

APPROVED

AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES

June 15, 2020

Board Members Present (Zoom/Video Conference): Chairman Ken Long [in-person], Treasurer Harry Hertline, Vice Chairman Vincent Bono, Neil Angell, James D’Onofrio [teleconference], James Franco [in-person], Barbara Freeman, Nancy Novak, Richard Redmond and Jim Williams

Authority Staff Present: William Rabbia, Jodi Tuttle, Jim Biamonte, Andrew Opperman and Joseph Artessa [Video Conference]

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, this meeting was conducted via video conference.

Chairman Long called the June 15, 2020 Authority Board meeting to order at 4:32 PM and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

A motion was made by Mr. Bono, seconded by Mr. Franco and passed to approve the May 11, 2020 Authority Minutes.

There were no comments submitted for public comment period.

Comptroller Joe Artessa presented the City of Utica Solid Waste Fund Agreed Upon Procedures Report for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2020 and reported that there were no exceptions noted. In 2020, the City of Utica Solid Waste Fund had a \$269,689 surplus, in comparison to the \$37,898 deficit in 2019. Contributing to the surplus for 2020 was a .15 cent increase in the price of blue bags, an increase in solid waste service charge collections, and a decrease in tipping fees. Overall expenses were down \$44,742 in comparison to the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

Mr. Redmond inquired about the Authority’s contract with the City of Utica.

Mr. Rabbia explained that the Authority has an intermunicipal agreement with the City of Utica to manage the City’s solid waste program. The Authority assists the City with solicitation of bids, vending and purchasing of City blue bags, and paying for tip fees. The Agreed Upon Procedures report is part of the Agreement. Mr. Rabbia noted that the City of Utica sets its own rates.

Mr. Hertline added that this is the second agreement that the Authority has had with the City of Utica. The first agreement was for a 25-year period and the most recent extended through the current 5-year collection contract.

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Chairman

Harry A. Hertline
Treasurer

James M. D’Onofrio

Nancy A. Novak

William A. Rabbia
Executive Director

Vincent J. Bono
Vice Chairman

Neil C. Angell

James A. Franco

Richard G. Redmond

Jodi M. Tuttle
Authority Board Secretary

Barbara Freeman

James M. Williams

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Resolution No. 13 was introduced by Mr. Hertline, seconded by Mr. Angell and passed approving the Authority's current Investment Policy and Investment Guidelines with no modifications. [As teleconference voting is not permissible, Mr. D'Onofrio abstained from voting.]

Mr. Artessa reported that on May 27, 2020 the Authority sent out an RFP to eight accounting firms for annual audit services and services related to the City of Utica solid waste fund. Staff will work with the Finance Committee and Audit Committee to review any proposals received. Mr. Artessa anticipates a recommendation for the Board's consideration at the September 21st Authority meeting.

Mr. Biamonte gave a PowerPoint presentation on future bio-solids [sewage sludge] management. He noted that in the past, sludge ash, a relatively low-volume waste, was managed at the Regional Landfill. However, Oneida County has recently retrofitted its plant and has installed anaerobic digesters to process the sludge. As a result, this project has increased the level of sludge by approximately 10,000 tons, or 43%. Mr. Biamonte stated that last year he briefed the Board on the Authority's state-approved Local Solid Waste Management Plan extension. One of the key items in the extension included a bio-solids recovery study beginning in 2020. Mr. Biamonte is currently updating data on generation figures for the different sewage treatment plants and confirming current disposal methods. He will also be conducting internal research related to viable bio-solids management methods ranging from composting and land spreading to fertilizer production. This Fall the Authority plans to issue a 120-w RFP seeking respondents with proven ability to employ reliable, existing permitted reuse technologies and practices that the Authority could identify for the project quantities. Mr. Biamonte stated that the Authority does not anticipate using any Authority property or facilities for this project. In early 2020-21, the Authority will evaluate any proposals received and consider technical and economic feasibility including landfill airspace usage and impacts of not having sludge managed at the landfill and the effect on landfill gas production. Mr. Biamonte said that the Authority will also need to assess any possible environmental liability.

Mr. Rabbia provided a recycling market update through a PowerPoint presentation. He commented that disposal tonnages have remained relatively stable throughout NY on Pause, amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the end of May, the Authority has seen a slight downtick in municipal solid waste compared to last year. The Authority has seen large increases in other tonnage, related to ongoing development of the new MVHS Hospital, the Nexus Center and Rome Cable demolition. He said that from a disposal standpoint, tonnages are still very strong which is a large driver of the Authority budget. He noted that there have been some positive changes to the recycling commodity market (i.e., run on tissue paper has increased the value of old newspaper) since the pandemic. There has also been an increase in demand because of in-country processing related to new mills and an increase in supply related to COVID-19 changes. Mr. Rabbia noted that all Authority commodities are moving with no stockpiling.

Mr. Rabbia said that the Authority had budgeted on receiving 2,000 tons of source separated organics in 2020. Through the end of May 2020, the Authority has received over 1,200 tons. New customers/generators (primarily restaurants) have been put on hold because of COVID-19, but the Authority continues to accept grocery store and certain institutional waste.

Mr. Rabbia reported that construction work at the Western Transfer Station has resumed. The Authority previously shut down the project based upon NY on Pause recommendations. The project re-started during phase two. Solid Waste Engineer Andy Opperman has been working with the project engineer and contractors. Most of the siding is complete and the overhead door work will soon be complete. Roof work will begin after July 4th. Indoor work continues in the locker room and lunchroom areas.

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The tip floor is slated to be poured by the end of June and Mr. Rabbia anticipates resuming normal operations shortly thereafter.

Mr. Rabbia provided an update on Cell 4 construction at the Regional Landfill. He stated that the pandemic has not affected the timeline of this project. The contractor, Kubricky Construction, has begun surveying and bringing equipment on-site. Mr. Rabbia noted that this is a two-year construction project and he does not anticipate any delays related to COVID-19.

Mr. Rabbia relayed that the Authority has been working with a few of the municipalities in the Valley whose collection contracts are due to expire. The Authority has been working with the Village of Dolgeville on a new collection contract. The bid was advertised, a pre-bid meeting was held and bids were received. The Authority is assisting the Village of Dolgeville in analyzing the bids. He noted that the Village is looking at a slight increase in its rates due to collection cost increases.

The Authority has also been working with the Village of Herkimer to secure a new collection contract. The bid was advertised, and a pre-bid meeting is scheduled for June 24th.

The Authority will soon begin working with the Village of Frankfort, as that collection contract is set to expire on December 31, 2020.

Mr. Rabbia noted that the Authority has inter-municipal agreements with the Villages of Frankfort, Ilion, Mohawk, Herkimer, and Dolgeville, similar to the agreement it has with the City of Utica. The Authority assists these municipalities in soliciting bids for new collection contracts, managing the contractor(s) and collecting revenues from bag sales and/or toter services.

Governance Committee Chair Barb Freeman reported that the Committee has reviewed and discussed the legal memo written by Kevin Martin, Esq. regarding the Executive Director's son participating in an internship and/or potential future employment with the Authority's engineering firm Barton & Loguidice. Ms. Freeman stated that, most importantly, there was full disclosure of the internship to the Board. She said that no money or promises were exchanged to secure this internship and that the Committee does not see any conflict of interest or legal or ethical issues associated with this. Ms. Freeman noted that in the past it has been Board policy that the best qualified person be hired for a job.

Chairman Long noted that the next meeting of the Authority is scheduled for Monday, September 21, 2020.

With no further business, at 5:12 PM a motion was made by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Bono and passed to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Jodi M. Tuttle
Authority Secretary