

MAB Meeting Minutes
October 16, 2024
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

MAB Members Present: Jan Ameen, Tracy DeMaio, Amy Donovan, Steve Ellis, Abbey Massaro, Arlene Miller, Susan Cooper, Mary Summers, Susan Waite

Others present: Mike Moores, Waste Management Recycle America (WMRA); Bernard Fosu (WMRA)

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 am by Chair A. Miller. The following items were taken up.

1. Public Comment Period. None

2. Review and Approval of Draft Minutes

J. Ameen made, and S. Waite seconded, a motion to accept the September 18 minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

3. MRF Update

M. Moores reported that operations are going well and winter preparations are beginning. Fiber markets are down and OCC has dropped \$15. The Baltimore port strike has affected material movement but things are starting to improve. Springfield MRF materials are moving but some larger sites experienced slowdowns.

4. MRF contract extension: next steps

The discussion turned to planning and preparations for the October 22 MRF contract extension event for MRF member communities. M. Moores noted that the landscaping and lighting improvements are complete and look good. The break room will be used for the event presentation and seating, as it is larger than the education room. 25 RSVP's have come in so far; the room can hold 40 people. A. Miller noted that the fiber processing building had been discussed as the location for the presentation, but that would mean that the paper line would have had to be shut down for the morning, which is not ideal.

S. Cooper noted that for the presentation to member communities, Jan Ameen does a great job explaining how the contract works, the monetary difference between the current contract and the contract extension, and why things changed. J. Ameen noted that the 3% increase in the contract extension is a modest increase, as she is seeing solid waste bids containing 8% increases. The 3% will be locked in for the 5 years of the contract extension. A. Miller reminded the group of the strength of the public/private partnership between the MassDEP, the member towns/MRF Advisory Board, and the private operator (WMRA).

J. Ameen suggested that M. Moores start the presentation with an overview of the MRF, including the # of staff, the # of bales sent out, etc. A. Miller suggested that we start the meeting by going around the room to give brief introductions.

S. Waite said that MRF Advisory Board (MAB) members should contact the towns they represent to encourage them to come to the Oct. 22 meeting. She said that many people do not understand what the MRF does. This event and facility tour will be a great opportunity for town representatives to see the facility for themselves and hopefully tell other people in their towns about it. At this point, representatives from the following municipalities have indicated that they will attend: East Longmeadow, Russell, Southwick, Belchertown, Longmeadow, Holyoke, Hadley, South Hadley, Southampton, Worthington, New Marlborough, Montague, Orange, Buckland, Rowe.

Logistics of the setup, parking, and refreshments were discussed. WMRA will donate donuts and muffins. After the presentation, the group will be split into two groups to tour the facility.

The MAB will offer a virtual meeting on 10/30 at 9 am for those who cannot make the in-person event.

Chair Miller noted that western Mass recyclables are not traveling too far to be processed. The MRF is a local facility. A. Donovan noted that the public is hearing repeatedly that plastic is not being recycled, so we should reassure the MRF communities that their material is really being recycled.

5. Treasurer's Report

J. Ameen reports another quiet month, with only the charges for the MAB's social media manager coming through.

6. MAB vacancies

A. Miller noted that there are some vacancies on the board, and the board did some brainstorming on how to get these vacancies filled.

7. Election of 2025 officers continued

The position of MAB Clerk is still vacant, and J. Ameen suggested that we hire someone to fill this role, including taking minutes.

8. RRR West (Berkshires)

M. Summers reviewed progress of the second annual "RRR West" guide, to be published in the Berkshire Eagle on November 16 in honor of America Recycles Day (Nov. 15).

9. MAC Update

The 2024 MassDEP grant announcement is hopefully coming soon. In 2025 there will be significant changes in the Recycling Dividends Program (RDP). The yellow highlights in the 2024 guidance document give an idea of the changes that will be made. Changes include: the textile point is being removed; to earn a CHARM point, the site must collect textiles and mercury devices; and the compost point has been restructured. If municipalities don't have their RDP funds going into a separate account, that will be required going forward.

There was discussion about the different amounts that various communities are paying to haul their material to the Springfield MRF. S. Waite might compile a chart of western mass towns hauling costs. A. Donovan suggested that the chart include if the paper loads are compacted or not, as S. Waite had noted that some small rural towns do not have paper compactors. S. Waite noted that, in the past, a

compactor grant has been offered in the Drop-off Equipment SMRP grant category, and the municipal assistance coordinators (MACs) have been lobbying for its return.

10. Future MAB meeting schedule

November 20, December 18. The meeting adjourned at 11:07 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Donovan, Franklin County Representative