

Newton County Solid Waste Management Authority  
Newton County Historic Courthouse, Commissioners' Boardroom  
1124 Clark Street, Covington, Georgia 30014  
Thursday, August 19, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

## MINUTES

The Newton County Solid Waste Management Authority (SWMA) held a Regular Meeting on Thursday, August 19, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. in the Commissioners' Boardroom on the Third Floor of the Newton County Historic Courthouse.

The following SWMA members were present:

Kent Campbell, Jr., Chairman  
Phillip Wise  
Marcello Banes, Chairman, Newton County Board of Commissioners (BOC)  
Stan Edwards, District 1 Commissioner

Also present were:

Laurie Riley, Secretary  
Megan Martin, Attorney  
Kevin Walter, Solid Waste Manager

### **Call to Order**

Chairman Kent Campbell called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

### **Moment of Silence/Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Campbell led everyone in observing a moment of silence and then in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Agenda Adoption**

BOC Chairman Marcello Banes moved to approve the agenda. Mr. Phillip Wise seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

### **Citizen Comments on Agenda Items**

None were offered.

### **Approval of Minutes from SWMA Regular Meeting on 7/15/21**

BOC Chairman Banes moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Stan Edwards seconded the motion. All voted in favor except Mr. Wise, who abstained from the vote because he was not present at the meeting on 7/15/21.

### **July Landfill Tonnage Report**

Mr. Walter explained the report. (See attached.) He said that paid volume coming into the landfill has averaged 318.97 tons per day for the month of July. Unpaid tonnage from Convenience Centers has averaged 36.85 tons per day. Although daily tonnage varies greatly, monthly tonnage figures are on target. The 2022 budget is based on 275 (paid) tons per day.

Mr. Walter said he felt that volume had been slightly affected by price increases. He said that the number of small customers is down due to the \$30 minimum fee, which is good for safety at the landfill.

### **Financial Status Report for Solid Waste for Month 1 of FY2022**

Mr. Walter referred members to the attached report. Net income is at \$1,055,547. Expenses remain below budget projections with landfill expenses at 2% and Convenience Center expenses at 4% (when expected to be at 8%). Equity in pooled cash is \$6,221,804.57. Mr. Walter said income is at budget: Landfill at 7.9%; Convenience Centers at 54.6% (includes income from hang tag sales). He said 5100 hang tags have been sold to date, with a budget projection of 5250 to be sold for the entire fiscal year.

### **Discussion of Yellow River DNR Canoe Launch Site on Landfill Gun Range Road**

Mr. Walter provided information about a proposed plan to build a boat ramp. He said that the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) would pay for construction and the County would donate the land and pay for maintenance.

Mr. Walter explained that DNR had considered several locations but favors the landfill location. To build a boat ramp at the proposed site requires a minor modification approval from EPD (Georgia Environmental Protection Division). The EPD requires that landfills have buffers, and the Gun Range Road potential boat ramp site is in the landfill buffer. Mr. Walter referred Authority members to the plat and email in their meeting packets. (See attached.)

In the email, Mr. Keith Stevens, Solid Waste Permitting Unit Manager (at EPD), said that EPD will approve a minor modification as long as control measures are implemented. Mr. Walter said that the project will require a gate and fencing as well as video camera installation.

Mr. Walter and Mr. Curtis Reynolds (of Harbin Engineering) estimate that preparing documents for the minor modification and receiving the permit change from Mr. Stephens will take approximately 6 months, and that it could take about a year to receive funding. Mr. Walter said that he had not yet spoken with Sheriff Ezell Brown about the project.

Commissioner Edwards explained that his friend at DNR builds boat ramps for the State. He asked him to investigate the possibility of building a boat ramp on land owned by the SWMA (Solid Waste Management Authority). He said that there are only minor costs involved in the project for leases, lighting, and trash pickup. He thinks it is a good idea. He said another possible site at the Boy Scout Camp (Bert Adams) had been identified, but it was not as good as the Gun Range Road site.

Chairman Campbell asked whether the boat ramp would be a County facility or a DNR facility. Mr. Walter clarified that it would be a DNR facility on SWMA land. He said it would necessitate a lease agreement between the SWMA and the County. The County would be responsible for trash pickup and security. Chairman Campbell said he had concerns about long-term maintenance.

