

## GREATER NEW BEDFORD REGIONAL REFUSE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT MEETING

### Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 16, 2023

The Greater New Bedford Regional Refuse Management District Committee held a publicly posted meeting on **Thursday, March 16, 2023 at 8:00 A.M.** at the Dartmouth Town Hall, Room 315, 400 Slocum Road, Dartmouth, MA.

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

Michael Gagne, absent.

**Also in attendance:** Scott Alfonse, Executive Director; Leonor Ferreira, Secretary; Matthew J. Thomas, District Counsel; Tom King, Shawn Peckham (8:00 a.m. to 8:16 a.m.), Marissa Perez-Dormitzer (8:28 a.m. to 9:18 a.m.)

### **1. Call to order / Salute the flag.**

Chairperson Beauregard called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. and led a salute to the flag.

### **2. Legal notices**

Chairperson Beauregard read the following statement:

“Pursuant to Section 20 of Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, as amended by Section 3 of Chapter 107 of the Acts of 2022 I, John Beauregard, a member of the District Committee, am participating remotely in this meeting.

He reminded members that texting and private chats on Microsoft Teams or any other channel are not an acceptable method of remote participation. He also wanted to make sure that all members can be heard when they are speaking and if he or any member cannot hear another member, please let him or the Executive Director know.

Finally, he stated that if his remote connection is lost, he will attempt to log back in. If his remote connection is lost, we will note the time of disconnection and the time of reconnection.

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 legal notices of the meeting were posted in Dartmouth and New Bedford more than 48 hours prior to the meeting.

### **3. Roll call of members**

Chairperson John Beauregard, yes – Mr. Beauregard participated via video conference (Teams)  
Daniel Patten, yes – Mr. Patten participated in-person  
Christine LeBlanc, yes – Ms. LeBlanc participated in-person  
Kelley Cabral-Mosher, yes – Ms. Cabral-Mosher participated in-person

John Perry, yes – Mr. Perry participated in-person  
Michael Gagne, absent

Chairperson Beauregard recognized and welcomed Mr. Perry to the meeting. Mr. Perry is the newly appointed City of New Bedford District Committee member.

#### 4. Approval of Minutes

Approval of Minutes of February 23, 2023 meeting

**Motion to approve the minutes of February 23, 2023, made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Ms. LeBlanc. Roll call vote: John Beauregard, yes; Daniel Patten, yes; Christine LeBlanc, yes; Kelly Cabral-Mosher, yes; John Perry, yes; Michael Gagne, absent.**

**Motion passed 5 – 0.**

#### 5. Warrant Report and Ratification

Warrants No. 16-23 dated February 22, 2023, and warrant 17-23 dated March 7, 2023.

**Motion to ratify warrants 16-23 dated February 22, 2023, and 15-23 dated February 9, 2023, made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Ms. LeBlanc. Roll call vote: John Beauregard, yes; Daniel Patten, yes; Christine LeBlanc, yes; Kelly Cabral-Mosher, yes; John Perry, yes; Michael Gagne, absent.**

**Motion passed 5-0.**

#### 6. New Business

Committee moved to discuss item 6e.

e. Authorize Invitation for Bids for Street Sweeper/Discuss contract award.

**Motion that the District authorize the advertised Invitation for Bids, vote to award the contract for a new street sweeper to CN Wood in the amount of \$286,055, and authorize the transfer of \$37,449 from Equipment Reserve to cover the difference between funds available from FY 2022 and FY 2023 and the purchase price. Motion made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Ms. LeBlanc.**

Mr. Beauregard recognized Mr. Alfonse who reviewed the memo. He said that 5 bids were received, but only one of the bids met the bid specifications. He said there was \$225,000 carried over from FY22 for the purchase of the sweeper. He reviewed a summary table showing the various funding sources for the street sweeper. He referred to Mr. Peckham for more information.

