

# Springfield MRF Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

December 18, 2024

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

**MAB Members Present:** Jan Ameen, Ruby Chang, Linda Cernik, Susan Cooper, Amy Donovan, Abbey Massaro, Arlene Miller (Chair), Mary Summers, Susan Waite (MAC).

**Others present:** Bernard Fuso (Waste Management), Mike Moores (Waste Management)

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 am by Chair A. Miller, sans quorum.

## Public Comment

None

## Treasurer's Report

A bill was received from the Berkshire Eagle for MAB sponsorship of the Berkshire County RRR Guide (\$2,300). Halfway through FY 2025 a total of \$5,300. has been spent.

Quorum established as Ruby Chang, Mary Summers, and Abbey Massaro joined the meeting by 10:12 AM.

## MRF Advisory Board (MAB) Vacancies

At the November meeting Liz Bone (East Longmeadow) was voted in a new Hampden County representative and Board Clerk. She will represent the communities that Abbey Massaro has represented in the past.

Abbey Massaro was recently appointed Executive Director of MassRecycle. Her office situation will not change, as she will continue to represent and work with communities and organizations in Western Mass and all over the state, with no physical office in western Mass. As we have a vacancy on the MAB in Hampshire County, A. Miller suggests that Abbey take over representation of the communities Ethan Tupelo represented.

*S. Cooper made a motion to retain Abbey Massaro as a Board member representing Hampshire County. J. Ameen seconded. The vote was unanimous.*

A. Massaro anticipates no conflicts but will confirm agreement from MassRecycle at Board at their next Board meeting.

## SMRF Operations Update

M. Moores explained that operations are running smoothly, and materials are moving. Fiber prices are down (OCC & mixed paper are both down \$5). Per a recent marketing meeting, Waste Management Recycles America anticipates that prices will go back up in January & February.

B. Fosu reported that about 10,400 tons of material have been assigned for the contract extension to date. Several municipalities have experienced approval-related delays. A. Miller commended R. Chang for her communication/routing of Southern Berkshire towns, and J. Ameen and L. Cernik for their efforts to bring in Northern Berkshire communities.

A. Miller explained that South Hadley would like to continue bringing the dual stream material collected at the Town's transfer station to the MRF. Although the Town's plan is to collect single stream curbside as of July 2025, there is also a chance that they might revert back to dual stream in the future. The contract states that a Designated Community must deliver all recycling collected by the municipality to the MRF (5.2.6.D), so this situation would be an exception. WMRA is OK with the arrangement. S. Cooper pointed out that additional tonnage is welcome. Discussion ensued. J. Ameen explained that the intent of 5.2.6.D was to prevent valuable material being diverted by a hauler or municipality. A. Massaro said that (as a former WM employee) WMRA has the final say re: the contract and it is their call.

*S. Cooper made a motion to allow South Hadley to bring the dual-stream sorted material from their transfer station to the Springfield MRF with the understanding that WMRA will allow the exception. R. Chang seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

*B. Fosu & M. Moores left the meeting*

### **Proposed MAB Education Project**

A. Donovan explained that the Board has not offered the educational material grant for two years and towns need signs, etc. She would like to offer a menu of educational materials. In order to move forward, changes (if any) need to be identified. There is a question as to whether we should change our materials to more closely match RecycleSmartMA's material list (e.g. canning jars).

M. Summers suggested that a subcommittee be formed to iron out issues and return to the Board for approvals as needed. S. Waite would like the inclusion of a sign about pizza boxes to be considered. A. Massaro volunteered to be on the subcommittee. The goal is for the subcommittee to meet before our January 2025 meeting.

### **RRR North and South 2025**

A. Miller would like to confirm that the Board wishes to move forward planning 2025 editions of the Reduce, Reuse, Recycle (RRR) newspaper inserts in the Springfield Republican (South) and regional Franklin and Hampshire County periodicals (North). A. Donovan, M. Summers, and S. Waite are committed to the RRR North project. A. Miller says that T. DeMaio would like to step down from her role, but hopefully new Board member L. Bone will want to get involved. M. Summers offered to help with RRR South instead of RRR North if needed.

### **MAC Update**

S. Waite explained that after an unprecedented delay the 2024 Sustainable Materials Recovery Program grant awards were announced earlier this week. She is organizing an in-person

municipal recycling coordinator meeting on January 10 at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission...the first in many years. She also explained that lithium battery collection and handling is a hot topic due to the spike in consumer products employing them, and the growing awareness of fire risk from damaged/defective batteries. The Environmental Protection Agency is in the process of identifying safety recommendations for Lithium batteries of all sizes. The topic will be addressed in a MassDEP statewide municipal recycling coordinator webinar in early 2025 (date TBA). A. Donovan explained that all Franklin County Solid Waste Management District transfer stations have been given [CellBlockEX fire suppression material](#) to mitigate damaged/defective lithium-ion batteries.

### **Review and Approval of Draft Minutes**

*J. Ameen moved to accept the 11/20/2024 minutes as adjusted, S. Cooper seconded, and the motion passed. L. Cernick abstained (she did not attend).*

*R. Chang moved to accept the 6/16/2024 meeting minutes as adjusted. S. Cooper seconded. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Other Business**

R. Chang asked if the MRF would ever collect additional materials. A. Miller explained that the age and limited size of the facility makes major changes difficult. S. Waite said that there have been brief discussions about aggregating glass or mattresses on site but space limitations prevented any movement. A. Donovan said that the MRF could add materials that are not currently collected but are on RecycleSmartMA's acceptable list (e.g. paper egg cartons and paper soda/beer sixpack cartons). It is a conversation to be had with M. Moores. J. Ameen suggests that we dedicate time during our next meeting to focus on this topic and public education ideas.

### **Next Meeting**

Our next Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 15 at 10AM.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:23 AM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Susan Waite