

**GREATER NEW BEDFORD REGIONAL REFUSE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT  
DISTRICT MEETING – October 19, 2021**

Minutes

The Greater New Bedford Regional Refuse Management District Committee held a publicly posted meeting on **Tuesday, October 19, 2021, at 8:00 AM** at the Dartmouth Town Hall, Room 315, 400 Slocum Road, Dartmouth, MA.

**District Committee Members in attendance:** Chairperson, John Beauregard; Daniel Patten, Christine LeBlanc, Ken Blanchard, Kelley Cabral-Mosher.

**Not in attendance:** Michael Gagne

**Also present:** Scott Alfonse, Executive Director; Leonor Ferreira, Secretary; Attorney Matthew J. Thomas, District Counsel.

**1. Call to order**

Chairperson Beauregard called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

All in attendance stood to salute the flag.

**2. Legal Notices**

Mr. Beauregard read the notice advising the committee that the meeting may be recorded by audio and/or video, and noted that the legal notices of the meeting were posted more than 48 hours prior to the meeting.

**3. Roll call of members**

Chairperson Beauregard, yes  
Daniel Patten, yes  
Christine LeBlanc, yes  
Ken Blanchard, yes  
Kelley Cabral-Mosher, yes  
Michael Gagne (not in attendance)

**4. Approval of minutes**

Chairperson Beauregard asked for a motion to approve the minutes of September 29, 2021. Motion made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Mr. Blanchard. All voted in favor. Motion passed 5 – 0.

**5. Warrant Report and Ratification – Warrant No. 5-22**

Chairperson Beauregard asked for a motion to ratify warrant number 5-22. Motion made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded by Mr. Blanchard. All voted in favor. Motion passed 5 – 0.

## **6. Old Business**

- a. Discussion of Classification and Compensation Study.

**Chairperson Beauregard asked for a motion to resume discussion of the Classification and Compensation Study performed for the District. Motion made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Ms. LeBlanc.**

Mr. Alfonse reviewed the memo, which summarized the main issues from last meeting, discussions with Mary Aicardi of the Collins Center regarding a performance-based system for salary increase, and written comments received from Mr. Patten. Mr. Alfonse suggested that a performance-based system for salary increases requires more discussion and noted that there are variations of this type of system.

Mr. Beauregard suggested addressing the issue of cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) first. The group discussed the need to maintain pace with increases in cost of living. There was general agreement that the District should annually adjust the steps by a COLA to keep the schedule current. Mr. Blanchard asked if District should adjust by Consumer Price Index (CPI) or use another metric. Mr. Patten noted that the District usually considers CPI when making a COLA. Mr. Alfonse added that it also considers Town of Dartmouth and City of New Bedford COLAs, as well as national trends. Mr. Alfonse described the District's current process for awarding COLAs annually, except in the case of an employee's first few years of employment. Mr. Beauregard confirmed that the Committee agreed that the District should continue to adjust salaries by a COLA which would be determined annually by the Committee.

Mr. Beauregard moved the discussion to longevity pay. Mr. Patten asked if this should be done now. Mr. Beauregard suggested it be done before the end of the year. Mr. Patten asked when COLAs were typically applied, and Mr. Alfonse responded at the beginning of the fiscal year. The Committee discussed which schedule it should adopt (New Bedford or Dartmouth). Ms. Cabral-Mosher asked if these costs were included in the FY 22 budget. Mr. Alfonse explained that they were not anticipated, and the Committee will have to discuss how to fund any changes. Mr. Patten described his recommendation for the District's longevity pay schedule:

Years of Service	Annual Longevity Pay
10 to 14	\$375
15 to 19	\$500
20 to 24	\$625
25 to 29	\$750
30 to 35	\$800
More than 35	\$875

Attorney Thomas asked if the District planned to vote on these items individually or if it planned to have all the recommendations included as part of a policy that will eventually be voted by the District Committee. The Committee agreed that the changes should be included in the study.

