

Springfield MRF Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

June 18th, 2025
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

MAB Members Present: Jan Ameen, Liz Bone, Abbey Massaro, Arlene Miller (Chair), Mary Summers, Linda Cernik, Laurie Simmons, Susan Waite.

Others present: Mike Moores (Waste Management), Bernie Fosu (Waste Management)

The meeting was called to order at 10:07 am by Chair A. Miller, quorum was not met at the beginning of the meeting so we moved to item # 3. A. Massaro joined at 13:30 to complete the quorum.

Public Comment

None

MRF Update: markets, tours, bulky rigid plastic

M. Moores explained that a load from East Longmeadow was contaminated. M. Moores will send photos and day and time of the load so L. Bone can address it with Casella.

The MRF is also having contamination issues with Pittsfield bringing in loads with 30%-50% contamination. The MRF is documenting and taking photos of everything. The loads are contaminated with tarps, shrink wrap, trash bags, barrels, 5 gallon buckets, etc. The contamination is causing the production to slow down because workers are stopping to separate the contamination. M. Moores said that Steve Ellis from DEP is going to reach out to their DPW. *J. Ameen asked why is there contamination?* M. Moores is unsure because the hauler brings the materials to the Casella transfer station and dumps it on the floor before reloading it for the MRF.

A. Miller mentioned that Pittsfield changed their trash barrel size from unlimited to a 48 gallon container, and a 48 gallon container for dual stream recycling.

A. Miller asked if they use overflow bags? M. Summers, who represents Pittsfield, replied that A. Miller was correct about their program. The town has had the new program in place for the last 7 or 8 months, so something has changed and more people are abusing the recycling container and putting trash in instead. Pittsfield's transfer station just opened last week so now residents can bring overflow bags there, where for the last few months they have not had that option. Residents have the option to rent an additional trash and recycling container per quarter.

A. Miller stated that our advisory board should offer help to Pittsfield in any way because the contamination is unacceptable.

J. Ameen questioned whose responsibility it is to check the load since it is dumped before it is loaded again for the MRF. M. Moores also mentioned that the other day there were trash bags, C & D materials, and OCC. Casella has the capability to check the load when it is picked up in their trucks with cameras.

M. Summers mentioned that the contract with Casella might have language that addresses contamination, or Pittsfield might need to adjust their contract. The city also needs to address recycling education.

S.Waite mentioned Ricardo from Pittsfield and that he needs to get involved.

J.Ameen mentioned that we will be getting a check for \$10,000 from Waste Management so maybe we can offer some financial public education because Pittsfield helped the MRF by joining and adding tonnage.

S.Waite said that Pittsfield has lots of unspent RDF funds so we should talk to Riccardo first.

A.Miller said that our board has a lot of experience and perhaps Pittsfield needs a model like E. Longmeadow with a part time recycling coordinator.

S.Waite said that we should talk with Riccardo first to hear his experience first.

M.Summers asked what is the acceptable contamination rate? 15%, but the facility has an average of 5%.

A.Miller, A.Massaró, and S.Waite agreed to help out offering technical assistance.

Markets: All materials are moving however the mills are starting to get filled up which has lowered the AMV to \$66.30, lower than last month. Aluminium dropped \$200, #5's dropped \$215 and the MRF is having trouble pushing the load out. Natural dropped \$600.

A.Miller asked for any reasons? Tariffs? M.Moores said the tariffs have not really affected our recycling, only in the first week they were announced.

A.Miller asked about the fiber mills? M.Moores said the fiber prices have not dropped significantly.

J.Ameen said that the aluminium and steel markets should be rising since the tariffs would make domestic products more valuable. M.Moores agreed.

M.Moores also said that gable tops are starting to move again going to Mexico.

A.Miller asked about rigids? Rigids are moving with a new customer this month.

Tours: No new tours have been scheduled.

MRF Contract

J.Ameen spoke to the typo. Waste Management has written a letter to correct the \$300 per ton instead of \$300 per load and will send it to DEP. It will also be sent to all the MRF communities. They do not need to sign it. A.Miller and S. Ellis have the names of the people who signed it so it will be sent to them but also others who are involved in the contract process such as recycling coordinators. The MAB will draw up a list of their contacts.

