

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, March 20, 2024 – 5:30 – 7:30pm**

**MEETING NOTES**

**SWAC MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Amy Maron, Chair	Oladapo Awe
Robin Barr, Vice Chair	Michelle Ennis
Adam Diamond, Secretary	Carol Jones
Fred Kranz	Pradip Mukerjee
Heidi Lovett	Dawn Selis
Chaz Miller	Barry Shanoff
Troy Cavell	Mark Symborski (M-NCPPC rep, non-voting)

**SWAC MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**DEP STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:**

Willie Wainer, Chief, RRMD

David Frank, RRMD Waste Reduction and Recycling Section

Lisa Shine, RRMD Executive Administrative Assistant

Anthony Ekweozoh, RRMD – Chief, Planning, Design, Construction & Monitoring Section

Alan Pultyniewicz, RRMD Acting Section Chief, Recycling and Refuse Services Section

Eileen Kao, Chief, Waste Reduction and Recycling Section

Anthony Skinner, Business Manager, Department of Environmental Protection

David Rosenbaum, DAFIG Coordinator, RRMD

**OTHER COUNTY STAFF IN ATTENDANCE**

Scott McClure, Management and Budget Analyst, Montgomery County

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** Alan Van Order, Compost Crew

The meeting began at 5:30pm.

New members of SWAC introduced themselves. The new members are: Oladapo Awe, a representative of the business community, Sustainability Manager for United Technologies; Pradip (Peter) Mukerjee, a member of the public and a retired chemical engineer; Barry Shanoff, a member of the public, and a retired environmental attorney; Michelle Ennis, a representative from the solid waste industry, who works for Titus Trash (owned by her family) and owns a convenience store; Dawn Selis, member of the solid waste industry, who co-owns Georgetown Paper Stock.

## **Presentation of County Executive's Proposed Budget for RRMD**

Speakers: Willie Wainer and RRMD Staff

RRMD staff outlined budget requests for the 2024-2025 fiscal year (FY 25) for RRMD. Key highlights include:

- Budget request of \$154.9 million, which is a \$12.2 million increase.
- \$3 million increase for Zero Waste Strategy implementation
- Single-family solid waste charge increasing by \$17.66, to \$310.02; Multi-family increasing by \$1.08 to \$19.12.
- a 13% increase for the yard trim/compost facility due to inflation, higher labor and transportation costs, as well as \$2.5 million for capital expenditures on equipment replacement.
- a 5.3% increase for the recycling center (MRF) due to higher bid prices for new collection contracts, CPI adjustments for existing contracts, more households being served, and additional funds for new recycling carts and repair of carts/containers.
- Projected Leafgro Sales: Bags--\$1.625 million; Bulk sales--\$420,000
- Resource Recovery Facility—8.6% increase—based on lower revenue from electricity sales and RECs—will decrease by \$2.6 million—last year was particularly high year
- New positions: asking for 1 new grade 25 position—zero waste; Reclassification of one position in RRM as grade 25—someone is retiring, replacement will work on zero waste
- \$3 million additional—covers consultants working with RRMD on design/planning/implementing waste/waste diversion projects.

## **Q & A**

**Q;** What does refuse collection refer to?

**A:** County is divided into two subdistricts—93,000 households in down-county (Subdistrict A). The County provides refuse and recycling collection.

Subdistrict B, about 133,000 households, which only receives County recycling services.

**Q:** You referenced new contracts in collection areas 6 and 8. Are these replacing expiring contracts?

**Q:** An ongoing problem is the lack of competition for waste collection contracts. Section 48 of County Code requires a labor peace agreement for any contract bidders over \$125k. Smaller companies often don't want to bid. Don't want to get in battles over labor union organizing. For areas 6 and 8—got reasonable offer—from Unity.

**Q:** How much did the contracts for these areas go up?

**A:** The increases were reasonable relative to contracts awarded to areas 9-13—not big increases compared to that, but they were big increases compared to previous contracts for areas 6 and 8. \$23/unit per month for refuse and recycling for new contracts in areas 6 and 8. 5-year contracts—averaging 40-50% increases over previous contracts. Rising labor and other costs.

**Q:** What is getting shut down in FY 27?

**A:** The County plans to end the Covanta contract to operate the RRF by April 2026 based on finding appropriate alternative. Proposals for alternative waste management strategies to incineration under a Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI) are due March 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Q:** How do you calculate rate for commercial properties? Has there been decrease in # of commercial enterprises in County?

**A:** Take gross floor area in County and use population and employment statistics. We don't see stark decrease in the number of businesses in county.

