

MAB Meeting Minutes
May 15, 2024
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

MRF Advisory Board Members present: Arlene Miller (chair), Ethan Tupelo (minutes), Jan Ameen, Abbey Massaro, Susan Cooper, Ruby Chang, Susan Waite, Amy Donovan, Tracy DeMaio
Arrived Late: Steve Ellis

Other attendees: Mike Moores (Waste Management)

Meeting called to order at 10:04

1) Public comments – none

2) Approval of previous minutes

Jan Ameen moved to accept, Amy Donovan seconded, passed unanimously.

Susan Waite asked if the notetaker is a member of the executive board, and if Ethan is not willing to do the job on a regular basis, we should decide on a system for trading off. We should spend time next month to try to figure this out. Jan Ameen suggests to put this on the agenda for next month, since next month is the annual meeting to vote in officers anyway.

3) MRF Update: markets, tours

Mike Moores: Revenue report coming out today, will send out this afternoon. Markets are improving, from April to May, aluminum is up 50, PET up 30, the total AMV up \$5. Some other plastics are higher, but those are highlights. Last month we powerwashed the building outside, got a lot of grime off from last 5-6 years. We're decent inside, should probably touch up windows if anything. Operationally everything is good. Steve has one tour for next Tuesday. Total tons was 1425 last month, pretty consistent for last few months.

Jan Ameen: Any updates on finding the source of those plastic widgets you emailed about?

Mike Moores: We've got it narrowed down to ten haulers. They're nylon blocks, looks like some commercial customer. They came in again last week, so we're just going to watch these trucks when they come in. Can send those suspects out to the group if that helps.

Arlene Miller: Amy asked at the last meeting if towns in CT could join the MRF?

Mike: It's ok with me!

[Some discussion on customer sorting and education at transfer stations, and why people can't recycling forms of bulky rigid plastic.]

Amy Donovan: Any updates on the idea of planting a tree for Margarita?

Mike Moores: We talked to the landscapers, we're going to be doing it out in the front of the building with some kind of plaque, not sure when yet.

[Request from multiple board members to let us know when the ceremony is so we can attend.]

Susan Waite: I also had the idea about the board sending a card to her family, we could just sign the card with our organizations, letting the family know that we knew of her, that kind of thing is meaningful.

[Mike Moores leaves]

4) Treasurer's Report

Jan Ameen: Only two bills paid since last meeting, Jess for social media posts, one for the website. I have the bills for RRR North, Arlene is working on South, will be about \$4200 total. Still have \$15,000 in dual stream, will leave us with at least \$10,000 in July after those are paid.

Amy Donovan: What is the status of the single stream fund?

Jan Ameen: We haven't spent anything this fiscal year. We decided not to use any of that unless it was a specifically single stream project. Still have \$8000, that number won't change unless we decide to spend money out of that line. We said in the past that any project that had to have anything to do with dual stream was under the dual line item.

Susan Waite: Is there any way we can spend down that money?

Jan Ameen: I'm not sure if we want to. This is the way to keep single stream members in the fold, so we don't have to charge them a membership fee, because they would just leave at that point. We haven't assessed a community fee in some time, so this sort of replaces the need for that. WM will continue to give us \$10,000 a year under the new proposed contract, so as long as we're planning on doing similar things, we'll have funds.

[Steve Ellis joins the meeting during this item]

5) MRF contract extension: An update and discussion

Arlene Miller: Steve, Jan, and I have been in talks with WM, now down to tiny details. Overall we're excited about it, good negotiations. The goal was to keep the processing fee as low as possible, and AMV as high as possible. We will have a 2.5% increase in yearly processing fee, borrowing from the AMV to round that up to 3.5%.

Jan Ameen: The calculation for AMV changes a little bit. Commodities percentages for indexes changes for some things, especially our paper category, recognizing its actual quality and what WM can sell it as. What Arlene mentioned was an adjustment in year two of the contract, where 1% of processing fee will be subtracted from AMV.

