

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

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, July 29, 2025

The Greater New Bedford Regional Refuse Management District Committee held a publicly posted meeting on Tuesday, July 29, 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, Ed Iacaponi, and Caroline Conzatti. Kelley Cabral-Mosher was absent.

Also in attendance: Anthony Novelli, Executive Director; Lee Ferreira, Executive Assistant; Raphael Wechsler, Project Manager.

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

Caroline Conzatti: yes

Michael Gagne: yes

Kelley Cabral-Mosher: Absent

Ed Iacaponi: yes

4. Approval of Minutes

a. Draft Minutes of June 17, 2025 Meeting, Regular Session

Chairperson Beauregard requested a MOTION to approve the Draft Minutes of the June 17, 2025 meeting, Regular Session. MOTION made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Mr. Gagne. All voted in favor. Motion passed 5- 0.

- b. Draft Minutes of June 17, 2025 Meeting, Executive Session

Chairperson Beauregard requested a MOTION to approve the Draft Minutes of the June 17, 2025 meeting, Executive Session. MOTION made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Ms. Conzatti. All voted in favor. Motion passed 5- 0.

5. Warrant Report and Ratification

Chairperson Beauregard requested a MOTION to ratify Warrant 24-25 dated June 25, 2025 and warrant 1-26 dated July 27, 2025 made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Mr. Gagne. All voted in favor. Motion passed 5-0.

6. New Business

- a. Discuss Potential Solar Solicitation

MOTION to discuss a potential Solar solicitation made by Ms. Conzatti, seconded by Mr. Gagne.

Mr. Novelli explained a few different opportunities to potentially utilize solar energy in the District's operations- both for on-site usage and as a potential revenue source by feeding power back to the grid. The process of feeding energy back to the grid can be time consuming (could take years to get all permits), and he wants to get the process started.

Mr. Gagne acknowledged that Attorney Thomas has a good amount of experience implementing solar at other landfills and municipalities. Also, that a common complication for similar projects is the interconnection permit with Eversource. He recommended some early conversations with Eversource about the feasibility of interconnection.

Mr. Novelli agreed and has discussed this with Attorney Thomas. He imagines a phased approach to implementing solar. The first phase would be to utilize the energy on-site with battery backup, which does not require an interconnection permit and could be accomplished more quickly while the interconnection study is being conducted to determine long-term feasibility.

Mr. Gagne also added that there could be potential to enter into offtake agreements with neighboring properties in the business park to directly purchase the power generated, potentially reducing transmission costs. Mr. Patten mentioned that the District had considered this a few years ago, but at that time there was not enough available infrastructure in the local grid for the District to feed into. There is a privately owned solar field near the landfill, which may have added some capacity locally. Mr. Novelli understood the complications, and noted that the consultant study they wish to procure would assist with his feasibility.

Mr. Wechsler reviewed the presentation and noted that the expected demand for electricity continues to increase at a significant rate. Massachusetts leads the United States in converting capped landfills to solar arrays, and around 60% of development in MA since 2010 has come from clear cutting land. Utilizing capped landfill makes a lot of sense and doesn't require clear cutting.

He mentioned that his vision for the first phase of this approach would be to find a way for the District's operations to be self-sufficient for electricity, especially as electricity rates continue to increase (~30% increase over the past 5 years). The second phase would involve putting solar on the capped slopes of the landfill and feeding power back to the grid. Phase 3 could involve some of the District's other properties.

He referred to the Greenwood landfill solar array in Worcester, which is owned by the City of Worcester and generates a significant amount of annual revenue for the City. Ownership of the system will need to be decided after further due diligence, as the District would have the option to own the panels outright or lease the land to a developer. He wishes to work with a solar consultant to perform a comprehensive assessment of the District's options for solar. The District currently pays \$6,000- \$7,000 per month in electrical bills and staff see this as a significant cost-saving opportunity with the potential to generate revenue.

Mr. Novelli added that the recommended path forward would be to issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a qualified solar consultant to work with to perform a comprehensive analysis of the District's options. A Request for Proposals would then be prepared to solicit the actual installation.

Mr. Gagne requested that SRPEDD consider this work in their land use analysis and mentioned that many communities are incorporating solar into cranberry bogs. Mr. Novelli confirmed that this potential would be explored further, and that there are incentives for dual-use systems that incorporate solar and agriculture.

