

**DISTRICT COMMITTEE- GREATER NEW BEDFORD
REGIONAL REFUSE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT MEETING**

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 26, 2024

The Greater New Bedford Regional Refuse Management District Committee held a publicly posted meeting on Thursday, September 26, 2024, at 8:00 AM at the Dartmouth Town Hall - Room 309, 400 Slocum Road, Dartmouth, MA 02747.

District Committee Members in attendance: Chairperson John Beauregard, Daniel Patten (participated remotely via Teams), Christine LeBlanc, Michael Gagne, Kelley Cabral-Mosher, and Caroline Conzatti.

Also in attendance: Anthony Novelli, Executive Director; Lee Ferreira, Executive Assistant; Matthew J. Thomas, District Counsel; Robert Cabral, Director of Housing and Community Development, SRPEDD; Lizeth Gonzalez, Director of Economic Development, SRPEDD.

1. Call to order / Salute the flag

Chairperson Beauregard called the meeting to order at 8:00 am and led the pledge of allegiance.

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 Christine LeBlanc, a member of the District Committee, is participating remotely in this meeting. I want to remind the members that texting and private chats on Microsoft Teams or any other channel 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 I or any member cannot hear another member, please let me or the Executive Director know. Finally, I want to state that if Dan’s remote connection is lost, he should 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. All 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
Christine LeBlanc- Yes
Daniel Patten- Yes (participated remotely via Teams)
Michael Gagne- Yes

Kelley Cabral-Mosher- yes
Caroline Conzatti - yes

4. Approval of Minutes

- a. Draft Minutes of the July 18, 2024 meeting, regular session.

MOTION to approve the minutes of the July 18, 2024 meeting, regular session made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded by Mr. Gagne. Roll call vote: Chairperson John Beauregard- yes; Daniel Patten, yes; Christine LeBlanc, yes; Michael Gagne- yes; Kelley Cabral-Mosher, yes; Caroline Conzatti, yes. Motion carried 6-0.

- b. Draft Minutes of July 18, 2024, Executive Session meeting.

MOTION to approve the minutes of the July 18, 2024, Executive Session meeting, made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded by Mr. Gagne. Roll call vote: Chairperson John Beauregard- yes; Daniel Patten, yes; Christine LeBlanc, yes; Michael Gagne- yes; Kelley Cabral-Mosher, yes; Caroline Conzatti, yes. Motion carried 6-0.

5. Warrant Report and Ratification

- a. Warrants 01-25, 02-25, 03-25, 04-25, and 05-25 approval.

MOTION to ratify Warrants 01-25 dated July 12, 2024, Warrant 02-25 dated July 23, 2024, Warrant 03-25 dated August 8, 2024, Warrant 04-25 dated August 22, 2024, and Warrant 05-25 dated September 5, 2024, made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded by Mr. Gagne. Roll call vote: Chairperson John Beauregard- yes; Daniel Patten, yes; Christine LeBlanc, yes; Michael Gagne- yes; Kelley Cabral-Mosher, yes; Caroline Conzatti, yes. Motion carried 6-0.

6. New Business

- a. Presentation by Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD)

MOTION to receive a presentation by the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD). Motion made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded by Mr. Gagne.

Mr. Novelli mentioned that he approached SRPEDD at the request of the Committee to evaluate long-term management options for District-owned lands and introduced Mr. Cabral and Ms. Gonzales. Mr. Cabral mentioned that based on initial conversations, the District has a lot of options for land uses and has a lot of opportunities available. SRPEDD is experienced in preparing financial and technical analyses to compare potential uses, and he reviewed some similar projects SRPEDD has completed and the proposed project team. Ms. Gonzales mentioned that they have experience in rural, urban and suburban areas and are accustomed to working with different property types. She also mentioned that this proposal with SRPEDD is exempt from Chapter 30B procurement as an intergovernmental agreement.

Mr. Cabral reviewed the draft scope of work and proposed project timelines with the Committee. Ms. Gonzales mentioned that this project has the potential for economic development in the region and is therefore eligible for funding from the EDA (Economic Development Administration). SRPEDD would be responsible for the grant application and administration. The grant would only require the District to explore development options and would not require the District to move forward with any proposed developments.

Attorney Thomas asked about the proposed municipal assistance funding associated with this project and asked if this would affect Dartmouth or New Bedford's available municipal assistance funding from SRPEDD. Mr. Cabral replied that there would not be a conflict with the District using hours allocated to Dartmouth or New Bedford for this project and said that SRPEDD would communicate this with the communities.

Attorney Thomas pointed out that the word "growth" was used a lot in the proposal and requested that the wording be changed. The District tries to make it clear that it is not planning to expand the landfill footprint. The District plans to develop another phase/cell within the existing landfill, but does not want to give the appearance of expanding the landfill onto other parcels.

