

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

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 17, 2025

The Greater New Bedford Regional Refuse Management District Committee held a publicly posted meeting on Thursday, April 17, 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, Michael Gagne, and Caroline Conzatti.

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

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

Chairperson Beauregard called the meeting to order at 8:00 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: absent  
Caroline Conzatti: yes  
Michael Gagne: yes  
One seat on the Committee is currently vacant.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

a. Draft Minutes of the March 27, 2025 meeting

Mr. Gagne stated that he was absent at the March 27 meeting. Attorney Thomas added that the District has a quorum at this meeting, and a majority of the quorum can vote to approve the minutes.

**Chairperson Beauregard requested a MOTION to approve the Draft Minutes of the March 27, 2025 meeting, Regular Session. MOTION made by Ms. Conzatti, seconded by Mr.**

**Patten. All voted in favor. Motion passed 3- 0.**

- b. Draft Minutes of the March 27, 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 Ms. Conzatti, seconded by Mr. Patten. All voted in favor. Motion passed 3- 0.**

- c. Disclose Executive Session Minutes

Mr. Novelli mentioned that he reviewed the previously approved Executive Session minutes to determine if any were suitable for public disclosure. He suggested that the minutes of two prior minutes be disclosed: April 11, 2024 (subject 2 of 3 only); and September 26, 2024 (subject 1 of 4 only).

**Chairperson Beauregard requested a MOTION to disclose previously approved Executive Session minutes. MOTION made by Ms. Conzatti, seconded by Mr. Patten. All voted in favor. Motion passed 4- 0.**

## **5. Warrant Report and Ratification**

- a. Warrant 18-25 and 19-25 ratification

**Chairperson Beauregard requested a MOTION to ratify Warrant 18-25 dated March 20, 2025 and Warrant 19-25 dated April 3, 2025. MOTION made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Ms. Conzatti. All voted in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

## **6. New Business**

- a. Discuss Landfill Gas Collection System.

**Chairperson Beauregard requested a MOTION to discuss the landfill gas collection system. MOTION made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Mr. Gagne.**

Mr. Novelli explained that the overall landfill gas quantity being delivered to the power plant has been decreasing over the past year and that he continues to have conversations with CNBE (the power plant owner/operators) on ways to address this. Since December 2023, there has been about a 30% decline in gas production and currently only two of four available engines in the power plant are operating. He highlighted the importance of the gas collection system and the power plant as critical components of the landfill's operation. The District beneficially reuses the landfill gas to create electrical power, which would otherwise be a nuisance and odor concern, and this also creates a good source of revenue for the District.

A factor believed to be contributing to the declined gas production is the acceptance of Processed Bottom Ash (PBA) as landfill daily cover, which has a relatively high pH. Acceptance of a high-pH material could cause the pH of the landfill to be outside of the ideal range for decomposition of waste and gas production (between 6.5-7.5). Leachate sampling data, which is indicative of the pH within the landfill, has shown pH slightly higher than this ideal range over much of the past year.

Mr. Novelli added that the District has a Beneficial Use Determination permit from MassDEP that allows for the use of PBA as cover material and that PBA is not considered a hazardous waste.

Mr. Novelli also added that the District's Lead Landfill Gas Technician was taking some Parental

Leave recently and had only been working part-time. He will be returning to full-time work soon, and the District is also working to fill an additional Landfill Gas Technician role that is currently available. Mr. Novelli believes that additional staffing and attention to the gas system will effectively improve things, but it will take some time. The gas collection wells require a lot of ongoing maintenance, and the new position will be able to create a more proactive maintenance schedule for the wells.

Given the concerns around elevated pH, CNBE has requested that the District stop using PBA as cover material. Mr. Novelli said that the District has not accepted PBA since December 2024, when acceptance was paused at CNBE's request, and that the District has been conducting additional pH sampling at different points across the landfill to better understand the effects of pH on landfill gas production. He did not believe that the acceptance of PBA is the sole factor that has caused this level of declined production since December 2023, but does believe that it has contributed and said he does want to correct the pH to be within the ideal range.

Mr. Gagne asked about the revenue received from accepting the PBA. Mr. Novelli stated that the District was receiving \$27/ton and accepted around 9,000 tons in FY24 for approximately \$250,000 in revenue. The District will receive increased payments from CNBE as the landfill gas supply increases, but it is difficult to say how much additional revenue will be received through a continued pause in PBA acceptance and if it would be enough to offset the decline in PBA revenue.