Mr. Beauregard moved the discussion to the remaining elements of the study. Mr. Blanchard asked how many years the landfill will operate. Mr. Alfonse responded that based on current estimates, there are approximately 10 years of capacity, and the solid waste master plan may identify options for extending the landfill life. Mr. Blanchard said attracting new employees may be challenging if they know it will be difficult to reach top step in that time frame. Mr. Blanchard discussed specific positions and questioned the classification of a certain position. Ms. Cabral-Mosher suggested that the Committee should not consider the individuals

currently occupying a position, but instead should focus on the duties of the position. Mr. Beauregard noted the size of the organization and his preference for flexibility to reward employees that are higher performers. Mr. Alfonse agreed it is a small organization and said that accepting the recommendations of the Collins Center reduces the possibility of the appearance of bias. He expressed his satisfaction with the system created by the Collins Center for establishing grades for employees.

Attorney Thomas reminded the Committee that the Agreement forming the Refuse District allows the District to operate after the landfill reaches capacity. It may have a role in managing the communities' solid waste.

Mr. Patten distributed a handout and summarized its contents. He noted some of the inconsistencies he saw between comparable and proposed salaries. He recognized that employees would not reach top step for approximately 8 to 10 years.

Mr. Patten referred to the bottom of the handout. He said eliminating steps 1 and 2 and moving everyone to step 3 would cost an additional \$10,150. He confirmed step increases would occur in July. Mr. Alfonse asked if this was something to be implemented this fiscal year. If so, the District would need to transfer funds to cover the costs.

Mr. Patten suggested eliminating steps 3 and 4 after employees have moved beyond those steps. In certain instances, he recommended adding additional steps at the top of the scale and eliminating an equal number of steps as employees move beyond those steps.

Mr. Blanchard noted the difficulty attracting skilled personnel to certain positions. Mr. Alfonse expressed his agreement. Mr. Blanchard asked for confirmation that the District has the ability to adjust starting pay for employees. Mr. Alfonse explained that the District has discretion in the absence of a structured pay scale, but the pay must be within the budgeted amount. It should also be comparable to other employees and recognize more senior employees should be paid more. Ms. Leblanc asked if, at the time of hire, whether the District could start employees at a step higher than the first step. Mr. Alfonse noted that it could, but that it should be done in accordance with a policy which the District should develop. He gave the example of the City of New Bedford, which requires City Council approval for starting an employee at a step higher than step 1. Mr. Blanchard noted that for hourly positions, all employees in the same position must be moved to the same rate of pay as that of a new employee which starts at a rate higher than the lowest rate. However, this is a contractual obligation due to City of New Bedford collective bargaining agreements which the District does not have.

Mr. Patten noted that his chart did not consider certain positions that were already addressed.

Mr. Beauregard stated that the chart should reflect fair and equitable wages to ensure employee retention and ability to recruit. Mr. Alfonse said that this process began in December 2020 when he began the budget. That process typically involves comparing District salaries to similar positions in New Bedford and Dartmouth. During that process, he noticed that District salaries may lag behind in the very near future.

Mr. Blanchard noted that the Collins Center only used public sector comparables, and that the District is competing with both private and public sector for employees. Mr. Alfonse responded that Mr. Hale of the Collins Center did provide some anecdotal information to suggest certain landfill operations salaries were below private industry standards. Mr. Alfonse noted other benefits to municipal service that don't exist in the private sector.

Mr. Beauregard asked the Committee how it would like to move forward. Mr. Blanchard suggested asking the Collins Center to revise its schedule to reduce the number of steps. Mr. Blanchard explained that New Bedford has a performance based system which requires favorable performance reviews before an employee

can advance to the next step and asked if that is what the District envisioned. Mr. Alfonse responded that the District could use any system it chooses. It could be similar to the system used in New Bedford. It could be more complex, and include goals and objectives against which employees would be measured. Increases could be adjusted for higher performers. He explained that if that is the type of system the District wants, it should develop a very clear policy as to how an employee would be ranked highly. He described the cons of not having such a policy. Attorney Thomas suggested that the District's policy could include a provision to move an employee up more than one step based on their performance. He said that the District would still need a structure with goals and objectives as to how to do that. He explained that such a system will require a significant level of effort to implement. Mr. Alfonse stated that Mary Aicardi suggested that a more robust performance based system may be suitable for managers and salaried employees, but not for hourly employees. He said that Mary Aicardi also referenced the City of Somerville's system of smaller, numerous steps which provide a system for managers to increase high performing employees more than one step.

