

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

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 27, 2025

The Greater New Bedford Regional Refuse Management District Committee held a publicly posted meeting on Thursday, March 27, 2025, 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, Kelley Cabral-Mosher, and Caroline Conzatti.

Also in attendance: Anthony Novelli, Executive Director; and Matthew J. Thomas, District Counsel.

Others in attendance: Raphael Wechsler (from 8:00 a.m. until 8:31 a.m.)

1. Call to order / Salute the flag

Chairperson Beauregard called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. and led the pledge of allegiance.

2. Legal notices

Chairperson Beauregard read the following statement:

“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
Daniel Patten: yes
Kelley Cabral-Mosher: yes
Caroline Conzatti: yes
Michael Gagne: absent

4. Approval of Minutes

a. Draft Minutes of the February 13, 2025 meeting

Chairperson Beauregard requested a MOTION to approve the Draft Minutes of the February 13, 2025 meeting, Regular Session. MOTION made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Ms. Conzatti. All voted in favor. Motion passed 4- 0.

- b. Draft Minutes of the February 13, 2025 Meeting, Executive Session

Chairperson Beauregard requested a MOTION to approve the Draft Minutes of the February 13, 2025 meeting, Executive Session. MOTION made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Ms. Conzatti. All voted in favor. Motion passed 4- 0.

5. Warrant Report and Ratification

- a. Warrant 16-25 and 17-25 ratification

Chairperson Beauregard requested a MOTION to ratify Warrant 16-25 dated February 20, 2025 and Warrant 17-25 dated March 5, 2025. MOTION made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Ms. Conzatti. All voted in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

6. New Business

- a. Introduction of Project Manager Candidate

Chairperson Beauregard requested a MOTION to receive an introduction to a Project Manager candidate. MOTION made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Ms. Conzatti. All voted in favor.

Mr. Novelli introduced Raphael Wechsler to the Committee. Mr. Novelli had an initial virtual call with Mr. Wechsler, followed by an in-person interview with Mr. Beauregard at the District office that both went well. Meeting with the Committee was the next step in the process for this position.

Mr. Novelli explained that the Project Manager is a management position, with responsibilities involving landfill operations, waste reduction efforts, and administrative tasks. Mr. Wechsler was given a tour of the landfill to see the operation firsthand.

Mr. Patten asked Mr. Wechsler to give a brief overview of his background. Mr. Wechsler mentioned that he has an undergraduate degree from Boston University and an MBA from IESE Business School in Barcelona. He majored in sustainability and operational finance and has over 20 years of operational finance experience and over 10 years of sustainability experience. He was previously the sustainability lead with a packaging company, working with MRFs to increase recyclability of their products. He was more recently the head of operations and partnerships for the largest cannabis and industrial hemp organization in the state of New York, which represented around 90% of a now \$2 billion industry. He mentioned that sustainability is close to his heart.

Chairperson Beauregard asked Mr. Wechsler what about the District's organization excited him to want to work here. Mr. Wechsler responded that the District is facing some interesting problems. His prior experience in sustainability centered around educating people and businesses that being sustainable is a worthwhile investment. He wants to contribute to problems surrounding waste in the area.

Mr. Patten asked if Mr. Wechsler was responsible for supervising employees in his previous roles. He confirmed that he did supervise employees- the amount varied based on workflow. He also worked as a liaison between around 18 different committees, including retail, sustainability, and policy changes. He confirmed that he was required to worked with regulatory agencies.

Chairperson Beauregard asked Mr. Wechsler if he would have to give presentations to the different committees. Mr. Wechsler replied that he did a lot of speaking and presentations to groups. One interesting presentation was to the association of councilmen for all of New York, as well as the association of Mayors. The Executive Director of his previous position was Mayor

whom he worked closely with on a daily basis.

Mr. Novelli said that he informed Mr. Wechsler that education and messaging to the community in New Bedford and Dartmouth was an important part of the position, as the District continuously promotes waste reduction and recycling initiatives and asked about his previous experience with public outreach. Mr. Wechsler replied that when he came into his previous position, the open rates for their emailed outreach materials was in the high teens (15-19%). He reimaged the company's newsletter to get better information that would be of interest and conducted a lot of surveys that reached about 12,000 people. The open rate for those newsletters went to over 50% after his efforts, above the average open rate for similar outreach.