Mr. Gagne asked how much the District would have to pay if it needed to purchase cover material. Mr. Novelli said that the District solicits bids for this material and would have to pay around \$10/ton if needed. He added that they have not needed to purchase daily cover material in recent years because they have had sufficient sources of alternative daily cover for which they receive revenue, including the PBA. The District also receives street sweepings as a source of alternative daily cover material and currently has a good and seemingly reliable supply, but it has a lower tipping fee than the PBA at \$22/ton. Mr. Novelli has continued to explore other alternative cover materials that the District could receive revenue for in place of the PBA but has not found one that generates similar revenue without any operational concerns yet.

Ms. Conzatti asked about the estimated timeline for increased gas since the District stopped accepting PBA in December. Mr. Novelli replied that it is difficult to predict exactly, but decomposition of waste and production of gas generally happens between 6 months and 1 year after the waste is placed. He is continuing to monitor trends and accumulate data related to pH and gas production.

Attorney Thomas added that the District's primary motivation has always been to responsibly dispose of solid waste for its members, and that the creation of landfill gas is a by-product of waste disposal. The District does have a financially successful contract with CNBE and has cooperated with CNBE on past requests, including providing long-term contracts and agreeing to amending their contract early. He reminded the Committee that a term of the existing contract is that if CNBE determines the power plant is no longer economically feasible to operate, they can terminate the contract. He does not believe CNBE wants to walk away from this, and the District certainly does not want this either.

Mr. Novelli summarized that CNBE has two current requests. The first is that the District commit to not accepting PBA throughout the operational life of their facility. Mr. Novelli added that he has currently implemented a pause between the District and Covanta in PBA acceptance with no definite timeline. He has not yet been approached by Covanta to resume deliveries. He asked how the Committee wanted to proceed on this first request.

Mr. Patten requested that Mr. Novelli keep track of the cost to the District by not accepting PBA, starting in December 2024. The District now receives less per ton for cover materials and there has therefore been a loss of revenue in that area. Mr. Novelli agreed to do so.

Mr. Gagne asked where Covanta would send the material if the District stopped accepting it. Mr. Novelli responded that the Bourne landfill accepts a majority of the PBA, but not all of it. He believes that Covanta already has another source for disposal, potentially out of the state.

Mr. Gagne clarified that if the Committee voted to commit to this pause, the District would potentially have to purchase daily cover material at an additional expense. Mr. Novelli agreed this could potentially happen if the District could not source other alternative cover materials.

Mr. Novelli added that the District continues to test the pH of the landfill leachate in different cells, at different heights, and in different areas to get a better understanding of this situation and accumulate additional data.

Mr. Patten suggested that the Committee could agree to extend the pause in PBA acceptance for another 6 months while they continue to evaluate the additional data as it is presented. He suggested that the resumed acceptance of PBA would have to be approved by the Committee.

Ms. Conzatti asked if food waste diversion from the landfill could be affecting the gas production as well, since the District makes a lot of efforts to reduce food waste. Mr. Novelli replied that methane production is dependent on the decomposition of organic waste, and reduced organic waste can lead to reduced gas production. However, it is difficult to fully quantify how much organic waste has been diverted from the landfill in recent years as a comparison. The District has some estimates of how much food waste enters the landfill and how much is diverted through the Recycling Center, but it's difficult to know how much is diverted to backyard composting and other avenues.

Attorney Thomas reminded the Committee that FY26's revenue is relatively stable, but the District has 1-year disposal agreements and there could potentially be a substantial revenue drop in FY27 from non-member tipping fees if the current arrangements are not extended.

Mr. Gagne acknowledged that pausing PBA acceptance will have a financial cost to the District and asked what CNBE's participation would be during this period of reduced revenue. Mr. Novelli replied that CNBE had not made any commitments yet, but that CNBE did recently fund the cost of installing 3 vertical gas collection wells to try to collect more gas. These new wells did provide a slight increase in gas and are expected to contribute over time, but this did not cause a major spike in production. He added that CNBE may be willing to contribute to additional gas restoration efforts.

Attorney Thomas mentioned that CNBE has been a strong partner for the District, and that they also do consulting work on waste-related topics. The City of New Bedford has contracted with them in the past around waste collection services. They also have a financial interest in this situation as the District's partner and owner of the power plant. He suggested that the Committee's decision take into consideration what is financially viable for the District's members in the long term.

Chairperson Beauregard suggested that the Committee agree to continue a pause in the use of PBA as landfill cover, cognizant of the financial impact it may have on District operations, and requested that CNBE help provide alternatives that help mitigate the loss of revenue to the District. The Committee agreed with this suggestion.

