

GREATER NEW BEDFORD REGIONAL REFUSE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT MEETING

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 13, 2022

1. Call to order

The Greater New Bedford Regional Refuse Management District Committee held a publicly posted meeting on **Thursday, January 13, 2022, at 8:00 A.M.** The meeting was called to order at 8:03 a.m.

District Committee members and District Counsel participated remotely.

2. Legal notices

Chairperson Beauregard read the following statement:

“Pursuant to Section 20 of Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, all members of the District Committee are participating remotely in this meeting.

I want to remind the members that texting and private chats on Zoom are not an acceptable method of remote participation. I also want to make sure that all members can be heard when they are speaking and if any member cannot hear another member, please let me know.

Finally, I want to inform members that if their remote connection is lost, they should attempt to log back in. If your remote connection is lost, we will note the time you were disconnected and the time you logged back in.

Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, any person may make an audio or video recording of this public meeting, or may transmit the meeting through any medium. Attendees are therefore advised that such recordings and transmissions are being made, whether perceived or unperceived, by those present, and are deemed acknowledged and permissible.”

Mr. Beauregard noted that all legal notices of the meeting were posted in Dartmouth and New Bedford more than 48 hours prior to the meeting.

There were not any members of the public present at the meeting location where the public meeting notice was posted.

3. Roll call of members
Chairperson, John Beauregard; yes
Daniel Patten, yes
Christine LeBlanc, yes
Ken Blanchard, yes
Michael Gagne, yes
Kelly Cabral-Mosher, yes

Mr. Beauregard noted that all members of the District Committee of Greater New Bedford Regional Refuse Management District who have responded to the call of the roll, being Daniel Patten, Christine LeBlanc, Ken Blanchard, Michael Gagne, Kelly Cabral-Mosher, and John Beauregard are participating remotely in the meeting.

He also noted that Attorney Matthew J. Thomas, District Counsel, was also participating remotely and Scott Alfonse, Executive Director of the District was present at the advertised meeting location.

4. Approval of minutes
a. Approval of December 7, 2021, minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the December 7, 2021, meeting made by Ms. LeBlanc, second by Mr. Gagne. Roll call vote: Chairperson John Beauregard, yes; Christine LeBlanc, yes; Ken Blanchard, yes; Michael Gagne, yes; Daniel Patten, yes; Kelly Cabral-Mosher, yes.

Motion passed 6-0.

- b. Correction to October 19, 2021, minutes

Motion by Ms. LeBlanc to amend the minutes October 19, 2021, by replacing the language of the vote on the second item in 6a with the following language:

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 2022 retirement health care line item to the salaries and wages account equal to the amount of the payment (for FY 2022).

Roll call vote: Chairperson John Beauregard, yes; Christine LeBlanc, yes; Ken Blanchard, yes; Michael Gagne, abstained; Daniel Patten, yes; Kelly Cabral-Mosher, yes.

Motion passed 5-0 (1 abstention).

5. Warrant Report and Ratification – Warrant No. 8-22 (December 03, 2021), and Warrant No. 9-22 (December 20, 2021)
Chairperson Beauregard asked for a motion to ratify warrant No. 8-22 dated December 3, 2021, and warrant No. 9-22 dated December 20, 2021. Motion made by Ms. LeBlanc, second by Mr. Blanchard. Roll call vote: Chair John Beauregard, yes; Christine

LeBlanc, yes; Ken Blanchard, yes; Michael Gagne, yes; Daniel Patten; yes, Kelly Cabral Mosher, yes.

Motion passed 6 - 0.

6. New Business

6a. FY 2023 Budget

Motion by Ms. LeBlanc to discuss proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 budget; second by Mr. Gagne.

Mr. Alfonse reviewed the memo and the proposed draft FY 2023 budget. He noted the budget was reviewed by the Budget Subcommittee (John Beauregard and Dan Patten) at a meeting of the Budget Subcommittee held on December 15, 2021. He described the supporting documents, including the financial statement and table attached to the memo.

Mr. Alfonse described the District's efforts to reduce waste going into the landfill and the impacts on the FY 2023 budget. He reviewed the assumptions used in making revenue projections. He noted that the budget recommends a 2% increase in assessments to member communities.

Attorney Thomas noted that the District has a 2.5% limit on increasing assessments to member communities. The limit is cumulative, meaning that for every year which the District did not increase the assessment by 2.5%, it could increase future assessments by more. Mr. Alfonse noted that using that calculation, the District's limit on FY 2023 assessments to member communities could not exceed approximately \$3.98 million. The proposed FY 2023 assessment is significantly below that level, at \$882,610. The Committee discussed the importance of not imposing a significant increase in any given year and the need to impose a moderate increase.