Arlene Miller: We currently have a commitment to get 17,000 tons, but we were under last year. There's a section in the contract allowing WM to pull out if that happens. We may be better this year, Greenfield is leaving, but Holyoke joined, and Pittsfield is staying. WM dropped it to 16,800, we're trying to get them to go lower.

Jan Ameen: We delivered 18,000 tons in 2021, this year could be as low as 16,000. But one thing we're trying to mention is that isn't not just us, all WM MRFs are down 6-8% in this region. There's just lower overall tonnage compared to the pandemic, when everyone was working from

home, and contributing more to the municipal streams. It's not that towns are diverting tonnage from the MRF, it's just the generation is down, and increasing lightweighting of recyclables. We're going to meet with Bernie, and see how low he can go. One of the ideas is to have a contract minimum below which they could withdraw, and then figure out what the actual delivery minimum is where they may do that. There's also a tonnage adjustment in the current proposed contract, where town have to pay in if we come under that number. We need to figure out a number, maybe like 16,500, where the towns aren't going to be starting in the hole, because otherwise we need to pay WM for the yearly shortfall.

Arlene Miller: Once this is done, we need to sell this to our member communities, have them sign as soon as possible. We all should confirm who the proper contract signers are for this, whether the DPW, Health Board, Town Manager, etc, so we don't have to figure that out later.

Jan Ameen: I also want to think Steve, he's been going back and forth with Bernie, working on our behalf.

Redistribution of towns

[Discussion on swapping town representation between Susan Cooper and Ruby Chang]

Susan Cooper: Moves to trade Great Barrington and Sheffield. Full revised list will be:

Susan: New Marlborough, Monterey, Otis, Sandisfield, Sheffield

Ruby: Alford, Egremont, Great Barrington, Mount Washington, West Stockbridge

Susan Waite seconds, passes unanimously.

Jan Ameen: I just changed it on the list and will send it out to everyone

6) RRR 2024: North and South: Comments and wrap up

Arlene Miller: I think both South and North were great, hope people are pleased with it. We had some issues with the Republican, didn't do some things we wanted, but they were also working on their 200th anniversary at the time.

Susan Waite: Fabulous circulation, and the labor that went into it, kudos to the board members who made this happen.

Amy Donovan: We had a great team this year for the North: Amy, Susan, Mary, Ethan, Laurie

Arlene Miller: And Amy and Susan had a great tour with Monte Belmonte for the Fabulous 413 radio episode!

Susan Waite: We also got at least one replay when they were on vacation last week.

7) Projects for 2024

Tabled until next meeting

8) MAC update: Susan RDP and other DEP issues

Susan Waite: RDP is coming up, June 12 deadline. We're meeting in Boston discussing changes to RDP in 2025. More discussion about people carrying over balances, some have accrued a lot of money, how can we incentive to spend it down. The whole point of the program is to strengthen solid waste diversion programs, and if money isn't spent, it makes it more difficult to request.

Beyond the Bin is required, must be posted in order to qualify for CHARM point this year. In 2025 textiles and mercury collection will also be required for this point.

We also discussed how we can open up recycling center access to businesses or non-residents, talk to me offline if you have ideas.

There's also some discussion on the surplus property rule from some state division about how it is used, which is the policy unless there is municipal process for how that is distributed. This is for things like filing cabinets, desks, etc, where towns feel like they have to throw it away because they feel like giving it to a group would unduly benefit an organization. But if municipalities form their own policies, they can prevent a lot of waste from this.

Abbey Massaro (in the Zoom chat): Our furniture reuse guidance covers the OSD state policy as it is: <https://recyclingworksma.com/furniture-and-equipment-reuse-guidance/#Jump1>

9) Other Business

Abbey Massaro: I probably won't be attending meetings after July, we're expecting our first child! I'll try to take the full three months off, and then slowly transition back in.

10) Next meeting:

Moved to June 17 2024 10am, due to June 19th being a federal holiday

[adjourned at 11:32]