He also requested that the study incorporate an analysis of local traffic impacts, especially for residential neighborhoods. Mr. Cabral mentioned that SPREDD works with traffic impacts frequently and can include a summary in the plan.

Chairperson Beauregard asked how far SRPEDD goes into the development process after the initial planning & strategic development stage. Ms. Gonzales mentioned that SRPEDD is primarily involved in the planning and strategy phases, and some of the proposed developments may not happen for 5-10+ years. With the final strategic master plan, the District could use those documents to solicit proposals for the developments. SRPEDD could remain involved in the RFP process if desired, or could step away at that point. Mr. Cabral mentioned that they work frequently in this area and would continue to be available.

Ms. Gonzales further explained that the EDA could fund up to 50% of the study through a grant, or \$40,000. SRPEDD would have to apply for the funding and believes the funds would be awarded and available in early 2025. Because the project is planning to use EDA funding, SRPEDD would not be able to begin working on this project until after the grant was awarded and the funding was received.

Chairperson Beauregard thanked Mr. Cabral and Ms. Gonzales for attending and for the detailed presentation. They exited the meeting at 8:35 am.

MOTION to authorize the Executive Director to execute a contract with the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) subject to terms and conditions as negotiated by General Counsel for a Land Alternatives & Redevelopment Study and to authorize the transfer of \$40,000 from the Building & Capital Improvement Reserve for this study. Motion made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded by Mr. Gagne. Roll call vote: Chairperson John Beauregard- yes; Daniel Patten, yes; Christine LeBlanc, yes; Michael Gagne- yes; Kelley Cabral-Mosher, yes; Caroline Conzatti, yes. Motion carried 6-0.

- b. Discuss details of the Parental Leave policy

MOTION to discuss details of the Parental Leave policy made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded by Ms. Conzatti.

Mr. Novelli explained that two District employees are planning to take Parental Leave in the upcoming months, including himself. Both have a lot of responsibilities within the District and both are interested in continuing to work on a part-time basis while on leave. He believes that a part-time work arrangement in both cases would be beneficial to the District, as opposed to them taking 4+ consecutive weeks of leave and having other staff try to cover those duties. He reviewed the existing Parental & Family Leave language in the Employee Handbook, which pays employees in full for the first 4 weeks of leave and partially for up to 8 additional weeks. Since the employees would already be paid at 100% for the first 4 weeks, he suggested that there be some sort of compensation if they work part-time while on leave.

Mr. Novelli temporarily left the room at 8:39 a.m.

Mr. Patten suggested that the 12-week limit established in the policy remain and that the allowed leave be expressed in days instead of weeks for clarification. Mr. Gagne agreed that expressing the policy in allowed days of leave instead of weeks of leave makes more sense and is easier to track. For example, instead of being paid for 4 weeks of leave, employees would be paid for 20 days of leave.

Ms. LeBlanc said that if an employee works for a day during their paid leave period, it should not count against their days of paid leave available. Even in periods where paid leave is being paid at 75% or 50%, days that an employee works would be paid at their normal rate. These hours would not be eligible for comp time. The paid leave days still need to be used within one year of the qualifying event. The group agreed.

MOTION to approve amending the Parental & Family Leave Policy in the Employee Handbook to express the amount of paid leave available to employees in days instead of weeks, and to allow for employees to work over that paid leave period. made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded by Ms. Conzatti. Roll call vote: Chairperson John Beauregard- yes; Daniel Patten, yes; Christine LeBlanc, yes; Michael Gagne- yes; Kelley Cabral-Mosher, yes; Caroline Conzatti, yes. Motion carried 6-0.

Mr. Novelli returned to the room at 8:51 am. He thanked the Committee for implementing this policy and mentioned that he would remain available while on leave for any important matters and continued communication. Chairperson Beauregard appreciates that availability, and iterated that during those first four weeks, the newborn child is certainly the top priority.

Mr. Patten signed off at 8:54 a.m.

c. Staff Report

MOTION to receive the staff report made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded by Mr. Gagne.

Mr. Novelli happily announced that there have been no odor complaints since the last meeting and expressed appreciation to the landfill staff for their continued attention to this.

The District continues to work with LoCi Controls and CNBE to maximize gas collection and to detect and troubleshoot any surface gas emissions.

Mr. Novelli noted that Mr. Beauregard, Ms. LeBlanc, and he attended the Dartmouth Select Board meeting on 8/12/24 at the request of the Town Administrators. An update was provided on the current landfill capacity (about 4 years in the existing cells), they highlighted the financial benefits that the District provides to its member communities (estimated \$75 million in savings since Crapo Hill opened in 1995), mentioned that there are plans to construct an additional landfill cell, and discussed the long-term outlook for waste in the region (likely needing to be transported long distances at a considerable cost increase).