Mr. Gagne noted the actual landfill gas revenue in FY 2021 and asked why revenue was higher. Mr. Alfonse described the fluctuations in gas production and revenue since the project began.

Mr. Alfonse referred to the reused material revenue line item. He said there are challenges to projecting this revenue, since the District is dependent upon outside sources for material reused beneficially.

Mr. Alfonse reviewed the salaries and wages budget. He noted that the Budget Subcommittee recommended the District begin to plan for succession of its upper management team. Therefore, a new position is proposed for FY 2023 to support the Director and/or Operations Manager. Mr. Beauregard noted the challenges of not having a succession plan. He described the importance of having senior management provide

significantly more than two-week notice of their departure, and the value of a longer transition period. Mr. Gagne described the challenges of filling vacant positions.

Mr. Alfonse reviewed the remaining sections of the budget, including buildings and site maintenance. Mr. Alfonse explained that funding was included in site maintenance for replacement of the access road. Mr. Beauregard asked if that amount was sufficient. Mr. Alfonse responded that it was developed by Shawn Peckham, Operations Manager, who reviewed costs for similar services. Ms. LeBlanc suggested exploring the use of reprocessed material as road base as a way to potentially reduce costs and beneficially reuse material. Mr. Alfonse described the planned purchases of equipment. Mr. Blanchard noted that the proposed budget for a new pickup truck seems low.

Motion made by Ms. LeBlanc to adopt the Fiscal Year 2023 budget as presented. Mr. Blanchard second. Roll call vote: Chair John Beauregard, yes; Christine LeBlanc, yes; Ken Blanchard, yes; Michael Gagne, yes; Daniel Patten, yes; Kelly Cabral-Mosher, yes.

Motion passed 6 - 0.

6b. Accountant Recruitment Status

Motion by Ms. LeBlanc to discuss the status of the accountant recruitment. Second by Mr. Gagne.

Mr. Alfonse noted that the District's Accountant (Cindy Cammarata) is retiring and described the process for and status of recruitment. He commended Cindy's work over the 19 years she served as Accountant. Ms. LeBlanc asked how the transition would be handled. Mr. Alfonse said he is exploring options, including the use of outside accounting services. He noted that in the interim, Lee Ferreira will assist with some duties, including accounts payable and payroll. Mr. Alfonse requested that the Committee consider compensating Ms. Ferreira for performing duties not normally required of her position. Attorney Thomas asked if it would be paid as a stipend and Mr. Alfonse responded yes, for the weeks Ms. Ferreira performs some duties normally performed by the accountant. Mr. Patten asked what the weekly pay difference is between accountant and Ms. Ferreira. Mr. Alfonse said it was approximately \$500 per week. Mr. Alfonse suggested \$300 per week stipend.

Motion by Mr. Gagne to grant a stipend of \$300 for every week Ms. Ferreira is performing duties of Accountant. Second by Mr. Blanchard. Roll call vote: Chair John Beauregard, yes; Christine LeBlanc, yes; Ken Blanchard, yes; Michael Gagne, yes; Daniel Patten, yes; Kelly Cabral-Mosher, yes.

Motion passed 6 - 0.

Mr. Beauregard noted that when other long-term employees have retired, the District has offered a retirement gift. Mr. Alfonse noted that the last employee to retire in 2020 had more than 20 years of service and was awarded a gift valued at \$150 by the District. He noted Ms. Cammarata's 19 years of service was comparable.

Motion by Mr. Gagne to award a retirement gift valued at \$150 to Ms. Cammarata. Second by Mr. Blanchard. Roll call vote: Chair John Beauregard, yes; Christine LeBlanc, yes; Ken Blanchard, yes; Michael Gagne, yes; Daniel Patten yes; Kelly Cabral Mosher, yes.

Motion passed 6 - 0.

6c. District "Vacation Leave" Policy

Motion by Ms. LeBlanc to discuss the District's vacation leave policy. Second by Mr. Patten.

Mr. Alfonse described the District's vacation policy and explained the policy may have historically been interpreted and applied incorrectly.

Ms. Cabral-Mosher asked if the District had a probationary period for employees and if employees must use their accumulated vacation time by July. Mr. Alfonse stated District employees are employees at will and can be terminated for cause at any time. He said employees are required to use vacation time prior to July 1, unless the District Committee grants approval to carry days into the next fiscal year.

Mr. Patten asked what would happen in the case of an employee that started in January, was awarded 5 days for use in their first 6 months of employment, was awarded 10 vacation days on July 1, used them the first two weeks of July and resigned in August. The employee would not have worked long enough to accrue 10 days of vacation after July. Attorney Thomas suggested the employee would be required to reimburse the District for the time. Mr. Patten said that the District's policy does not state that. Mr. Alfonse noted that the memo concludes by stating the need to revise the District's personnel handbook, including vacation policy. Mr. Blanchard noted the complications associated with attempting to seek reimbursement by a former employee in such an instance.

