

CAP Standing Committee Meeting

Whitefish City Hall, 415 E. 2nd Street

June 16, 2021

In Attendance

Committee Members: Hilary Lindh, Casey Lewis, Karin Hilding, Robin Paone, Kate McMahon, Liz Records

Staff: Craig Workman

Public: Mayre Flowers

A. Meeting called to order at 5:35 pm

B. Approval of Minutes – May minutes unanimously approved

C. Republic Services and Recycling

Karin gave a report from a tour of the Pacific Steel and Recycling facility that she, Kate, Robin, and Craig attended. Pacific only receives recycling from Republic and specifically the material from the Whitefish central drop-off site. County recycling goes to Evergreen Disposal. All plastic and aluminum material are mixed and baled together. Twice a month bales are transported to Spokane where they are sorted. Paper and cardboard are baled separate from the plastic and aluminum. One bale is equal to about one ton. They lose money on recycling from the drop-off site but make money from aluminum cans that are dropped off at facility. Recycling center in Spokane is operated by Waste Management. Contamination is a big issue.

Mayre suggested the Committee members tour Valley Recycling. Valley Recycling monitors drop-off and just collects plastic milk jugs so bales are not contaminated and have more value. Valley Recycling contracts with Georgia Pacific and guarantees the bales get recycled and do not end up in the landfill.

Question: Multi-stream vs. Single stream. Craig noted that multi-stream would require a new RFP process. Mark from Republic answered that single stream collection gets sorted at the Spokane site. Single stream is easier and cheaper to collect. The current drop-off site is not staffed and so there is a lot of contamination. A smaller cart for collecting curbside recycling at the homes limits the amount of comingled waste. Also, the service would be limited to residents only and would eliminate illegal dumping from out-of-towners. Education on proper recycling will be a big part of the program. In the short term, single stream will be easier for people to adopt. Longer term, it may be possible to introduce some requirements to separate recycling. Curbside pick-up allows the driver to identify who is comingling waste with recycling and it will be easier to enforce proper practices.

With multi-stream, recycling gets separated at the household level into different bins. Multi-stream costs more because the truck has to pick up multiple bins rather than just one container.

Currently, Republic loses about \$6,700 a month on the current system. Waste Management operates the sorting facilities in Spokane and education will be part of contract. Republic will work with the city on outreach. Republic has the capacity to expand into composting in the future if the city wants to contract for that service.

Question: Reporting & Targets. Republic can monitor the household participation rate by residents. They will request data from Waste Management in Spokane on the percentage of collected recycling that goes to the landfill after sorting. A comparison of contamination before and after curbside pick-up is initiated would be useful. The City would like to know the number of households using the service, the volume of material collected, and the percentage going to the landfill after sorting. Republic noted the volume of material will be easy to collect and the typical participation rate is about 80% for a mandatory program.

Question: Efficiency of recycling plastic. The committee asked about the efficiency of recycling plastic once transportation and processing costs are considered. Republic will get this information. The education component should include information about reducing the use of plastic. Republic will contact Waste Management in Spokane to get more information. A kick-off event & public forum to answer questions with people from Republic and Waste Management is recommended with the roll-out of the mandatory curbside collection program.

Mayre noted that the County Solid Waste Board funds the Waste Not Project including education in the schools. Education is also needed for the public.

Question: How to identify contamination in the bin? Driver looks in the containers. Containers are different than the household waste containers. Roll out containers for multifamily are still a question. Each single-family unit will have its own container. There is a camera in the truck that the driver can use to view what is in the container and to identify contamination. Republic currently has an optional curbside recycling service that is every other week. Collection of the mandatory program also will be every two weeks.

Question: Mixing of paper board and corrugated cardboard. Valley recycling separates corrugated cardboard because they get a higher price. Republic will follow Waste Management best practices for collecting and sorting corrugated cardboard.

Question: Glass recycling. Glass is shipped to Missoula and is expensive to transport. A local recycling option is preferred. Contamination of glass is a problem, and it would have to be collected in a separate container. Ideally there would be a central collection site for glass. Pick up and transport of the glass is a service that could be added in the future. The Republic unit in Missoula processes glass and there is a market for crushed glass.

Question: Education. Republic can work with Waste Management to produce a flow chart that shows the recycling process from collection to reuse. Republic is willing to cooperate on a can collection event. Collecting cans would reduce processing and transport cost for baling the single stream and could be a fundraiser for non-profits.

Question: How are bales classified. Bales are classified by Waste Management Spokane based on the amount of contamination. Higher grade bales with less contamination are worth more money. Collecting data on the grade of bale would be a useful benchmark to track improvements in contamination rates. Republic will also get information on whether bales are being sorted in Spokane or are being shipped to another broker or processing center.

D. Committee Status Updates

- **Sustainability Coordinator Work Session with City Council**

Work session is scheduled for August 2nd around 6:30 pm. A draft letter from the CAP Committee has been sent to Dana for consideration of a new position in the FY 23 budget. The more Committee members that can attend the work session the better. It would be helpful to present a job description, position cost, and implementation status. The Committee will have 30-minutes for the discussion. Staff will draft presentation material for the committee to review at the July 21 CAP meeting. The Sustainability Coordinator position should be coordinated with housing and transit issues.

- **Irrigation and Landscape Plans.** – To be discussed next meeting.
- **Other** – Climate Smart Glacier Country will be hosting its fourth “Zero Waste” webinar on June 30th. CSGC delivered the first batch of HEPA filters to the County Health Dept. Citizen Climate Lobby reported that a carbon dividend bill has been introduced in both the House and Senate. City Council will be having a work session on using ARPA funds. July 8th rain garden adult education event with free plants at the Adult Ed center – staff to publicize event on City socials.

E. Public Comment-

Mayre Flowers noted that Valley Recycling has a magnet to separate tin cans from aluminum. The Waste Not project has collapsible PCV pipe recycling bins that are on loan for events. The collected material goes to Valley Recycling. The group sponsoring the event collects the bins and takes them to Valley Recycling.

F. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm

Next meeting: July 21

Photos from Pacific Steel and Recycling Tour