Mr. Peckham said that last year when District started looking for a sweeper, the price range was \$225,000. Due to inflation and supply chain issues, prices increased dramatically. The bid that met the specifications, unfortunately was the highest bidder. It's the same model as what the District currently has and the same model that the city uses. The lowest bidder did not meet the bid specifications.

Mr. Alfonse noted that under Chapter 30B if District does not accept bid that meets all of the bid specifications, there's a potential for a bid protest.

Ms. LeBlanc asked if funds from the FY 2024 budget would be used. Mr. Alfonse reviewed the funding for the street sweeper price included in the memo which Mr. Alfonse distributed at the meeting.

**Roll call vote: John Beauregard, yes; Daniel Patten, yes; Christine LeBlanc, yes; Kelly Cabral-Mosher, yes; John Perry, yes; Michael Gagne, absent.**

**Motion passed 5 – 0.**

Committee moved to discuss item 6a.

- a. Discussion of District staff and organization

**Motion to discuss staffing and organization made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded by Mr. Patten.**

Chair recognized Mr. Alfonse who said he is planning to leave his position in January 2024. He recognized Mr. Peckham who said that his plan is to retire at the end of December 2023.

The board thanked them for their dedication and service to the District.

Mr. Alfonse said that it would be difficult to find an Operations Manager with the knowledge that Mr. Peckham has. The institutional knowledge and grasp for every issue or problem that comes up every single day is unbelievable.

Mr. Beauregard asked if the information provided was for the record or for discussion purposes. Mr. Alfonse noted that some discussion on how to move forward would be needed. A Project Manager was hired with the hopes that person will advance to the leadership position in July. He suggested that at every meeting going forward, there should be some discussion on the progress of filling those two positions.

Ms. LeBlanc noted that the Operations Manager position should be advertised sooner rather than later. Mr. Alfonse noted that there may be a candidate internally who is interested in the Operations Manager position, which could be the smoothest transition. Management will have a preliminary discussion with the interested person and report back to committee next month.

Mr. Beauregard thanked both and noted they will be missed.

Mr. Peckham left the meeting at 8:16 a.m.

- b. Discussion of District employee health insurance contribution.

**Motion to discuss District's employee health insurance contribution made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Ms. LeBlanc.**

Chair recognized Mr. Alfonse who reviewed the memo. The District pays 75% of the employee's health insurance and any employee hired after February 1, 2012, pays 60% of the employee's health insurance. He asked if the board would want to keep the insurance subsidy contribution rate as it is currently or change it (75% for everyone). Dartmouth pays 52% for their employees, and the city pays 75% for their employees.

Ms. LeBlanc referred to the table with the memo, and asked for clarification on the column containing "*# of individual participants*" which shows 4 participants, but the text on the memo states "*this affects 7 employees, 6 of whom currently obtain health insurance*". Mr. Alfonse noted that there were employees who had *individual plans* and others who had a *family plan*. Total is seven (7) participants.

Mr. Alfonse discussed the various types of health insurance plans the District offers and the subsidy rates. He noted the most recent increase rate from Mayflower Municipal Health Group (MMHG).

Ms. LeBlanc asked if the change would affect current employees with the 75% rate. Mr. Alfonse replied that there was a compensation study done in 2021 where District evaluated the positions, evaluated the responsibilities, and a salary schedule was set based on those responsibilities. Currently there are employees that are in the same grade performing the same job. Those employees will eventually have the same income, but one of them, just by virtue of the fact that they were hired before February of 2012, will get more of their insurance paid. The disparity exists now.

Mr. Patten noted that typically contributions are reduced in response to tight budgets and/or financial difficulties. He asked if Mr. Alfonse remembered when the 75% rate was changed to 60% rate. Mr. Alfonse noted that at that time the District had insurance through the Town of Dartmouth, and there was a committee member who was also on the insurance advisory board committee as a retiree for the town. That committee member felt that it was unfair that District employees, who were getting health insurance through the town, were paying a lower rate than the town's employees.

