

# SMITHVILLE BOARD OF ALDERMAN

## WORK SESSION

February 2, 2021 6:30 p.m.  
City Hall Council Chambers

**Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this meeting was held via teleconference.**

**The meeting was streamed live on the city's FaceBook page.**

### 1. Call to Order

Mayor Boley, present at City Hall, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

A quorum of the Board was present via Zoom meeting: Steve Sarver, Marv Atkins, Dan Ulledahl, Melissa Wilson and John Chevalier. Jeff Bloemker was present at City Hall.

Staff present via Zoom: Cynthia Wagner, Chuck Soules, Stephen Larson, Matt Denton and Linda Drummond.

### 2. Discussion of the Solid Waste Contract Renewal Process

Chuck Soules, Public Works Director, gave a brief history of the Solid Waste Management Plan.

In 2016 the City established the steering committee to develop a solid waste management plan and that was attached to the staff report. The Solid Waste Management Plan was never adopted by the City. At that time the City did request a proposal for residential collection services and WCA was awarded the contract. Their services started in 2017 and the contract is up March 31, 2022.

Staff was recently notified by WCA that they were acquired by the firm GFL Environmental so we may be seeing some changes in the City's bills and correspondence.

WCA's services provide weekly collection of municipal solid waste to our residential customers, collection of recyclables, seasonally collect compostable materials and bulky item pick-up twice a year in the spring and late summer/early fall.

- *In 2016 Steering Committee developed a Solid Waste Management Plan (not adopted)*
- *City requested proposals for Solid Waste Collection*
  - *WCA was awarded the contract beginning in 2017 and ending March 31, 2022*  
*(WCA was recently acquired by GFL Environmental)*

- *Services Provided:*
  - *Weekly collection of MSW*
  - *Weekly collection of Recyclables*
  - *Seasonal collection of Compostable materials*
  - *Twice / year Bulky Item pick-up*

The City has 3,621 residential solid waste accounts, and we charge residents \$19.90 per month. Of that, \$19.51 per month goes to WCA to pay for their services. The remaining \$ .39 the City pays to MARC to participate in the Household Hazardous Waste Program.

In 2020 WCA reported they collected 3,274 tons of municipal solid waste from our residences which is fairly consistent with the 2019 numbers.

In 2020 WCA collected 626 tons of recycling and in 2019 it was 608 tons. This gives the City only about a 16% recycling rate which does not include compost. WCA estimated that they collected about 550 tons of compost in 2020. Recycling and compost collection total diversion rate that were not sending to the landfill is about 26%. This does not include the bulky item weight; we do not receive a report on that.

*Data*

- *City has 3621 Residential Solid Waste Accounts*
- *Cost of collection service is \$19.90/ month*
  - *WCA cost- \$19.51/ month*
  - *Remainder of fee is for City participation in MARC HHW program*
- *WCA collected 3274 tons of solid waste (2019 – 3149 tons)*
- *WCA collected 626 tons of recycling (2019 – 608 tons)*
- *16% recycling rate (compost not included)*
  - *2019 - 16% recycling rate*
- *Estimated 550 tons compost*
  - *Diversion Rate (including compost) – 26%*

*Additional services / areas for improvement:*

- *Improved reporting*
- *Incentives to recycle*
- *Tire disposal*
- *Education*
- *E-Waste*
- *Paper Shredding*

Chuck noted some areas where we could see some improvement in the contract and in service:

- *bulky item pick-up - a report on the total weight and how much they collect. We know they collect it, but we do not have any quantitative numbers for it.*

- We receive a list of people that call in and every month (around 200 in 2020), but we do not receive a resolution. Most are missed calls or missed pick up, or they want another cart. We assume that those are taken care of, but it would be nice to know and how long it does take WCA to respond and that it was resolved.
- Incentives to recycle - if somebody wants a second solid waste cart there is an additional \$5 charge. We could increase that cost and to disincentivize people from getting that second cart for solid waste.
- Tire disposal - we could ask for them to be picked it up with the bulky item pick up, or have one day a year for residents to put the tires out have them picked up.
- Educating residents on what is recyclable – using social media and maybe including information in the water bills.
- E-Waste is essentially computers, TVs etc. These types of things can be collected and salvaged and can be picked up separately.
- Paper shredding for documents that residents do not want to throw in the trash like sensitive materials. A lot of businesses have that service, but lot of communities hold a paper shredding event for residents to bring those documents to be shredded. This could be done for an upfront fee or be included in the in solid waste fee every month.