Mr. Walter listed pro's and con's for the project. Pro's included: ideal site for river recreation; excellent gravel road because SWMA maintains it; and short distance to site. Con's included: initial security expenses; and allows public closer access to landfill and opens potential for them to smell odors, see erosion issues, or see windblown trash, and complain. He said that there is a strong desire from the BOC to proceed with the project. He asked whether anyone has talked with the sheriff about the project. Commissioner Edwards said that (County Manger) Lloyd Kerr

had talked with the sheriff. Mr. Walter suggested that Sheriff Brown's approval should be sought.

Commissioner Edwards suggested a fee box to help cover expenses. He said he thought the project would open potential to work with river cleanup groups. He talked about the large amount of plastic bottles and balls he finds along the river.

Chairman Campbell said the site could spur interest in an Adopt-a-River program. He said he thinks the project is a good idea. He and Mr. Walter suggested that the site could possibly be a "mini-park" with picnic tables.

Chairman Campbell asked whether the site is in a flood plain. Mr. Walter said that it is, but that DNR puts boat ramps in flood plains on purpose.

Mr. Wise said that he felt a boat ramp would be good for community river access but not good for a park, due to the landfill odors. He thinks it would be good for fishermen and would be a benefit to the community.

Mr. Campbell said he would like to see the location in person. Mr. Walter said he would take Mr. Campbell to the site and asked Mr. Wise if he, too, would like to see it. Commissioner Edwards said that the site is covered in ticks and chiggers and suggested waiting until the temperature cools to visit the site. Mr. Walter said that they could postpone the site visit until Fall.

Mr. Walter said that the project requires (EPD requirement) about 2000 feet of 6-foot high fencing with barbed wire on top. He said the potential boat ramp site at the Boy Scout Camp is on a bad road and had other negatives. He asked whether Authority members wanted to keep the project on hold until looking at the site. He asked for permission to go ahead with drafting paperwork to pursue the minor modification. Commissioner Edwards moved to direct Mr. Walter and Mr. Reynolds to move forward with drafting documents for the minor modification from EPD. Mr. Wise seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

### **Landfill Holiday Calendar for FY 2022**

Mr. Walter referred Authority members to the holiday calendar in their meeting packets. He proposed to keep the landfill open on two County holidays: Friday, November 26 and Monday, December 27 to better serve the needs of citizens and commercial trash haulers. He said, if approved, he would require employees to work, and they would receive holiday pay plus time and a half. He said he would publicize schedule changes in advance of the dates.

Chairman Campbell asked whether convenience centers would still be closed on Monday, December 27 even if the landfill was open. He and Mr. Walter and Mr. Wise discussed the benefits of having the convenience centers open when the landfill is open and whether customers could instead bring their hang tags to the landfill and dispose of trash there. Mr. Walter agreed that it would be better to have the convenience centers open on the Monday after Christmas.

Mr. Wise moved to change the holiday calendar to open the landfill and convenience centers on November 26 and December 27. Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

### **Citizen Comments**

David Gilleland  
1384 Duncan Road  
Oxford, GA 30054

Mr. Gilleland would like to take trash to the Stone Road Convenience Center. He thinks \$165 is too much to pay for a hang tag. He would like for the SWMA to consider cutting the cost for senior citizens.

After Mr. Gilleland left the meeting quickly after making his comment, Mr. Wise and Mr. Walter discussed hardship applications for hang tags. Mr. Walter said that the SWMA has not received many hardship applications. He said that it involves a cumbersome process and that offering a special discount for seniors would be controversial and would invite other groups to also ask for discounts. Mr. Wise said that he feels the hang tag is a good low-cost option for citizens and that the cost for it is probably too low instead of too high.

### **Executive Session**

Executive Session was not necessary.

### **Remarks from Authority Members**

None were offered.

### **Adjourn**

With a motion to adjourn from BOC Chairman Banes and a second from Mr. Wise, all voted to approve, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

### **Attachments:**

- July 2021 Daily Tonnage Report
- July 2021 Financial Reports
- Gun Range Road Boat Ramp Plat
- Email, July 16 re: EPD Approval of Minor Modification for Boat Ramp Access
- FY 2022 Holiday Calendar

Attest:

  
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Laurie Riley,  
Secretary

  
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Kent Campbell,  
Chairman