Chairperson Beauregard mentioned that the District has a small team in the administrative office and asked if Mr. Wechsler enjoyed working with a small group. Mr. Wechsler confirmed and said that he views himself as a piece of the puzzle and hopes to contribute to the District's goals.

Chairperson Beauregard asked about Mr. Wechsler's financial background. Mr. Wechsler is confident in constructing financial statements and is eager to put his MBA to good use.

Attorney Thomas asked what made Mr. Wechsler pursue an MBA in Spain. Mr. Wechsler responded that he was living in Harvard Square for a while, and wanted to put himself outside of his comfort zone. His mother worked as a translator, and he was eager to speak Spanish more often as well. Mr. Novelli asked if the school he attended was connected to Harvard Business School. Mr. Wechsler mentioned that the IESE Business School has partnerships with MIT, Stanford, and Harvard. His classes were in both English and Spanish. Mr. Novelli mentioned that there is a significant Spanish-speaking population in this area, and the District is working to better reach the Spanish-speaking population with outreach materials.

Ms. Cabral-Mosher asked what Mr. Wechsler's initial thoughts about joining the District were. Mr. Wechsler mentioned that he was excited about the opportunity for youth education and engagement, as well as pursuing additional revenue streams for the District beyond the landfill.

Chairperson Beauregard asked if Mr. Wechsler had any questions for the Committee. He asked about the Committee meeting schedule and was told that they generally meet once per month. Mr. Novelli added that the Project Manager is expected to attend the meetings and help act as a liaison between the Committee and the rest of the District's team.

Mr. Patten asked about a time when two of his positions on his resume overlapped. Mr. Wechsler responded that the positions worked together. A lot of policy around sustainability was still being formed in NY, and he would provide recommendations to the Senate and Governor's office. Initially he worked part time with the cannabis association, which later turned into a full-time position.

Chairperson Beauregard thanked Mr. Wechsler for attending the meeting and Mr. Wechsler left the room at 8:31 a.m.

Mr. Novelli mentioned that the position is intended to work closely with him on projects that can help the District have a greater impact and that he has a lot of ideas for projects that he doesn't have enough time to get to.

The Committee recognized that he didn't have any landfill experience, but acknowledged that there are not a lot of landfills around and that this wasn't surprising. Chairperson Beauregard asked Mr. Novelli if he could see himself working well with Mr. Wechsler. Mr. Novelli confirmed and mentioned that he seemed enthusiastic and intelligent.

Ms. Conzatti asked why Mr. Wechsler left his previous position. Mr. Wechsler had told Mr. Novelli that it required a lot of driving all around New York, and he wanted to work closer to home. He was willing to commute to the District's office.

Attorney Thomas mentioned that the District typically hires people provisionally for an initial period. Chairperson Beauregard confirmed that this was the intention. Attorney Thomas asked where this office would be located. Mr. Novelli replied that there is an extra desk at the office that he previously utilized as the Project Manager and is currently used by part-time employees.

Chairperson Beauregard asked if the Committee was comfortable moving forward with hiring Mr. Wechsler. There were no objections. He requested that a background check be conducted and that Mr. Novelli get in touch with a few of Mr. Wechsler's references as the final steps.

Chairperson Beauregard moved onto the next agenda item.

b. Discuss a New Position in Landfill Operations

Chairperson Beauregard requested a MOTION to discuss a new position in landfill operations. MOTION made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Ms. Cabral-Mosher.

Mr. Novelli mentioned that the District currently has an open position in landfill operations that was previously occupied by an equipment operator. Mr. Novelli believes it would be more beneficial to the operation to hire someone that is dedicated to the landfill gas and leachate collection systems, who could operate machinery at times as well. This position does not currently exist as presented, and he suggested that the position be titled "Landfill Gas System Technician" and presented a drafted a job description for this position modeled after a few of the existing job descriptions. He suggested that the position be created at a Grade 5 in the salary schedule, the same as a Mechanic.

Mr. Novelli requested that the District Committee vote to officially create the position of Landfill Gas System Technician and approve the draft job description.