Mayor Boley said that the Chamber of Commerce does do a paper shredding event for members but agrees that a citywide event would be beneficial. He stated that he likes the idea of adding E-Waste. He explained that there are a lot of businesses in the Northland that have giant shredders that will take E-Waste and shred the hard drives. For the education, since we now have e-billing for the water bills, inserts would not go to all residents. He explained that he has been talking to some folks about working with the schools to come up an information sheet and turn it into a sticker sheet to send home with the kids to stick to the trash cans to remind them what is recyclable is not.

Chuck explained that in Lawrence they had stickers just like this that the city put right on the recycling can that way people could take a second look at it when they are throwing things away.

Chuck said that due to COVID-19, MARC did not hold Household Hazardous Waste events last year, but we could definitely host an event for our residents, so they do not have to haul their items so far.

Mayor Boley said he would like to see cardboard collection on the list for our businesses. He knows some of the other solid waste companies offered that service. He explained that right now MARC is accepting proposals for grants and there is a category that our Main Street could apply for that could be used for cardboard recycling. He feels we should add business waste to our Solid Waste Plan.

Alderwoman Wilson stated she would like to add on the paper shredding she said in previous years she believes it was Clay County who coordinated events where you could take your paper to be shredded at different locations around the county. She would like to see us coordinate one here in Smithville once or twice a year.

Mayor Boley said he would like to see these events lined up with the bulky item pick up or the city-wide garage sale. That way if our residents do not sell items during the garage sale, they can put them on the curb for pick up.

Chuck said that some of the items can be things that the city can take on and some of them can be also included in the support from our solid waste provider. These items we can add whether the Board decides to go with another RFP or decides to try and negotiate the contract with WCA.

*Action Requested:*

- *Does Board desire to review services and identify any changes?*
- *Does Board desire to negotiate with WCA/ GFL for renewal of contract?*
- *Does Board desire to solicit proposals for solid waste collection?*

Alderwoman Wilson said we need to be careful. She likes what Chuck presented but does not know that we want to see items like the shredding be included in the monthly bill. She explained that the shredding is going to be very minimal and there are still people who do not want to recycle. Those are the ones who feel their bills are too high now due to paying for the recycling. They are not recycling now and probably never will. She believes those are the items that really need to be discussed going forward.

Alderman Atkins agreed and said we do not want to add additional benefits they do not want to pay for.

Alderman Sarver asked if there was any way glass could be added to the recycling?

Chuck said the recyclers do not like glass. He said that what happens when you put it in with your recyclables all the glass shards end mixed in with all the fiber. The fiber then is not as valuable. Chuck explained that in Lawrence they said that had to be included and they ended up paying significantly for that collection. Chuck asked if Ripple still has a dumpster out by Price Chopper?

Mayor Boley said they do, but the problem we have in Smithville is the length of the City. People also have a difficult time remembering to take their glass when they go to the grocery store. He said that he has had to make special trips because he forgets to take it. He asked if we could maybe work with Ripple to get one or two smaller bins placed somewhere else in the city?

Chuck said that staff could have those discussion with Ripple about getting additional smaller glass bins.

Chuck noted that staff is looking for direction from the Board on how to proceed with the City's next Solid Waste contract. He said obviously the Board is not interested in increasing cost to our residents for these services. Services like paper shredding can be separate events the community can hold. Chuck explained that we have to give notice if we are going to change service providers to WCA six months in advance of the March 31, 2022. He asked if the Board wants to look at another steering committee to discuss this, or if they want staff to send out an RFP or do you want staff to talk to WCA and see what some of their thoughts could be? He explained that he and Cynthia have a meeting with WCA Thursday morning and would be able to find out some more information from them to bring back to the Board.

Alderman Chevalier asked with the GFL Environmental acquisition of WCA would residents notice any kind of service level changes or if we would be anticipating changes in customer service with this new take over, or does staff think it is going to be similar to how WCA has operated in the past few years?

Chuck said that they sent a letter that said we would still receive service from the same people that are servicing our contract now and still speak to the same people in the office, so as far as we know everything should remain the same.

Cynthia noted that when the City received the notification from WCA of the acquisition in advance of receiving that email, our contact at WCA had called her to let her know that the change was coming and indicated that there should not be any change. As Chuck noted the contract remains the same and she and Chuck are actually meeting with our contact in person Thursday here at City Hall to go through the report just so he can answer any issues and questions we have.

