the state.

Update on RRC contract between Clay County and Moorhead

Joe commented his frustrations on entities not talking to each other on partnerships and that sending a letter does not seem like a good way to collaborate. Kevin responded that the terms in the contract dictated how to communicate wanting to renegotiate.

Kevin stated that there are some deep financial differences in how the City of Moorhead wants the contract to go and how Clay County wants it to go. Kevin states that as a Moorhead resident, the funding set-up for the RRC was very good, especially for the City of Moorhead. The City is now proposing changes.

Chuck mentioned that “we’re still talking and we will work this out”. The letter was sent as a notification.

Kevin talked about being a part of the discussion from the beginning stages of the joint facility (RRC) and how the County took over a lot of financial responsibility that the City had prior, such as transportation of the garbage to the landfill (Moorhead was paying for transportation from the old transfer station and the County now covers this). Kevin reiterated that we are all forced to look more deeply at our budgets at this time. The latest communication from City Manager Dan Mahli is that Moorhead does not intend to leave.

Jenny expressed frustrations as part of this partnership from the beginning stages was streamlining and co-locating services to see financial savings. Kevin mentioned that we have an advisory committee with members of both entities that meet annually to discuss the budget, and would be an avenue for discussion if either entity has issues. The frustration is that a meeting happened in November 2024 with no issues brought up by the City then in December the County received a letter wanting to renegotiate terms.

On motion by Joe Pederson, seconded by Cliff Bang, the meeting is adjourned.