Mr. Alfonse reviewed the District's OPEB trust and said that based on the information obtained from its OPEB actuarial advisor (Odyssey), there would be minimal impact on the District's OPEB liability, which is fully funded.

Ms. Cabral-Mosher noted that it was an insignificant effect long term.

Attorney Thomas asked what the effective date would be if the committee was to approve the health insurance change. Mr. Alfonse noted that it should be done during open enrollment period.

**Motion made by Mr. Patten to restore District's contribution to HMO health insurance plans to 75% for all employees effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, seconded by Ms. LeBlanc. Roll call vote: John Beauregard, yes; Daniel Patten, yes; Christine LeBlanc, yes; Kelly Cabral-Mosher, yes; John Perry, yes; Michael Gagne, absent.**

**Motion passed 5 – 0.**

Mr. Alfonse thanked the committee on behalf of the employees.

- c. Request to use District recycling funds

**Motion to consider a request to use District recycling reserve funds made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded by Mr. Patten.**

Chair recognized Ms. Perez-Dormitzer. She reviewed the memo requesting committee approve making \$25,000 available to New Bedford and Dartmouth from the District's Recycling Fund. Dartmouth's portion would be used to purchase blue bins for public schools and Town buildings including decals to label the blue bins and recycling carts. She noted several ideas to use the New Bedford's portion. New Bedford would receive \$21,198 and Dartmouth would receive \$3,803.

Ms. LeBlanc asked how the bins would be managed once they're in the building; who would be responsible for collecting and emptying all the bins. Ms. Perez-Dormitzer noted that she assumed Town building staff would be responsible for emptying their bins.

Mr. Patten asked if New Bedford had to spend the \$21,000 or is that just allocated to spend as needed. Ms. Perez-Dormitzer noted that it would be up to the District Committee to decide. She noted that because New Bedford hadn't spent their portion of the funds from the previous allocation, it would be a good idea to set a time limit for spending the funds.

Mr. Beauregard said that New Bedford should be encouraged to spend the funds.

Mr. Alfonse said that in order for New Bedford to expend money, they need some documentation that they're going to be receiving that same amount. They typically require some agreement with the District that it will grant funds. District could put an expiration date on the agreement and it could be extended by either party.

Attorney Thomas noted that unused funds would go back into the recycling fund.

**Motion to approve making the \$25,000 available to New Bedford and Dartmouth from the District's Recycling Fund and transferring the amount of \$25,000 from the Recycling Reimbursement Fund for this purpose.**

Attorney Thomas asked if \$25,000 was for each community or total. Mr. Alfonse said it was \$25,000 total and the allocation is \$3,803 for Dartmouth and \$21,198 for New Bedford.

**Motion made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded by Mr. Patten. Roll call vote: John Beauregard, yes; Daniel Patten, yes; Christine LeBlanc, yes; Kelly Cabral-Mosher, yes; John Perry, yes; Michael Gagne, absent.**

**Motion passed 5 – 0.**

- d. Authorize Request for Proposal for operation of compost area (including food waste)

**Motion to discuss issuing a Request for Proposal for operation of the compost area (including food waste) made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Ms. LeBlanc.**

Chair recognized Mr. Alfonse who reviewed Mr. Novelli's memo seeking Committee's authorization to advertise a request for proposal (RFP) for the operations and management of a composting facility. Mr. Novelli could not attend the meeting due to a conference at SWANA Young Professionals. He noted that Mr. Michaud from Dartmouth's Board of Health, contacted a District board member, and emailed Mr. Alfonse and Mr. Novelli about some concerns.

Ms. LeBlanc described the conversation with Mr. Michaud.

Attorney Thomas asked if Mr. Michaud was looking for the treatment of the flow from the compost facility before it goes into the wetlands. Mr. Alfonse noted that a baseline for nutrient pollution would need to be established without a compost facility. Ms. LeBlanc said the town has taken a very aggressive stance on nutrient pollution. Attorney Thomas described MassDEP's septic system regulations and the Town's stance on the issue.