Mr. Patten added that the solar market in general is mature, and panels have become more efficient and cheaper over the years, so this has been a tested market.

Mr. Iacaponi asked if there was a state contract available that had vetted solar consultants so the District would not need to follow the traditional procurement pathway. Mr. Novelli was not aware of any, but would look into this further.

Mr. Gagne made a MOTION to authorize the Executive Director to research the Goods and Services Bulletin for qualified and vetted solar consultants, and if that is not satisfactory, to advertise a Request for Qualifications, subject to edits by District Counsel. MOTION seconded by Mr. Patten. All voted in favor. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Gagne expressed appreciation to Mr. Novelli and Mr. Wechsler for researching this opportunity to generate revenue for the member communities outside of landfill operations.

b. Discuss District Staffing

Chairperson Beauregard requested a MOTION to discuss staffing. MOTION made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Ms. Conzatti.

Mr. Novelli explained that he has received feedback from the operations team that the staffing has been short-handed lately, which has been leading to some frustration. Staff want to take days off, but there are not enough people available to cover them. He reviewed the operations staffing from prior years, where there were more operations staff in total than the District currently has employed. In addition, the landfill continues to grow in size, which leads to more maintenance requirements. The Operations Manager has routinely been scheduled in machines to make things work, which can take away from other responsibilities and his ability to react to things as they come up. He mentioned his intention to hire another equipment operator.

Mr. Gagne agreed with this approach and added that it can be difficult to find well-qualified individuals for this type of position. The Town of Dartmouth is currently hiring for multiple similar positions and having some difficulty filling them. He suggested that the District's benefits be highlighted in the hiring process, noting the long-term benefits of this position. He noted that this problem could continue to

worsen as the existing staff earn more vacation time if an additional person was not hired. He also suggested that the existing operations staff help advertise this availability to people they may know.

Mr. Novelli added that this position was not anticipated in the current budget (adopted January 2024), but that it may be able to fit within the budget due to some other changes. If not, he would present budget revisions at a future meeting.

Chairperson Beauregard added that this is a tough job and is often under-appreciated. He expressed gratitude to the District's existing operations team for their continued dedication.

Mr. Patten asked if any of the existing Equipment Operators were close to retirement age. Mr. Novelli replied that one of them is getting close, which provides some additional motivation to get another person trained and acquainted with the operations. Mr. Novelli added that the existing team is great and they perform a lot of different tasks, and this additional staff member would be appreciated.

Mr. Patten asked if it would make sense to hire a laborer at a lower grade, who could move into the operator position after this employee retires. Mr. Novelli replied that most of the operational needs involve operating various pieces of equipment, and that they would need someone licensed and qualified to operate the heavy machinery to be most effective.

The Committee agreed with advertising and hiring another equipment operator at this time.

c. Discuss Compensation Schedule

Chairperson Beauregard requested a MOTION to discuss the compensation schedule. MOTION made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Ms. Conzatti.

Mr. Novelli relayed some feedback he received recently from some staff that have been employed with the District for a long time and are at the top step in their grade. They do not have additional step increases available and received a 3% cost of living adjustment this past year. Health insurance increased by 6.75% as actual costs of living increase, and there is concern that if this trend continues, their actual take-home pay will decrease, despite the COLA adjustments.

The Committee discussed how similar compensation schedules are structured in other municipalities for this scenario and acknowledged a potential lack of incentive after reaching the top step. Often, there are no additional step increases available after reaching the top step, and this has been the topic of many conversations and meetings in those areas. The Committee members value the District's employees and want everyone to feel appreciated.

Mr. Gagne acknowledged the complexity of this issue and that many municipalities are having similar conversations, including New Bedford and Dartmouth, which can be extremely time-consuming. He believes that the District could learn from some other recent developments and suggested that the Personnel Subcommittee meet to review the policies in other areas and come up with a recommendation.

Chairperson Beauregard agreed with this recommendation. He noted that there are only two members currently on the Personnel Subcommittee. A third seat was not filled at this time.

Mr. Patten described a scenario he has seen where another step is added to a salary schedule. If there is a 3% COLA available and they add another step, then the COLA drops down to 1% and the step increase is for the other 2%. So the people in the middle steps end up getting less due to the lower COLA, but it provides incentive for those at the top step. They did not get an additional step and the 3% COLA in this case.

