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The Municipality of Kings and the Towns of Annapolis Royal, Berwick, Kentville, Middleton and Wolfville

**Valley Region Solid Waste-Resource Management Authority**

**Wednesday, January 19, 2022**

**9:00am**

**Meeting held via WEBEX**

**Attendees**

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**Members Present: Wendy Donovan, Craig Gerrard, Derrick Jamieson, Martha Armstrong, Gail Smith and Pat Power**

**Alternate Members Present: none**

**Guests: Peter Muttart, Mayor, Municipality of the County of Kings; Mike Livingstone, Manager Financial Reporting, Municipality of the County of Kings; Greg Barr, Director of Finance and IT, Municipality of the County of Kings; Dan Troke, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Kentville; Jennifer Boyd, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Middleton; Don Clark, Mayor, Town of Berwick and Sylvester Atkinson, Mayor, Town of Middleton**

**Regrets: None**

**Staff: Andrew Wort, Andrew Garrett, Doug Armstrong, Dennis Fury, and Andrea Garrett**

**Agenda Item No. 1 – Welcome and Call to Order**

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Chair Armstrong welcomed everyone calling the meeting to order at 9:01am.

**Agenda Item No. 2 – Approval of the Agenda**

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**ON MOTION OF WENDY DONOVAN AND SECONDED BY GAIL SMITH THAT THE VALLEY REGION SOLID WASTE-RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY APPROVE THE AGENDA AS CIRCULATED.**

**MOTION CARRIED.**

**Agenda Item No. 3 – Approval of the Minutes**

**Agenda Item No. 3.1 – Approval of the Draft Minutes from Regular Authority Meeting December 22, 2021**

**ON MOTION OF DERRICK JAMIESON AND SECONDED BY WENDY DONOVAN THAT THE VALLEY REGION SOLID WASTE-RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING HELD DECEMBER 22, 2021, AS CIRCULATED.**

**MOTION CARRIED.**

**Agenda Item No. 4 – Business Arising from the Minutes**

There was no business arising from the minutes brought before the Authority at this time.

**Agenda Item No. 5 – General Manager’s Report**

General Manager Wort provided the Authority with an update on the organization. COVID continues to present challenges and concern for staff but so far, the organization is faring well.

The scale software procurement RFP closed last month and the evaluation of submissions is now underway.

GM Wort also suggested that an RFP for a salary review of utility workers be considered in the immediate future. In a short period of time, we have had 2-3 staff leave for better paying comparable jobs. Replacements are being recruited but the turn-over needs to be addressed.

**Agenda Item No. 5.1 – Commodities Tonnage Overview**

GM Wort offered a presentation entitled Commodities Tonnage Overview, as attached to these minutes. Mr. Wort explained that tonnage drives a solid waste operation and steers the per unit cost paid by all partners as well as existing contracts. Mr. Wort showed the tonnages at each transfer station and how they have changed from year to year. GM Wort noted that while COVID played a role in the tonnage increases at both sites, the tonnage increase at the WMC was directly related to the return of Annapolis County’s curbside waste.

Highlights of the data included:

Incoming tonnage increase at Eastern and Western Management Centres 2021/22

	EMC	WMC
E waste/ HHW up 21%	21%	102%
Residential curbside up 10%	10%	90%
Small loads at EMC up 19%	19%	19%
Commercial waste up 22%	22%	17%

It was indicated that the presentation will be shared with members of the Board.

In response to the question, General Manager Wort indicated the increase in residential tonnage was most likely a direct result of people staying closer to home rather than more restaurants using curbside collection and, if needed, a cost analysis could be done.

It should be recognized that municipal curbside waste is a direct cost to the participating municipalities and that an increase in volume should result in a direct increase in cost. The 2022/23 budget includes higher curbside waste volumes and consequently management cost (Disposal and transportation), however the total impact on the costs to municipalities is minimal due to off setting revenues from increased commercial revenues and Annapolis County returning to use VWRM services.