He mentioned that the staff is in the process of updating the District's website, which he is excited about and that that District is in the middle of its annual audit, which will be presented in November.

He reviewed the memo regarding electronic waste outlets in the area and noted that there are many existing options to recycle e-waste available to New Bedford and Dartmouth residents:

- The City of New Bedford accepts many electronics at no charge to residents- curbside collections are available by appointment for televisions, computer monitors, air conditioners, and dehumidifiers, or any of these items plus laptops and computer towers can be dropped off at the Recycling Center.
- The Town of Dartmouth accepts many electronics curbside and dropped off at the Dartmouth Transfer Station. They include televisions and computer monitors (\$15 curbside/\$10 drop-off), air conditioners and dehumidifiers (\$20 curbside/\$10 drop-off).
- Best Buy and Staples accept a wide variety of electronics at no cost.
- UMass Dartmouth holds an annual electronics drop-off event at the Buttonwood Park Zoo that is open to all and unlimited.

District staff will continue to advertise these options through press releases and other social media and make sure residents are aware of the options.

MOTION to accept the staff report and place on file made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded by Ms. Conzatti. Roll call vote: Chairperson John Beauregard- yes, Christine LeBlanc- yes, Daniel Patten- absent, Michael Gagne- yes, Kelley Cabral-Mosher- yes, Caroline Conzatti- yes. Motion carried 5-0.

d. Project Manager update

MOTION to receive an update on the Project Manager position made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded by Mr. Gagne.

Mr. Novelli said that he had interviewed two good candidates for the position thus far. One accepted another position and the other requested to work remotely once per week as his terms. The District's remote work policy allows remote work on a temporary basis, but does not allow for regular/weekly remote work. The Committee ultimately did not want to change the remote work policy, and the position currently remains vacant.

7. Old Business

- a. Discuss proposed revisions to the Employee Handbook

MOTION to discuss proposed revisions to the Employee Handbook made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded by Ms. Conzatti.

Mr. Novelli presented the updated language regarding supplemental insurance policies as discussed at the prior meeting.

Chairperson Beauregard commented that this language specifically mentions AFLAC and suggested that the mention to a specific company be removed in case the District changed providers down the road. The Committee agreed that the mention of AFLAC in section 4.12 should be removed and this change would be included in this motion.

MOTION to adopt the revised language for Section 4.12- Supplemental Insurance of the Employee Handbook as presented, and to fully remove section 4.5.2-Sick Leave Bank from the Employee Handbook made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded by Ms. Conzatti. Roll call vote: Chairperson John Beauregard- yes, Christine LeBlanc- yes, Daniel Patten- absent, Michael Gagne- yes, Kelley Cabral-Mosher- yes, Caroline Conzatti- yes. Motion carried 5-0.

8. Executive Session

MOTION that the District Committee go into Executive Session pursuant to General Law Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(7) and General Law Chapter 4, Section 7, Clause Twenty-Sixth(d) to discuss inter-agency or intra-agency memoranda or letters relating to policy positions being developed by the District and then reconvene in Open Session. The minutes of this Executive Session will become public once the policy positions being developed by the District have been fully developed. Motion made by Ms. Leblanc, seconded by Mr. Gagne. Roll call vote: Chairperson John Beauregard- yes; Daniel Patten, absent; Christine LeBlanc, yes; Michael Gagne- yes; Kelley Cabral-Mosher, yes; Caroline Conzatti, yes. Motion carried 5-0.

The committee entered into Executive Session at 9:13 a.m.

Chairperson Beauregard designated Mr. Gagne as Co-Chair before leaving the meeting at 9:35 a.m.

The committee returned into Open Session at 9:36 a.m.

9. Items That Could Not Be Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours In Advance

There were none.

10. Set Meeting Schedule

The next meeting was scheduled for October 24, 2024, and the following meeting for November 20, 2024.

11. Adjourn

MOTION to adjourn made by Ms. LeBlanc, seconded by Ms. Conzatti.

The meeting adjourned at 9:39 a.m.

MEMOS

6A. Presentation by Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD)

Attachment – SRPEDD Proposal – Final – 091924

6B. Discuss details of the Parental Leave policy dated

6C. Staff Report dated 09/26/2024

Attachment- tonnage graph as of 09/17/2024

Attachment – 2024 Site Life Memo

Attachment- income statement as of 9/19/2024

Attachment- Memo about Potential Electronics Drop-Off Day

7A. Discuss proposed revisions to Employee Handbook dated 09/26/2024

Attachment – Sick Leave Language revised

Approved by vote of the District Committee on October 20, 2024.



Anthony Novelli, Executive Director