

## Springfield MRF Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

August 20th, 2025  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

**FINAL**

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

Others present: Bernie Fosu (Waste Management).

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 am by Chair A. Miller, quorum was met.

### Public Comment

None

### Review and approval of minutes -June 18th, 2025 meeting

J.Ameen made a motion to accept minutes as presented. S.Cooper seconded. All in favor.

### MRF Update: MRF contract issues and markets, tours:

A.Miller sent a letter to all the MRF communities about the increase in the fees for July and then met with M.Moores, J.Ameen, and B.Fosu to review the markets. A.Miller asked B.Fosu to come to a meeting to discuss and explain why the dramatic increase.

B.Fosu reviewed issues and changes in the recycling market that have affected the MRF and MRF towns. Over the last 2 years, MRFs across New England have added 300,000 tons of annual capacity. All the MRF's have also added more technology and are advancing with AI capabilities. Looking at the dual streams, firstly bottles and cans. In the past PET (plastic) manufacturing and production was booming, but now because of the US and Chinese tariffs, it has slowed down. The US has been making natural resins and have been selling them to China but now because of the tariff, 40% of them have stayed in the US market. It is also a cheaper alternative to PET, so users are either replacing or supplementing the materials that we collect. Also, infrastructure development like buildings, commercial projects has slowed, and therefore less plastics are needed and cheaper alternatives are available. To summarize: Supply is abundant, demand has dwindled a little bit, and there is a cheaper alternative.

On the fiber side, capacity has also gone up and the mills are having issues. Paper mills around us are shutting down. A paper mill has a lifespan of 15-30 years and because the mills are taking on more materials, their equipment is wearing out sooner than expected. It is very costly for the mills to replace their liners, \$15 million at least. Supply

is very high and with the paper mills either shutting down, renovating, or expanding, it is going to take some time to have the paper mills all back to full production. B.Fosu suggests the best thing we can do is to supply a clean product for the manufacturers. They have the option now to reject dirty loads and find a supplier with cleaner material. This issue is cyclical and it will probably take a few months to self-correct.

*A.Miller asked for clarification about “virgin resins”.* An alternative to plastics that can also be blended with plastics used for construction materials. This virgin resin is flooding the markets in the US because of the tariffs.

*A.Massaro asked if the tariffs should be having a positive effect on the recycling markets?* B.Fosu said that he hopes the government is having discussions behind closed doors and is trying to work out the tariffs. We have agreements with the paper mills and manufacturers and we are still delivering them clean materials, it's just the market value has decreased.

*A.Miller asked for an explanation of the market indexes.* Our material value is based on indexes set by the market. B.Fosu explained that we get the market index pricing upfront from Waste Management. They then sell our materials and with the current market conditions, they are paid a lower price. They need our materials to be clean so they can keep selling our materials and hopefully in the near future have higher values. T.DeMaio shared some single stream market information to show that the market value is also lower for single stream.

B. Fosu mentioned that there has also been inventory buildup from areas that have had natural disasters so they are adding to the extra capacity.

*L.Bone asked if there was a simple graphic or industry article summary, and A.Massaro asked for something that we could post on social media. Some messaging about keeping the materials clean.* B.Fosu will work with his team at Waste Management on it. S.Waite recommended looking at [Recyclingmarkets.net](https://www.recyclingmarkets.net) for more market value information, historic trends, broken down by commodity.

Pittsfield Contamination Update: Ricardo has been assisting with the issue and there have been improvements. The MAB is available to help support getting Pittsfield back on track. There has been a little bit of a miscommunication issue. We really need Pittsfield to have clean material so we can get over the 14,000 ton mark.

*T.DeMaio asked about the program.* The residents have a 48 gallon recycling toter that is switched in between bottles and cans and paper. They also have a 48 gallon trash can. They can request another recycling bin for free. Some residents are using their recycling tote as a trash can, certain neighborhoods have alot of contamination, so the transfer station will need to do a better job on those days to sort out the trash. The recycling is brought to a transfer station and tipped on the floor and then is reloaded into a truck and brought to the MRF. The Casella trucks also do not have cameras yet so they can not see the tipped contamination. Residents can also bring their recyclables

directly to the transfer station for free. Pittsfield is now looking for a short term (3yr) recycling coordinator to educate, walk the streets, give tickets etc.

**Treasurer's Report and FY 2026 budget discussion: (Jan)** The budget is pretty simple and we did not spend a lot last year and it's pretty flexible. Some projects this year are adding to the website, more educational information, updating the dual stream information, RRR guides.

*L.Simmons moved to accept the budget as presented. S.Waite seconded the motion. All in favor.*

**RRR West (Mary)** M.Summers would like to request around \$3200 for the Berkshire RRR guide. S.Waite informed us that the MAB serves as a publishing sponsor for the Berkshire Eagle and therefore we get advertising in the issue. J.Ameen said it was \$2600 last year. We received around 500 copies. We will hold the vote at our Sept meeting in case the amount changes.

**Other Business:** S.Cooper is having some trouble in Monterey. Their hauler Roger's Trucking is charging \$615 per haul for their recycling to be brought to the MRF, which is more expensive than trash. Some options: sort separate glass and create an aggregations site for collection. There are a few companies such as New Hampshire Recycles, Messina Glass, Strategic Materials in Connecticut. Or working with Casella on creating a regional transfer station to store materials until they could fill a 100 foot trailer. Or even buying swap containers so Roger's doesn't need to drive so many miles. S.Waite will be going on a sabbatical for 7 weeks and for a few weeks from October until December. She will be reachable but will be working with Gail Garron and Missy Hollenback to help her out.

J.Ameen made a motion to adjourn. S.Cooper seconded the motion. All in favor.

11:24am

Respectfully submitted, Liz

#### Meeting Agenda

- 1) Public Comment Period
- 2) Review and approval of minutes -June 2025 meeting
- 3) MRF Update: MRF contract issues and markets, tours
- 4) Treasurer's Report and FY 2026 budget discussion: (Jan)
- 5) RRR West (Mary)
- 6) Proposed MAB education project 2025 -- a few updates
- 7) MAC update: RDP—how did we do?
- 8) Other Business

## 9) Next meeting

\*\*\* This special meeting has been scheduled to discuss the sudden and severe decrease in the AMV and the recycling markets. The focus of the meeting will be the financial situation. Other items on this agenda will be discussed depending on the quorum and the interest in the attendees.