Mr. Patten suggested that employees that currently feel they are underpaid may not have their concerns addressed by the proposed system. Mr. Beauregard said the District should consider the second high and highest rates of comparable positions and determine whether it wants to use those rates. He said that part of the whole study is to determine whether we are paying fair and equitable wages to employees now. If not, then the District may need to look at applying the second highest and highest rates of comparable positions to the District positions.

Attorney Thomas said that the Committee could take the input given today, and have Collins Center consider these comments. He suggested that the District include a sum in next fiscal year budget to address any increases and assume this would not be done in FY 2022. Mr. Beauregard said the Committee does not want to rush into adopting a system.

Mr. Blanchard suggested the District approve longevity immediately to begin to address concerns. Mr. Alfonse said that not all employees will receive longevity. The Committee discussed how it would fund the longevity pay system in FY 2022.

**Motion by Mr. Patten to adopt longevity pay scale as discussed effective for first pay period for month of December 2021, and every subsequent December, and approve the transfer from FY 2021 retirement health care line item to the salaries and wages account equal to the amount of the payment (for FY 2021). Second by Ms. LeBlanc. All voted in favor. Motion passed 5 – 0.**

Mr. Beauregard asked if Mr. Alfonse thought there was enough guidance to discuss a path forward with the Collins Center. Mr. Alfonse asked for more details on the type of performance based system the District Committee would like to see. Mr. Beauregard said he liked Mr. Patten's idea of fewer steps, suggested finalizing Dan's table and reviewing the effects on the budget. Mr. Beauregard said that a performance based system would require more discussion. He suggested the Collins Center provide some examples of systems the District may adopt. Ms. Leblanc stated she believed such a system should be in place for higher level employees, and not for hourly employees. Mr. Alfonse recommended it be for the Executive Director, Accountant, Operations Manager, Waste Reduction Manager, and Executive Secretary. Ms. Cabral-Mosher asked how the others would be measured for increases. Mr. Alfonse suggested it would be more subjective, and based on a satisfactory review. Mr. Patten suggested that if a managers' employees are not performing well, then the manager's performance will reflect that. Attorney Thomas suggested that administrative jobs would receive raises based on performance based system, and operational employees would not. Mr. Alfonse suggested the Collins Center could draft a policy.

b. Solid Waste Planning Services update

**Chairperson Beauregard asked for a motion to receive an update on Solid Waste Planning Services. Motion made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded by Mr. Blanchard.**

Mr. Alfonse provided a brief update on the status.

c. District Employee Health Insurance

**Chairperson Beauregard asked for a motion to resume discussion of the MIIA proposal to provide health insurance to District employees. Motion made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded by Mr. Patten.**

Mr. Alfonse discussed the memo. He noted that those were questions raised by Mr. Gagne (who was not in attendance). The committee agreed to place the item on file and table it for further discussion until the December meeting.

**Motion to place on file and table item for the December meeting. Motion made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded by Mr. Blanchard. All voted in favor. Motion passed 5 – 0.**

## 7. New Business

a. Discussion of District subcommittees

**Chairperson Beauregard asked for a motion to discuss the current status of District subcommittees. Motion made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded made by Mr. Blanchard.**

Mr. Alfonse reviewed the subcommittee appointments.

Chairperson Beauregard asked Ms. Cabral-Mosher if she was interested serving on any subcommittee to let the group know.

Attorney Thomas noted that each subcommittee could contain up to three (3) members.

b. Disbursement from OPEB Trust (for FY 22 and FY 23 retiree premiums)

**Chairperson Beauregard asked for a motion to appropriate \$37,000 for FY 2022 from the OPEB trust to pay for the District's share of health insurance benefits for retirees of the District and their dependents; AND to appropriate \$37,500 for FY 2023 from the OPEB trust to pay for the District's share of health insurance benefits for retirees of the District and their dependents. Motion made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Mr. Blanchard.**

Mr. Alfonse discussed the memo.

Mr. Blanchard asked if once a retiree reaches Medicare eligibility age (they would be transferring over) if they would no longer be the District's liability. Mr. Alfonse said that they are; they become part of Medex (supplemental plan to Medicare) and that there is a supplemental plan that the District pays a portion.

**All voted in favor. Motion passed 5 – 0.**

c. Accept assignment of Frade's Disposal, Inc. Waste Disposal Agreement

**Chairperson Beauregard asked for a motion to discuss the assignment of the Waste Disposal Agreement between the District and Frade's Disposal. Motion made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded by Mr. Patten.**

Mr. Alfonse reviewed the memo noting that the assignment letter from WIN Waste was recently received.