**Q:** Are any funds to support transition to a Save-as-you-Throw method of payment for trash collection part of the budget?

**A:** RRMD encumbered funds in prior years to support SAYT pilot program. Also, talking about Phase 1—collection of residential food scraps + SAYT, then extend to whole county. Most likely, but still in works, SAYT will have a co-collection of food scraps with yard waste. The county is evaluating a food scraps composting facility similar to the one in Prince Georges County because we don't have an in-county processing facility for food waste yet. Will have to send to PG county until have own processing facility.

**Q:** Will the households in the residential curbside food scraps pilot also participate in the SAYT pilot?

**A:** The County is still trying to determine the right approach. May present on details of SAYT in a couple of months to SWAC.

**Q:** Could yard and food waste be processed together at the Yard Trim Facility in Dickerson?

**A:** DEP will most likely recommend processing of food waste there. To make changes to that facility we need to amend the Sugarloaf Agreement—in negotiations currently with Sugarloaf Citizens Association.

**Q:** How will the different phases of SAYT work?

**A:** RRMD is not going to change solid waste charges for pilot. Will try to implement program to see if get expected behavioral changes. Will do lots of outreach and education. Then deliver a trash container; residents will get to pick one of two sizes: either 35 or 65 gallons. We will also replace the commingled recycling 18-gallon commingled bin with a 35-gallon cart. Residents will also get a 35-gallon cart for commingled organic waste.

**Q:** When MES markets recycled materials—who gets revenues? How is that reflected in the budget?

**A:** All recycling revenues from sales of materials go to the county while MES charges the county for the staff who market the materials. Prices for materials fluctuate quite a bit. MES can get between \$4.5 and \$6.5 million for recycled materials. Leafgro is another category—offset to expenses.

**Q:** What about alternative technologies to landfilling?

**A:** DEP will use the new REOI, followed by an RFP, to consider alternative technologies. The type of technologies being considered are starting to gain greater usage on the West Coast.

### **RRMD Updates**

A new 3-year website redesign has been completed. There was a separate website for solid waste services and now these services can be accessed through a single website for DEP. DEP/RRMD didn't have much flexibility because the County required a template for all departments to follow regarding design, feel, and look. The new website also addresses accessibility, which has required the removal of several PDFs. They want to replace PDFs with embedded text in website and didn't intend to lose any content. SWAC members pointed out that there are some missing documents (such as the waste composition study and HDR reports). Alan suggested we use the link on the website to report any missing information or broken links. He also said DEP will address PDF issue going forward—need to make sure have maximum transparency.

Willie Wainer: RRM is replacing all five original scales and the scale house at the Transfer Station. These were built back in 1982. Those scales were outdated and frequently broken. Currently three new scales in place. Next step—replace scale house and remaining 2 old scales. Will be huge renewal for transfer station.

Lisa Shine: The new Deputy Director of DEP, Jeff Selzer, begins his job April 1.

Next meeting: Wednesday April 3, 2024. We will receive a presentation on the report, *Organics Management Plan, including Siting, Technology and Capacity Planning for Montgomery County, Maryland*.

The January 2024 meeting minutes were approved. The February meeting minutes were approved pending one correction: Adam Diamond was absent, not present for the meeting.

The Strategic Planning and Budget Committee will prepare a letter for next meeting.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

## **ACRONYMS**

C&D	Construction and Demolition Waste
CC	County Council
CE	County Executive
CNG	Compressed Natural Gas
CPI	Consumer Price Index
DAFIG	Dickerson Area Facilities Implementation Group
DEP	Department of Environmental Protection
DMV	District Maryland Virginia (metropolitan area)
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
FTE	Full Time Employee
FY	Fiscal Year
MDE	Maryland Department of the Environment
MC	Montgomery County
MES	Maryland Environmental Services
MRF	Materials Recovery Facility
MML	Maryland Municipal League
MCPS	Montgomery County Public Schools
MWCOG	Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
OLO	Office of Legislative Oversight
PAYT	Pay-As-You-Throw
CPRG	Climate Pollution Reduction Grants
RRF	Resource Recovery Facility
RRMD	Recycling & Resource Management Division
SA	Service Area for County collection
SAYT	Save-As-You-Throw
SCA	Sugarloaf Citizens' Association
SF	Single family
SWAC	Solid Waste Advisory Committee
SWMP	Solid Waste Management Plan
T&E	Transportation and Environment Committee
TPD	Tons per Day
TPW	Tons per Week
ZWTF	Zero Waste Task Force