Attorney Thomas asked how this would affect the budget. Mr. Novelli replied that the equipment operator position has been vacant since November. This new position would be a slightly higher pay than that equipment operator position, but this would still fit within the yearly budget due to the vacancy period. The FY2026 budget included a new hire at a Grade 5 pay.

Chairperson Beauregard requested a MOTION to create the position of "Landfill Gas System Technician" at a Grade 5 of the District's pay scale and approve the job description for the position. MOTION made by Ms. Conzatti, seconded by Mr. Patten. All voted in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

c. Discuss a Request for Additional Disposal Tonnage in FY2026

Attorney Thomas stepped out of the room for this agenda item at 8:45 a.m., noting that he also works for the City of Fall River.

Chairperson Beauregard requested a MOTION to discuss a request for additional disposal tonnage in FY2026. MOTION made by Ms. Conzatti, seconded by Ms. Cabral-Mosher.

Mr. Novelli mentioned that after the FY2026 waste disposal tonnage contract arrangements were approved at the previous meeting, he received a letter from the City of Fall River requesting additional disposal tonnage in their contract. He mentioned that the existing contracted tonnage amounts of 20,000-22,000 tons is about 9 months' worth of Fall River's total waste tonnage. They began delivering waste to Crapo Hill in October 2024, 3 months after the start of the fiscal year. Fall River has requested to deliver between 25,000-27,500 tons in FY2026, a difference of between 5,000-5,500 tons. Mr. Novelli mentioned that Fall River currently pays the second highest tip fee of any customer at \$116/ton, and that this additional tonnage would give the District approximately \$600,000 in additional revenue. He acknowledged that the District is always mindful of how much capacity is being consumed by non-member waste, but that the revenue from non-member waste is what allows the District to keep the annual assessments to its members so low, so there is always a balance. He mentioned that the current landfill cells have an estimated 6 years of capacity remaining, and the landfill cell currently being designed is expected to provide an additional 7 years of capacity- 13 years total.

Mr. Novelli reviewed the data in the memo that compared the total tonnage accepted by the District between FY18 and FY25. In FY18, the District did a lot of business with ABC Disposal and Frade's Disposal, who have both been bought out by larger waste companies since then. In FY18, the District accepted 68,764 tons of non-member waste and a total of 104,328 tons of waste including the member communities. Since then, the District has actively reduced the incoming non-member tonnage to preserve airspace for the members, which has also reduced the operating revenue.

In FY25, the District expects to accept between 30,000-35,770 tons of non-member waste and a total of around 73,770 tons max, using an estimate of 38,000 tons from the members. The FY2026 arrangements that were approved at the last meeting were to accept between 32,100-38,270 non-member tons for an estimated total of 76,270 tons max. If the additional tonnage was accepted, the District would accept between 37,100- 43,770 tons for a total of 81,770 max. Mr. Novelli mentioned that the District would accept more tonnage than the current fiscal year with the additional tonnage from Fall River, but would still be well below the amounts that the District was accepting in prior years. The 81,770 max tons would still be less than the 82,749 accepted in FY 23 and would be significantly less than FY18's 104,328. Mr. Novelli believes that this would still align with the District's goals to minimize non-member waste acceptance, and that the revenue could be put to good use for the members.

Mr. Novelli also mentioned that securing disposal contracts in this amount may be more challenging after FY2026, as the City of Fall River plans to advertise a bid for their waste collection and disposal and may no longer be a customer. Fall River represents a large percentage of the current non-member tonnage, is a good source of revenue, and pays a higher tip fee than most of the District's other customers. Their current tip fee of \$116/ton may be higher than the District receives from other customers in the following years, so he believes this is a good opportunity. Chairperson Beauregard added that accepting the City of Fall River's waste to begin with was a business decision, and it was not expected to be a long-term agreement. He asked how the Committee felt.

Mr. Patten was in favor of accepting the extra tonnage, knowing that the District will likely accept even less tonnage than the current FY25 arrangement in future years if Fall River is no longer a customer, which would offset this temporary increase. The Committee agreed.