New Tonnage- J.Ameen has worked with Petersham, a Quabbin town for the last few months and they will be joining the MRF with 84 tons a year. They will be able to start bringing materials on July 1st even without a signed contract due to bringing the contract to legal counsel. Jan has been tracking Pittsfield tonnage and they have been bringing in an extra 50 tons per month, but it might be the contamination as discussed previously. The MAB is grateful that WM is being flexible with the tonnage because they are under no obligation to continue with less than 14,000 tons per year. Adding Pittsfield and Petersham has gotten us to 14,000 tons per year.

B.Fosu had some information to add about the market fluctuations. Some paper mills have been shutting down and building new ones that are not operational yet, causing an influx of supply. On the non-fiber side, some resins can not be used in certain manufacturing, and about 40% of resins that used to be sent to China have been pulled back because of the tariffs and have flooded the market. Also, everyone in the industry has been adding capacity to their

marketplace. WM has invested 50 million in the last 2 years to build more capacity. So there is a lot more capacity in the marketplace and fewer volumes to go after, and then more supply of the product and less manufacturers picking them up. We need to work on the quality so we can stay in the market. B. Fosu reiterated that WM is looking forward to working with us during the new contract.

Review and Approval of Minutes: (Quorum)

February 19th, 2025 minutes- S.Waite moved to accept the minutes as amended. M. Summers seconded the motion. All in favor.

April 16th, 2025 minutes- S.Waite moved to accept the minutes as amended. J.Ameen seconded the motion. All in favor.

(M. Summers left the meeting.)

Election of Officers

Postponed until next month.

Treasurer's Report and FY 2026 budget discussion

J.Ameen has made a level funded budget for FY26. FY25 was adjusted by \$344. A.Donovan previously asked to consider funding educational materials in FY26. Minor corrections to handouts and the website, even a refresh of the website. The budget was tabled until the next meeting with a quorum.

Proposed MAB education project 2025

A.Massaró reminded us about establishing an educational committee. A. Massaró and A.Donovan volunteered for it and will discuss it at the next meeting.

MAB vacancies: Franklin County

S.Waite spoke to Sarah Brown, a select board member in Greenfield who is too busy but has someone in mind. S.Waite will follow up. It should be a Shutesbury related person because they're a MRF community. S.Waite will reach out to Meryl for assistance.

MAC update: RDP:

S.Waite spoke about a record number of RDP submittals, 80. There were other applications for cardboard compactors and sheds.

Other Business:

S.Waite would like to give kudos to A.Donovan and J.Ameen for their recent repair event. Also a shout out to Belchertown for holding their first Trash Gala held to celebrate murals they had painted on their containers, and also a trash fashion show. It was paid with a grant and assistance from their library.

S. Waite also met with a reporter at the event from Turley Publishing who was interested in collaborating with us on recycling articles or even our RRR guide.

The DEP held an EPP/EPR webinar which was excellent. It has been recorded and available to watch. All towns will need to have an EPP instead of a buy recycled policy for the next grant round. Templates are available online.

S.Waite will be going on sabbatical from Sept-Dec, and will hopefully be able to continue in her role.

A.Massaró wants to remind everyone that there will be a MassRecycle Award Ceremony on October 16th in Westminster. Submit nominations for transfer stations, businesses, teachers, etc.

MassRecycle will hold a tour at Allied Scrap Metal in July.

A.Massaró asked if there was anything we wanted in their newsletter?

The next meeting date will be set for September 17th at 10am.

S.Waite made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:28AM. L.Simmons seconded. All in favor.

Meeting Agenda

- 1) Public Comment Period*
- 2) Review and approval of minutes -April 2025 meeting*
- 3) MRF Update: markets, tours, bulky rigid plastic (Mike and Steve)*
- 4) Treasurer's Report and FY 2026 budget discussion: (Jan)*
- 5) MRF contract Issues: the typo, new tonnage, contamination (the good, the bad and the ugly): Jan and Bernie*
- 6) Election of officers*
- 7) MAB vacancies: Franklin County*
- 8) Proposed MAB education project 2025 -- a few updates*
- 9) MAC update: RDP—how did we do?*
- 10) Other Business*
- 11) Next meeting*