Attorney Thomas noted the language on the assignment letter (second paragraph, last sentence). He noted

that the contract ends June 30, 2022, and that it would be the Committee's choice to extend at that point in time.

Mr. Beauregard asked if the District would be dealing only WIN Waste or if Frade's Disposal is still involved with operations.

Mr. Alfonse noted that he spoke with Richard Frade and Dan Balboni (WIN Waste) the day after the sale occurred, and he was informed that the plan was for operations to remain the same.

**Motion to accept. All voted in favor. Motion passed by 5 – 0.**

Attorney Thomas recommended the District file a copy of the signed assignment letter and the approved meeting minutes with the Frade's Disposal contract file.

- d. Amendment to contract with Southworth Milton, Inc. for rebuild of landfill compactor  
**Chairperson Beauregard asked for a motion to amend the contract with Southworth-Milton to perform work described in the referenced memo and increase the total contract amount by \$7,281.69 to \$396,039.69. Motion made by Mr. LeBlanc, seconded Mr. Blanchard.**

Mr. Alfonse reviewed the memo.

**Motion to amend the contract made by Mr. Blanchard, seconded by Ms. LeBlanc. All voted in favor. Motion passed 5 – 0.**

Mr. Patten suggested that when there's an amendment to a contract, instead of bringing it to the board for approval each time, if the Committee would consider making a motion to give the Executive Director blanket approval of 5% increase on contracts.

Attorney Thomas noted that it had to be done when the Committee approves the contracts, or have a general policy to increase it by 5%.

After further discussion the Committee recommended revising the procurement policy to reflect that "Executive Director is authorized to increase the contract no more than 5%, and anything over 5% requires the Committee's approval". Mr. Alfonse will revise the policy and place it on for future meeting.

- e. Director's Report  
**Chairperson Beauregard asked for a motion to discuss the Director's report. Motion made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded by Mr. Patten.**

Mr. Alfonse reviewed the memo. He noted that at Dartmouth Selectboard's request, he, Mr. Beauregard, and Ms. LeBlanc met with them on October 18, 2021, and the group provided an update on the life expectancy of the landfill and the District's Solid Waste Master Plan. Mr. Beauregard updated them on the District's efforts to ensure it has sufficient reserves available to reduce potential future liability to the city and the town.

Ms. LeBlanc noted that she got the sense that the selectboard may have implied that after year seven (7) they would be looking for different solid waste disposal options (form their own subcommittee). Mr. Alfonse noted once the results of the Master Plan are presented, it will help inform them what needs to be done. The Master Plan will help guide the District how to manage both communities' solid waste for the next ten (10) years and beyond.

Attorney Thomas described the District's potential roles when the landfill reaches capacity.

f. Items which could not have been reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance

None

**8. Set date for next meeting.**

Next Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 16, 2021.

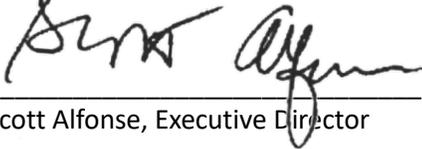
Mr. Patten recommended scheduling the December meeting date.

**9. Adjourn**

**Chairperson asked for a motion to adjourn meeting. Motion made by Mr. Blanchard, seconded by Ms. LeBlanc. All voted in favor. Motion passed 5 – 0.**

**Meeting adjourned at 9:19 a.m.**

Approved by vote of District Committee on November 16, 2021.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Alfonse", written over a horizontal line.

Scott Alfonse, Executive Director

## **MEMOS**

- 6a. Discussion of Classification and Compensation Study dated 10/14/2021
- 6b. Solid Waste Planning Services dated 10/14/2021
- 6c. District employee health insurance dated 10/14/2021
- 7a. Discussion of District subcommittees dated 10/14/2021
- 7b. Disbursement from OPEB Trust (for FY 22 and FY 23 retiree premiums) dated 10/14/2021
- 7c. Accept assignment of Frade's Disposal, Inc. Waste Disposal Agreement dated 10/14/2021
- 7d. Amendment to contract with Southworth Milton, Inc. for rebuild of landfill compactor dated 10/14/2021
- 7e. Director's Report dated 10/14/2021