Mr. Novelli reiterated that the District's non-member customers are uncertain after FY26 if Fall River goes elsewhere. The District could bid on just Fall River's disposal in the upcoming bid if the Committee desired, but that revenue is tough to rely on. He agreed that the additional

tonnage in FY26 would likely be offset by decreased tonnage accepted in FY27 and beyond.

Mr. Patten repeated that this would be a one-year deal only. Mr. Novelli confirmed that this contract offer was only for one year.

There was no further discussion.

Chairperson Beauregard requested a MOTION to approve a minimum of 25,000 tons and maximum of 27,500 tons for the City of Fall River at \$116/ton in the FY2026 contract in anticipation of a future decline in overall disposal tonnage to be accepted, and to authorize the Executive Director to execute this contract. MOTION made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Ms. Cabral-Mosher. All voted in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

Attorney Thomas re-entered the meeting at 8:52 a.m.

d. Staff Report

Chairperson Beauregard requested a MOTION to receive the staff report. MOTION made by Ms. Conzatti, seconded by Mr. Patten.

Mr. Novelli mentioned that Brown and Caldwell recently completed an annual airspace survey to determine the remaining capacity of the existing cells in the landfill. There are some variables involved, but the updated estimate is that there are about 6 years of capacity remaining in the existing landfill cells as of December 2024. The survey measured about 650,000 cubic yards of airspace and the current rate of consumption is around 105,000-110,000 cubic yards per year. This was welcome news and shows that the District's continued efforts to reduce waste have been effective in extending the lifespan of the landfill. He clarified that this estimate is only for the existing landfill cells and does not factor in the additional cell that is being designed. The additional cell would provide around 800,000 cubic yards of additional airspace, or an additional 7 years on top of the 5-6 years in the existing cells (12-13 years total).

Chairperson Beauregard suggested that this be summarized into a letter and sent to the member communities, as it is important information. The Committee agreed.

Attorney Thomas noted that Parallel Products has pointed to the limited lifespan of Crapo Hill as rationale for constructing their proposed facility in a recent New Bedford Light article, and this information could help alleviate any sort of emergency need regarding disposal capacity. Ms. Conzatti added that she was surprised that the article, which was focused on New Bedford's waste situation, did not have any quotes from the District or from Mr. Novelli. She said that it did not seem to tell the whole story. Chairperson Beauregard agreed and mentioned that he is planning to invite a New Bedford Light reporter to the landfill to do a separate article on just the District and Crapo Hill that can focus on all the positives and benefits it provides that are not as well known.

Mr. Novelli agreed that the benefits of the District are not well understood, including all of the dedicated waste reduction and recycling resources it provides its members, and that he wants to get some positive messaging out in the media. He added that Brown and Caldwell estimated that there were 5.2 years remaining based on the survey at the end of 2021 and the waste acceptance rates at that time. The updated estimates demonstrate that the District's efforts to reduce non-member tonnage and extend the lifespan of the landfill have been effective.

Chairperson Beauregard mentioned that the City of New Bedford is preparing to release a draft

update to its Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan for public comment. He hopes to see disaster debris management mentioned in the plan. Mr. Novelli met with a consultant working on the plan last year, and hopes that a disaster debris management plan will be referenced, but does not expect there to be a full debris management plan as part of this update. He hopes to work with the City and the Town of Dartmouth to develop a debris management plan- he can assist but this requires a lot of decisions from the municipalities regarding roles and responsibilities and debris staging locations. Chairperson Beauregard added that he and Mr. Novelli had discussed this plan with some representatives from Dartmouth before, and it was not easy to identify temporary staging locations for debris.

Mr. Novelli mentioned that the Committee has requested that he advertise an invitation for bids for auditing services after the current contract ends and asked when an appropriate time to advertise this would be. Mr. Patten suggested 6 months prior to the end of that fiscal year- around December 2025/ January 2026.

Mr. Novelli reviewed recent waste reduction efforts, including the implementation of stainless steel reusable trays into all New Bedford Schools to eliminate the use of single-use plastic trays. New Bedford received a \$76K grant from MassDEP for these trays and the District is helping to coordinate this. Chairperson Beauregard acknowledged that this post got a great response on Facebook.