Also, in response to the question, it was noted that the tonnages of curbside waste could be attained for individual Municipal partners; however, on a cautionary note, managing solid waste is best examined collectively on a regional basis. Volume and economy of scale is the essence of the business model for effective waste management and the shared services provide a better price per serviced unit.

**ON MOTION OF WENDY DONOVAN AND SECONDED BY GAIL SMITH THAT THE VALLEY REGION SOLID WASTE-RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY APPROVE THE GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT.**

**MOTION CARRIED.**

**Agenda Item No. 6 – Continue Review: 2022-2023 Draft Operating and Capital Budget**

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**Agenda Item No 6.1 – Equipment/Vehicle Replacement Reserve**

General Manager Wort explained that Valley Waste has never had a systematic replacement policy for the replacement of fleet vehicles - both pick-up trucks and, more importantly, heavy equipment used in the loading and transporting of waste at both transfer stations. In difficult budget years, the scheduled replacement of these vehicles was often deferred, leaving us now with an aging fleet.

GM Wort also explained that there are a number of infrastructure projects in the near future, needing attention. The Eastern Management Centre is nearly 23 years old and requires redesign to improve efficiencies and increased traffic flow. Also, Valley Waste's cost-sharing agreement with the Kaizer Meadow Landfill commits us to partially invest in major infrastructure requirements, such as a leachate treatment upgrade and landfill cell expansion.

GM Wort explained that by adopting fleet vehicle scoring methods currently used by the Town of Annapolis Royal and the Municipality of County of Kings, all of our loaders and roll-off trucks (with the exception of two) would immediately qualify for replacement.

To level out the sudden financial impact of such expenses, GM Wort proposed for the Board's consideration, to develop two policies: 1. An Equipment Replacement Policy that includes a lifecycle analysis, systematic scoring and timing of vehicle replacement. 2. An Equipment/Vehicle Reserve Policy, contributed to each year, for planned replacement of vehicles and infrastructure.

Finance Manager Armstrong reported that moving forward with such policies would save the Authority approximately \$600,000 over 10 years.

In response to the question, GM Wort explained that estimating the upfront costs, if moving forward is approved, would require additional time as well as upgraded accounting software to better track the fleet.

Also, in response to the question, GM Wort noted that other Municipalities and facilities practice a similar equipment replacement reserve, such as the Municipalities of Pictou and Lunenburg as well as Moncton NB. Mr. Livingstone added that reserves are a planning tool embedded into policy to give framework to decide whether to finance acquisitions through debt or by drawing from a reserve.

In response to the question, GM Wort confirmed that, if a reserve policy were to be approved this year, approximately \$300,000 would need to be added to the proposed 2022/23 operating budget.

Chair Armstrong noted that, considering the aging vehicle fleet, an asset management plan is needed and a policy should be developed however, creating a reserve would require the new Board's approval.

**ON MOTION OF PAT POWER AND SECONDED BY DERRICK JAMIESON THAT THE VALLEY REGION SOLID WASTE-RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY AUTHORIZE THE GENERAL MANAGER AND STAFF TO DEVELOP AN EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT POLICY AND AN EQUIPMENT/VEHICLE RESERVE POLICY TO BRING FORWARD FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION BY THE BOARD FOR APPROVAL.**

**MOTION CARRIED.**

Chair Armstrong thanked General Manager Wort and Finance Manager Armstrong for their report.