Alderman Chevalier said that he has been very happy with WCA and does not feel it is necessary to go through the bid process. He said they are light years ahead of who we used to have, and we do not have near the complaints we used to. We do still hear some complaints but WCA seems to go out there and actually fix the problems. He really would like to continue that service. Alderman Chevalier noted concerning the \$5 for extra trash bin, he would like to see that definitely increase significantly. He said he would also like the extra recycle bins to be a cheaper fee.

Mayor Boley said he believed there was no charge for extra recycle bins.

Chuck agreed that charging more for the trash bins and no charge for recycle bins might be a good incentive for people to recycle.

Alderwoman Wilson stated that she does not disagree with Alderman Chevalier on not getting bids from other vendors, WCA seems to have done a good job. She asked what complaints City staff has had from residents calling the city having issues with the trash

service? Have we seen a change in that since we have had WCA or if there any way of knowing?

Chuck said he did not know how it was before, but he knows when the residents call City Hall staff transfers them over to WCA. He said it does seem like WCA takes care of those and we do not get calls from the same person over and over. He said he would like to see some better reporting on that so we could track it better.

Alderwoman Wilson said she does not really agree with staff referring the residents on to WCA with their questions and concerns, she said she understands that being they are the ones providing the service. She said that she has always been of the mindset the City is the one providing that service to the citizens the City should be the one handling the frustration or the concerns of the citizen. She said that she is not aware of a vendor that is providing a service to a city where the customer is being told you need to call that vendor.

Cynthia stated that she and Alderwoman Wilson have had that conversation and she did have some conversation with staff and for the most part the first time a person calls staff takes the information, and then staff follows up with WCA. Staff has had a few instances where there becomes a communication gap and perhaps that resident may not be pleased with what had happened and they continue calling. Cynthia said it is her understanding for the most part staff does call that first time and beyond when there are issues.

Alderwoman Wilson said that based on the information received from the conversation that Cynthia and Chuck will have with our contact at WCA Thursday is when the decision is made whether we need to negotiate or send out another request for services. She suggested that based off of what is learned from that meeting, if Cynthia or Chuck pick up anything that leads them to think it may not be the service we have been used to, then we decide what needs to be done.

Cynthia noted that after that discussion staff could provide information to the Board and have a brief follow up at the next work session.

Alderwoman Wilson said that would work for her.

Alderman Ulledahl said he has been relatively pleased with the service from WCA

Mayor Boley said that they have actually had two pretty big incidents and one was near his house where they accidentally dumped the whole truck in the street. He said they cleaned it up pretty quickly.

Alderman Chevalier noted that the last trash service the City had had issues all the time, not picking up for a week, trucks breaking down, etc.

Mayor Boley said he only knew of a couple incidents with WCA having truck issues. He said that he also does not get a lot of calls for missed pick-ups either.

Cynthia said that we do have calls and we track those calls, but it is not a significant volume. Cynthia asked if there anything in particular the Board wants staff to inquire about when they meet with our contact from WCA other than about that continued service-level, what we can expect in the changes with that transition?

Mayor Boley said cut their cost, reduce their fees.

Alderman Sarver said he would like them to continue having only three holidays a year for no pick-up service.

Mayor Boley said he wants to see the continued yard waste pick-up.

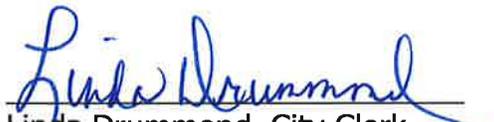
Chuck noted that having the yard waste pick-up helps with our storm water by keeping it out of the storm drains.

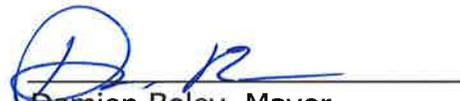
Dan Hartman, candidate for Alderman Ward I, stated he agreed with Alderman Chevalier, the level of service has been exceptional, and he has not been disappointed since we started with them.

### **3. Adjourn**

Alderman Sarver moved to adjourn. Alderman Ulledahl seconded the motion.

Ayes – 6, Noes – 0, motion carries. Mayor Boley declared the Work Session adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

  
Linda Drummond, City Clerk

  
Damien Boley, Mayor