Mr. Patten suggested revising the policy to award new employees .8 days per month. The Committee discussed various scenarios as to how vacation may be accumulated and used.

Mr. Beauregard suggested referring the matter to the Personnel Subcommittee. The Committee discussed whether the matter needs to be resolved immediately. Mr. Alfonse noted that it does affect one employee and should be resolved quickly. Ms. Cabral-Mosher suggested the District continue with the standard practice for the affected employee. Mr. Patten suggested the employee be granted vacation consistent with what has been

communicated to the employee (past practice). He suggested the Committee develop a clear policy to be implemented going forward.

Mr. Beauregard suggested a simple policy which awards employees a flat amount (i.e., 1 week in their first year, 2 weeks in their 2nd year, etc.) and avoid awarding fractions of days over time.

6d. Proposed Amendment to Brown & Caldwell contract

Motion by Mr. Patten to approve and authorize the Executive Director to amend the “Agreement to Provide Inspection, Reporting and General Engineering Services” with Brown and Caldwell by increasing the total contract amount \$20,100 (from \$59,040 to \$79,140) for the permitting and installation of monitoring wells for cells 7 and 8 design. Second by Ms. LeBlanc.

Mr. Gagne asked Attorney Thomas if the amendment was permissible under MGL 30b. Attorney Thomas noted the contract is for professional services which were not procured pursuant to MGL c. 30b.

Ms. Leblanc expressed concern that the work be limited to data collection in advance of cell design, and that cell design would not proceed until the District completed its planning study.

Roll call vote: Chair John Beauregard, yes; Christine LeBlanc, yes; Ken Blanchard, yes; Michael Gagne, yes; Daniel Patten, yes; Kelly Cabral Mosher, yes.

Motion passed 6 - 0.

6e. COVID-19 update

Mr. Alfonse did not have any new information to report.

6f. Director’s Report

Motion by Ms. LeBlanc to receive the Director’s Report. Second by Mr. Patten.

Mr. Alfonse reviewed the Director’s report. He summarized the work Geosyntec has performed. Mr. Beauregard asked when the project will be completed. Mr. Alfonse explained that they will submit final memos upon completion of tasks. Mr. Alfonse suggested the Committee would be more involved in reviewing progress on the Long Term Financial Plan task.

Attorney Thomas asked when information might be available for the Committee to consider in developing FY 2023 contracts for disposal. Mr. Alfonse explained that he discussed this with Geosyntec at a prior meeting. At that time, Geosyntec advised that the District should indicate the information needed to assist with this decision and they would provide it.

Mr. Blanchard asked if it would be appropriate for the Committee to meet with Geosyntec for an update. Mr. Gagne agreed. Ms. Leblanc and Mr. Gagne suggested March. Mr. Gagne said the information from Geosyntec would be informative, particularly if the District considers soliciting competitive proposals for disposal capacity. Attorney Thomas asked if Mr. Gagne was considering recommending the District offer all of its commercial disposal capacity through a competitive process. Mr. Gagne described the advantages offered by a competitive process. Attorney Thomas suggested reserving some capacity for municipal customers.

Mr. Alfonse reviewed waste reduction efforts. Mr. Patten asked if Waste Reduction staff are doing outreach on the City's plastic bag ban. Mr. Gagne explained the status of the ban. Mr. Alfonse said Waste Reduction staff will likely use social media to assist the City with outreach.

6g. Items which could not have been reasonably anticipated

None

7. Set Meeting Schedule

Mr. Alfonse said the next meeting is scheduled for February 15, 2022, and representatives of Bartholomew and Company will attend. Another meeting was scheduled for March 17, 2022, at 8:00 a.m.

Mr. Gagne asked if Bartholomew could provide the portfolio reports at least one week in advance of the meeting. He also suggested the District's auditor attend the meeting, and review their report.

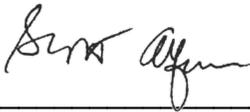
8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 4a. Draft December 7, 2021, minutes**
- 4b. Memo – Revision to October 19, 2021, minutes**
- 5. Warrant reports – Warrant No. 8-22 and 9-22**
- 6a. Memo – FY 2023 budget**
- 6b. Memo – Accountant Recruitment Status**
- 6c. Memo – District “Vacation Leave” Policy**
- 6d. Memo – Proposed Amendment to Brown and Caldwell Contract**
- 6f. Memo – Director’s Report**

Approved by vote of District Committee on Tuesday, February 15, 2022



Scott Alfonse, Executive Director