The Personnel Subcommittee plans to schedule a meeting to discuss further.

d. Discuss Cranberry Bog Agreement

Chairperson Beauregard requested a MOTION to discuss the Cranberry Bog agreement. MOTION made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Ms. Conzatti.

Mr. Novelli informed the Committee that the District's share of revenue from its licensing agreement to operate the cranberry bogs for FY2025 was higher than the previous years due to increased cranberry crop. The current license expires June 30, 2026. The licensee, S.K. Wainio explained that they had put their own money into renovating one of the bogs, which led to increased yield, and asked if the Committee would consider agreeing to a reduced payment structure given this investment. Wainio's concern is that the license agreement will not be renewed and he will lose out on this investment into the bog.

The Committee discussed the terms and conditions of the existing license agreement- the District receives 10% of revenue for berries sold for less than \$50 per barrel and 20% for berries sold for over \$50/barrel. The District has not yet received payment for the latest crop, and the Committee requested resolution as quickly as possible. Mr. Iacaponi described some similar situations he has encountered in the past and agreed that the cranberry industry can be complicated.

Chairperson Beauregard requested that Mr. Novelli and Attorney Thomas meet with them and attempt to resolve the situation. The Committee made no agreement to lower the payments due at this time.

e. Staff Report

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

Mr. Novelli reviewed a report of tonnages received for fiscal year 2025. He mentioned that the District received two odor complaints since the last meeting and described the responses taken by District staff. Staff take these complaints seriously and perform an evaluation of where the odor may be coming from. If it is believed to be coming from the landfill- any operational measures that can help the situation are taken, and the response is communicated with the person calling. One of the complaints was received around 4:45 am and mentioned a smell of gas in the business park. The operations manager responded promptly and did not find any gas leaks to report from the landfill. The power plant was down but the flare was operating. It is unknown if there was another natural gas leak elsewhere, or if the gas smell was coming from the landfill. The second complaint was from a neighbor who lived about ½ mile away. Mr. Novelli responded to the complaint and there were no odors on the road in between the landfill and the residence. When he arrived, he smelled a strong odor near this house that resembled sewage. He believes that a nearby neighbor was pumping a septic tank or similar, and that the odor was not coming from the landfill. The neighbor agreed with this analysis and appreciated the in-person follow up.

He reviewed the rest of the staff report, including the total tonnages delivered by the member communities, which increased slightly from the prior year. The Town of Dartmouth delivered 6,258.5 assessable tons and the City of New Bedford delivered 38,662.85. This equates to a 83.81% share of the member waste for New Bedford and 16.19% for Dartmouth- these percentages are used in calculating the assessments in the following year (fiscal year 2027).

The Committee had some preliminary discussions about the FY2027 budget and the potential impacts with Fall River's upcoming solicitation for collection and disposal. Fall River's current contract ends June 30, 2026. Losing this contract would have a significant impact on revenue but would preserve airspace in the long run. The District could choose to submit a bid as the disposal option, partnering with a hauler that performs the collection services. The District wants to prioritize the landfill's capacity for its members, but also relies on tipping fees to fund operating costs and keep assessments low to the members. Mr. Novelli is preparing an analysis of different scenarios that will assist with this decision process and no decisions were made at this time.

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 5.0.

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 5-0.

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

The Committee returned to Open Session at 9:28 a.m.

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

There were none.

8. Set Meeting Schedule

The next meeting is scheduled for August 28, 2025. The following meeting was scheduled for September 10, 2025. The Committee may decide to cancel one of these two meetings as necessary.

9. Adjourn

MOTION to adjourn made by Mr. Patten, seconded by Mr. Gagne. All voted in favor. MOTION passed 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 9: 30 am.

MEMOS

6A. "Exploration of Solar Benefits" powerpoint presentation.

6B. Discuss District Staffing

6C. Discuss Compensation Schedule

6E. Staff Report

Attachment: Community tonnage delivered to Crapo Hill up to FY2025

Attachment: Fiscal Activity Report- FY2025

Attachment: Income statement for FY2025 as of July 28, 2025

Attachment: Investment Reports for District Trust & Reserve funds for Fiscal Year 2025, prepared by Bartholomew & Co.

Approved by vote of the District Committee on September 10, 2025.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Anthony Novelli", positioned above a horizontal line.

Anthony Novelli, Executive Director