CNBE's second request was that the District consider accepting acidic solid waste materials that may help correct the pH, and/or wastes with high microbial content that generate gas easily.

Mr. Gagne was strongly opposed to the second request, especially given the District's current efforts to permit a new cell. Most of the suggested wastes have high potential for odors, and the District does not need any distractions that may lead to issues with neighbors or compliance, especially regarding odors. The Committee agreed.

Mr. Novelli replied that from CNBE's suggested list, compost tailings were being explored as a potential cover material and are not expected to generate odors. He is continuing to explore other means to reduce pH and improve gas flow that may not be as problematic to the landfill operations.

**Chairperson Beauregard requested a MOTION that the Committee authorize the Executive Director and Legal Counsel to respond to CNBE's first request in a letter as discussed, and that the District votes that it will not accept the wastes suggested in the second request. MOTION made by Mr. Gagne, seconded by Ms. Conzatti. All voted in favor. MOTION passed 4-0.**

Mr. Novelli thanked the Committee for their attention to this topic and reiterated its importance to the District.

Chairperson Beauregard moved onto the next agenda item.

b. Staff Report

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

Mr. Novelli mentioned that the District has not received any odor complaints since the last meeting and that the operations team continues to do a great job on this, as it is not easy.

Bids for the Main Pump Station Rehabilitation are currently being solicited and the results will be presented at the following meeting. He described the project and reminded the Committee that this is a critical piece of infrastructure for the landfill. The initial estimates for the work were around \$200,000 but there have been some additional tasks added since then.

The Dartmouth Conservation Commission approved the District's Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation (ANRAD) application unanimously at their April 8, 2025 meeting. This confirmed the boundaries of wetland areas in and around the landfill site, which will be factored into the design of the new landfill cell.

The Project Manager position has been offered to Mr. Wechsler after favorable references were received, and he is currently in the process of completing the onboarding paperwork and expected to start in the coming weeks.

Chairperson Beauregard expressed optimism with Raphael's hiring, noting that he is intelligent and has a strong financial background, and believes that Mr. Wechsler will be able to contribute a lot towards the District's mission. Mr. Beauregard understands that there are a lot of potential project ideas discussed and that he will help accelerate a lot of the items currently on Mr. Novelli's plate.

Mr. Novelli reviewed recent updates from the Waste Reduction office, including a recent

Compost Bin Day which sold subsidized home composting bins to 54 residents of New Bedford and Dartmouth. He mentioned that the District continues to try and offer a variety of options for residents to divert food waste from the landfill.

Ms. Conzatti mentioned that she recently attended the Earth Day parade in New Bedford and wanted to recognize Ms. Perez-Dormitzer for her efforts in helping to plan and coordinate the event. She said it was a very fun event and it was great to hear the District be recognized by the Mayor. Chairperson Beauregard echoed these compliments and appreciated the great waste reduction team that the District has. They are very active and positive on social media and he believes the addition of Mr. Wechsler will be helpful in this area of the District's operations as well. Mr. Novelli recognized all the time and energy that goes into managing these social media accounts and agreed that the District's team does a great job with it.

**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.**

**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. Conzatti. All voted in favor, motion passed 4-0.**

The Committee entered into Executive Session at 8:50 a.m.  
The Committee returned to Open Session at 9:13 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 May 20, 2025. The following meeting was scheduled for June 17, 2025.

**10. Adjourn**

**MOTION to adjourn the meeting made by Mr. Gagne, seconded by Ms. Conzatti. All voted in favor. Motion carried 4-0.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:14 a.m.

**MEMOS**

6A. Discuss Landfill Gas Collection System  
Attachment: CNBE Letter to A. Novelli dated April 9, 2025

6B. Staff Report

Attachment: Letter to Dartmouth Select Board from GNBRRMD dated 4/7/2025, Re: Crapo Hill Landfill Capacity Update

Attachment: Letter to Mayor Mitchell from GNBRRMD dated 4/7/2025, Re: Crapo Hill Landfill Capacity Update

Attachment: Income Statement as of April 7, 2025

Attachment: Photo from Compost Bin Day 4/5/2025

Attachment: Facebook post on the City of New Bedford's page regarding Yard Waste Collection

Attachment: Graph of waste tonnage received January 2024- March 2025.

Approved by vote of the District Committee on May 20, 2025.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Anthony Novelli".

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Anthony Novelli, Executive Director