Chairperson Beauregard requested a MOTION to accept and place the staff report on file. MOTION made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Ms. Conzatti. All voted in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

e. Discuss Health Insurance Updates and Benefits

Chairperson Beauregard requested a MOTION to discuss health insurance updates and benefits. MOTION made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Ms. Conzatti.

Mr. Novelli mentioned that the open enrollment period is coming up for health insurance and that Mayflower Municipal Health Group voted to pass a 6.75% increase on health insurance plans to its members. This is a significant increase but is actually less than the 10% or more that other municipalities and groups are facing and is a credit to being a member of MMHG. Chairperson Beauregard added that some towns are facing increases as high as 19%.

Mr. Novelli has been reviewing the other benefits available to District employees that may help offset some of these additional costs. Employees that elect a High-Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) are eligible for a Health Savings Account, which is a great benefit. He mentioned that employees that do not have a HDHP cannot have a Health Savings Account, but are eligible for a Flexible Spending Account (FSA), another type of account that can offer some tax savings. The District does not currently offer a Flexible Spending Account as a benefit and he suggested that it be added.

He explained that there is an annual fee to the employer for offering a FSA, plus monthly fees of around \$4 per month per account. He mentioned that the City of New Bedford and the Town of Dartmouth both offer FSAs, and the monthly cost is passed down to the employees. Attorney Thomas believes that Dartmouth's plan is around \$1.50 per employee per week, which is comparable.

Mr. Novelli mentioned that employees with a Health Savings Account are not eligible to have a Flexible Spending Account also, but that a limited purpose FSA or dependent care FSA accounts could be coupled with a HSA.

Mr. Patten asked when the open enrollment period was. Mr. Novelli replied April 15-May 15 and that the District would need at least 30 days before the start of the plan to enact this. The FSA enrollment period would then align with the open enrollment for health insurance each year.

Mr. Novelli mentioned that he had only received pricing from one vendor for this conversation, and he was told that they did not allow the monthly fees to be passed down to employees. He said that he could explore other providers for comparison.

Chairperson Beauregard was in favor of offering a FSA and mentioned that there are a lot of potential uses. The group discussed the details of FSA plans, and the Committee agreed that the District would cover the annual fee, but the monthly fees would be passed down to the employee.

Attorney Thomas stated that the Committee could decide to move forward with offering the FSA accounts, with the District covering the annual fee and the employee covering the monthly fees. Mr. Novelli could continue to look for a vendor, and the Committee could authorize Chairperson Beauregard to decide on which vendor the District moves forward with to expedite the process with the upcoming open enrollment.

Chairperson Beauregard requested a MOTION to authorize the Executive Director and Chairperson to secure a vendor for a Flexible Spending Account that will allow the District to pay the annual fee and the employee to pay the monthly cost. The specific vendor shall be at the Chairperson's discretion. MOTION made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Ms. Conzatti. All voted in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

7. Executive Session

Chairperson Beauregard requested a 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 Mr. Patten, seconded by Ms. Cabral-Mosher. All voted in favor, motion passed 4-0.

The Committee entered into Executive Session at 9:18 a.m.

The Committee returned to Open Session at 9:31 a.m.

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

There were none.

9. Set Meeting Schedule

The next meeting is scheduled for April 17, 2025. The following meeting was scheduled for May 20, 2025.

10. Adjourn

MOTION to adjourn the meeting made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Ms. Conzatti. All

voted in favor. Motion carried 4-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:32 a.m.

MEMOS

6A. Introduction of Project Manager Candidate

Attachment: Cover Letter

Attachment: Resume

Attachment: Employment Application

Attachment: Thank you email

6B. Discuss New Position in Landfill Operations

Attachment: Draft Job Description- Landfill Gas System Technician

6C. Discuss a request for additional disposal tonnage in FY2026

Attachment: Letter from City of Fall River dated March 20, 2025.

6D. Staff Report

Attachment: Income Statement as of 3-20-2025

Attachment: Tonnage Graph as of February 2025

Attachment: March 2025 Water Bill Insert

Attachment: (3) images shared on social media

6E. Discuss health insurance updates and benefits

Approved by vote of the District Committee on Thursday, April 17, 2025.



Anthony Novelli, Executive Director