#### **Agenda Item No. 7 - Regional Coordinator Report**

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Communications Manager Garrett referred to the Regional Coordinator Report to the Authority dated January 7, 2022, as circulated and attached to these minutes, highlighting the key areas of:

- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is moving forward and Nova Scotia Environment will be reaching out to the Municipalities in the coming months to discuss EPR. NSE has hired a consultant, Glenda Giess, an expert in EPR legislation from across Canada.
- The Priorities Committee will be presenting EPR to the AMA and the NSFM to answer questions and to propose a plan to maintain an official consensus from Municipalities about EPR.
- Divert NS provided financial information in December but noted the unpredictable marketplace continues to have an impact on their estimated diversion credits to the Regions. Another update will be provided later in the month.
- The provincial shopping bag ban is over a year old and has proven very effective. Audits of plastic film recycling bales show that the ban has reduced the number of single-use shopping bags in the bales from 25% down to 1%.
- Valley Waste's Planet Protectors class tour is still on pause due to COVID restrictions, however, staff continue to attempt to expand it virtually. With help from a student from the Bridgetown High School, Planet Protectors now has caricatures.
- 2022 VWRM Waste Management calendars were delivered through Valley flyers and dropped off to municipal offices, libraries and some Enviro Depots. If more calendars are needed, please call.
- Although winter covers many illegal dumps, staff have been busy, responding to 18 illegal dumps and illegal burning.
- Social media has been active with winter storm notices, cancellations and Christmas waste.

Chair Armstrong thanked Manager Garrett for his report.

**ON MOTION OF DERRICK JAMIESON AND SECONDED BY CRAIG GERRARD THAT THE VALLEY REGION SOLID WASTE-RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY RECEIVE THE REGIONAL COORDINATOR'S REPORT.**

**MOTION CARRIED.**

**Agenda Item No. 8 – Operations Manager Report**

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Operations Manager Fury provided an update to the Authority on a number of issues:

- new staff hires for the Management Centres
- Transfer station repairs including the WMC scale house window, tipping floor upgrade, electrical work
- Site positions and succession discussion including WMC Scale house operator job posting

In response to the question, Manager Fury stated that the utility workers' salaries are comparable to similar professions when staff reach the top range of the salary and include benefits but the starting rate, appears to be low. Mr. Fury noted that increasing the starting salary level by \$5,000 would help. GM Wort added that if the equipment operators' salary is not comparable the organization is at risk to and has lost good staff to higher wages and that a salary review would be beneficial.

Also, in response to the question, Manager Fury noted that there is not a mentorship program in place but that training is provided to class 3 drivers to drive the roll-offs trucks. GM Wort added that training extends to office staff where professional development has been added to the budget to benefit the organization long term.

Also, in response to the question, GM Wort confirmed that from time to time, Valley Waste has sent waste to Arlington C&D site for disposal. Last year, painted wood was not accepted by Brooklyn Energy so ground wood was processed by Halifax C&D and they in turn sent the wood to Arlington C&D as landfill cover. Also, recently, a small amount of waste gyprock/drywall was sent to Arlington for disposal.

Chair Armstrong thanked Manager Fury for his report.

**ON MOTION OF GAIL SMITH AND SECONDED BY PAT POWER THAT THE VALLEY REGION SOLID WASTE-RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY RECEIVE THE OPERATIONS MANAGER REPORT.**

**MOTION CARRIED.**

**Agenda Item No. 9 – In-Camera Session in keeping with Section 22(2)(e) of the Municipal Government Act**

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It was the consensus that an in-camera session was not required at this time.

**Agenda Item No. 10 – Next Meeting**

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**Agenda Item No. 10.1 – February 16, 2022 in keeping with the normal meeting schedule**

It was the consensus that the next meeting of the Valley Region Solid Waste-Resource Management Authority will be held on Wednesday, February 16, 2022. This will again be a WEBEX video conference meeting, subject to Covid-19 protocols in place at that time.

**Agenda Item No. 14 – Adjournment**

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**ON MOTION OF DERRICK JAMIESON AND SECONDED BY WENDY DONOVAN, THE JANUARY 2022 REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING OF THE VALLEY REGION SOLID WASTE-RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY ADJOURNED AT 11:04AM.**

**MOTION CARRIED.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrea Gibson-Garrett for  
Brenda Davidson  
Administration and Policy Manager  
Valley Waste-Resource Management