



Agenda

Southeast Minnesota Recyclers' Exchange Technical Committee Meeting

Date: **Friday, August 22, 2025**

Time: **10:00 a.m.**

Location: **Freeborn County Environmental Services—, 2020 Pioneer Trail, Albert Lea, MN 56007**

Chairperson: **Rita Cole**

Note Keeper: **Anthony Wittmer**

Time	Information Items	Presenter
10:00	1. Call to Order	Rita Cole
10:05	2. Approve Minutes	Rita Cole
10:10	3. SEMREX Pricing Update	Anthony Wittmer
10:15	4. Future of SEMREX – Cathy Presentation	Cathy Hall & All Staff
11:35	5. MPCA Update – Written Statement	Ben Crowell
11:40	6. Member Updates	All Staff
11:55	7. Next Technical Committee Meeting – September	
12:00	8. Adjourn	

Notes:

If you cannot attend, please contact Anthony.

SEMREX Tech Committee Meeting

July 25th, 2025

Steele County Administration Building

Present: Katie Barden, Paul Pieper, Maggie Ludwig, Mark Goskeson, Marcus Thompson, Jeff Schneider, Rita Cole, Tammie Bramer, Taylor Piotter, Scott Martin, Anthony Wittmer, Ben Crowell

Call Meeting to Order: Chair Rita Cole called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve by Scott, 2nd by Paul. Motion passed.

Director's Update & Future of SEMREX Discussion: All members

- What does the future of SEMREX look like?
 - Many of the members still see value in the educational piece of SEMREX.
 - There is a concern that if SEMREX does not remain a Joint Powers Board, that it will fall apart. *"People will just stop showing up to the meetings."*
 - Commissioners often enjoy the opportunity to stay current on topics in other counties. JPB meetings provide an opportunity for technical committee staff to engage with elected officials.
 - If SEMREX disbands, what incentives would Freeborn and Steele Counties have to send curbside-collected recyclables to Olmsted's MRF?
 - There is an opportunity to expand SEMREX and bring in other SE MN counties. Additionally, we could collaborate on educational campaigns with standardized messaging and better rates in printed materials.
 - SEMREX has not been utilizing its potential to negotiate contracts with better rates.

MPCA and Legislative Updates: Ben

- Greater MN grants are available again.
- Draft C&D rule will be released for public comment.
- Free battery recycling participation is strong.
- SCORE funds available for staffing.
- Waste Composition Study planned (last in 2013); new statewide study/report by June 2026.
- Single-sort breakdown shows more plastics by weight.

Member Updates:

- **Waseca:** Had an MPCA compliance tour. Their auger broke and they hired an additional FTE.
- **Blue Earth:** Working on cell development at ponderosa landfill. They have been evaluating their options on landfill abatement in the near future. HHW is running well. Molly is working with some of the northern counties to better track public participation. The Recycling Center is working well.

- **Olmsted:** Still working on MRF final engineering plans. The anticipated construction will start in March/April of 2026 and open in June of 2027. Working on utilizing ash as a road base. We found some problems with unanticipated cracks. Scott is looking into chemistry. The chemical reactions are complicated. Olmsted County recently staffed a booth at the county fair.
- **Steele:** The demo relocation is done, the MSW expansion project will be out for bid at the end of next month. HHW is steady as always. We got a new leachate semi and tanker trailer. Steele County created a new position for a public works director. Their solid waste plan is still under review at the state. Just got the green light for the second year of the Enviro show.
- **Rice:** Cell construction has started, working on the road system. They are ahead of the game. Paul got his 2nd quarter paint care report submitted and got his electronics report down. Recycling wise everything is busy. HHW is busy. They are getting tons of mattresses. It's hard to keep reuse items on the shelf. They had their fair last week. Maggie got a grant from the MPCA for building and construction reuse.
- **Freeborn:** We're running around 200 tons a month for single stream and commodity price dropped. 1,352 people walked through Hazardous Waste – and nine tons of E-waste shipped out.
- **Mower:** We're doing the fair this year for the first time. The recent ransomware attack made operations difficult. Solid waste was minimally affected. HHW is busy. Still working on composting with the state to save apple cores.
- **Dodge:** The new transfer station has tin on the roof. We are looking at what they can do for fire suppression (Fire Rover). Reuse is open most days of the week. Reuse, MN fundraiser. We charge \$5.00. The building is full of items. We promote it with Facebook ads.

Next Meeting: Friday, August 22, 2025

Motion to Adjourn: Tammie motioned to adjourn and Marcus 2nd.