Mr. Alfonse said that District hopes to address Mr. Michaud's concerns and move forward with the project in a way that's cost effective. A draft of the RFP could be provided for his input. Attorney Thomas asked if it could be a 2 phase RFP (pilot and then commercial operation). Mr. Alfonse said it can be written any way District chooses; however, coming up with a definition of what a pilot project is would likely limit the amount of material accepted.

Mr. Alfonse described the original plan for composting. Initially the District started looking at this as a possible grant application to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Introducing food waste to the process was suggested after meeting with a composting consultant.

Ms. LeBlanc asked if a third party would be constructing and funding the composting building. Mr. Alfonse said what was envisioned would be something similar to the compost facility that was visited by Mr. Novelli and Mr. Peckham. He described the building.

After further discussion the District will wait for the Town of Dartmouth's Board of Health outcome and report back the following month.

- f. District's staff reports  
**Motion to receive District's staff report made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded by Mr. Patten.**

Mr. Alfonse reviewed the report.

He noted that E.L. Harvey has indicated that they do not wish to extend their contract beyond June 30<sup>th</sup>. District should look for other waste disposal agreements with other haulers or municipalities.

## 7. Old Business

- a. Retiree life insurance.

**Motion to consider offering life insurance to District retirees made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded by Mr. Patten.**

Mr. Alfonse reviewed the memo.

Ms. LeBlanc noted that life insurance should be available to retirees at their cost.

**Motion to offer life insurance to District retirees 100% of the cost of the premium would be paid by the retiree made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Ms. LeBlanc. Roll call vote: John Beauregard, yes; Daniel Patten, yes; Christine LeBlanc, yes; Kelly Cabral-Mosher, yes; John Perry, yes; Michael Gagne, absent.**

- b. Engineering/Legal services – future landfill cell permitting

**Motion to receive an update on engineering / legal services for future landfill cell permitting made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Ms. LeBlanc.**

Mr. Alfonse noted that he and Mr. Novelli met with Geosyntec to discuss providing a scope of work/cost estimate for services, but there's no update.

Attorney Thomas provided an update on retaining legal services relative to site-assignment issues. He will provide more information at the April meeting.

- c. Set Meeting Schedule (May)

The May meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 25, 2023 at 8:00 a.m.

- 6g. Items which could not have reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance.

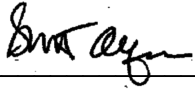
**Motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to litigation since an open meeting may have detrimental effect on the litigating position. The committee will adjourn in Executive Session and will not be returning to Open Session. Mr. Beauregard noted that since he is participating remotely, he stated that no other person is present and/or able to hear the discussion at his remote location. Motion made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded by Mr. Patten. Roll call vote: John Beauregard, yes; Daniel Patten, yes; Christine LeBlanc, yes; Kelly Cabral-Mosher, yes; Joh Perry, yes; Michael Gagne, absent.**

Committee entered into Executive Session at 9:01 a.m.

## 8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned in Executive Session at 9:18 a.m.

Approved by vote of District Committee on Thursday, April 27, 2023



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Scott Alfonse, Executive Director

**MEMOS**

- 6b. Memo – Employee Health Insurance Contribution dated 2/17/2023  
Attachment – Odyssey letter  
Attachment – Odyssey letter revised
- 6c. Memo – Waste Reduction memo from Marissa dated 3/9/2023
- 6d. Memo – Authorize advertising Request For Proposals for composting facility operations & management dated 3/10/2023
- 6e. Memo – Invitation for Bids for Street Sweeper dated 2/17/2023
- 6f. Memo – Staff Reports dated 3/10/2023
- 7a and 7b Memo – 7a. Retiree Life Insurance dated 2/17/2023  
Attachment – 6c. Retiree Life Insurance dated 2/17/2023  
  
Memo – 7b. Engineering/Legal Services – Future Landfill cell permitting dated 2/17/2023