



THE SOUTHEAST MINNESOTA RECYCLERS' EXCHANGE

cooperative marketing * market development * materials exchange

SEMREX JOINT POWERS BOARD (JPB) MEETING

Friday, June 12, 2026

Conference Room B

Dodge County Government Services Building (not the courthouse)

721 Main Street North (on the west side of Highway 57)

Mantorville, MN

9:30 A.M.

AGENDA

9:30 am	Call Meeting to Order – Roll Call and Introductions
9:35 am	Approve December 2026 Minutes
9:40 am	Director's Report – Anthony Wittmer, SEMREX • Market Update • Budget Report
10:00 am	Approve Renewal of Routeware/Waste Wizard Agreement
10:10 am	Olmsted County Materials Recovery Facility Update – Anthony Wittmer SEMREX Updated Website – Anthony Wittmer Food Scraps Composting Opportunities – Anthony Wittmer
10:30 am	MPCA & Legislative Update – Ben Crowell, MPCA
10:40 am	Member Update Report Questions/Discussion - All
10:55 am	Set Next Meeting – December 4, 2026
11:00 am	Adjourn

SEMREX Joint Powers Board Meeting
Friday December 5, 2025

Present: Anthony Wittmer, SEMREX; Rita Cole, Dodge County; John Allen, Dodge County Commissioner; Greg Wright, Olmsted County Commissioner; Paul Pieper, Rice County; Tammie Bramer, Waseca County; Mark Goskeson, Freeborn County; Taylor Piotter, Blue Earth County; Mark Piepho, Blue Earth County Commissioner; Brian Harguth, Waseca County Commissioner; Jim Purfeerst, Rice County Commissioner; Marcus Thompson, Mower County; Nicole Ekstrom, Freeborn County Commissioner; Mike Ankeny, Mower County Commissioner; Jeff Schneider, City of Red Wing; Mike Cook, Olmsted County staff, Jason Steffen, Blue Earth County Staff, Katie Barden Steele County, Don Kliever, Red Wing City Council

John Allen – chair called the meeting to order at 9:31am

Roll Call and introductions.

Motion to approve minutes from June 6, 2025, meeting by Mark Piepho and John Purfeerst 2nd.

Motion passed.

Director's update:

- **Market/Pricing Update:** Anthony provided market pricing for various recyclable commodities in 2025. Prices are ending the year in mediocre territory. Corrugated cardboard—SEMREX members' most common commodity—is seeing its lowest prices of the year as demand for boxes has been down. Alternatively, metals pricing (tin/steel & aluminum) remains solid as tariffs have had some influence on this. Recycling markets will continue to see challenges in the near term. When weather gets cold, vehicles break down which impacts the supply chain. Plastics will remain volatile going into 2026.

2025												
Commodity	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
OCC/ton - LP	\$ 95.00	\$ 95.00	\$ 95.00	\$ 95.00	\$90	\$ 85.00	\$ 80.00	\$ 80.00	\$80.00	\$75.00	\$ 70.00	\$ 70.00
OCC/ton - GP Mower & Olmsted	\$ 102.50	\$ 102.50	\$ 102.50	\$ 105.00	\$100	\$ 95.00	\$ 90.00	\$ 90.00	\$90.00	\$80.00	\$ 82.00	\$ 85.00
OCC - GP Blue Earth										\$85.00	\$ 80.00	
OCC/ton - Pioneer			\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00								
OCC/ton - MDK (BE, Mower, Olmsted)								\$ 92.50	\$92.50		\$ 70.00	
OCC/ton - Cardinal						\$ 85.00						
OCC/ton - Quincy						\$ 90.00					\$ 65.00	
MP/ton - GP	\$ 70.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 85.00	\$ 85.00	\$60	\$ 55.00	\$ 55.00	\$ 50.00	\$50.00	\$ 55.00	\$ 55.00	
MP/ton - Pioneer			\$ 80.00	\$ 80.00								
Sorted Office Paper/ton (GP)	\$ 160.00	\$ 175.00	\$ 185.00	\$185.00	\$185.00	\$ 175.00	\$175.00	\$170.00	\$170.00	\$160.00	\$ 155.00	\$ 155.00
Sorted Office Paper/ton (Pioneer)			\$ 190.00	\$190.00	\$185.00							
Tin/net ton GP	\$ 169.64	\$ 169.64	\$ 183.03			\$ 102.67		\$107.14			\$ 151.78	
Tin/net ton AMG	\$ 169.64		\$209.82				149.1			\$147.32	\$ 151.78	151.78
Tin/net ton Cardinal			\$214.28		\$160.71	\$ 169.00			\$170.00	\$156.28	\$ 147.32	
Tin/net ton Alter Metal	\$ 155.00											
Aluminum UBC (baled)/lb. MDK								\$0.92	\$0.93			
Aluminum UBC (baled)/lb. GP	\$1.05	\$1.11				\$ 0.98	\$0.94			\$0.87	\$0.90	
Aluminum UBC (baled)/lb. Cardinal			\$1.12		\$ 0.970						\$0.945	\$96.50
Mixed PLS (Quincy)								\$ 20.00				
Mix PLS 1-2 -5 Olmsted,Mower, Waseca (Republic)	\$ 185.00	\$ 195.00	\$205	\$ 215.00	\$190	\$ 150.00	\$ 55.00	\$ 50.00	\$50.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 40.00
Mix PLS 1-2 -5 Olmsted,Mower, Waseca (Harters)											\$ 65.00	\$ 65.00
#1 Plastic - PET/ton			\$ 240.00			\$ 235.00	\$100.00		\$40.00	\$40.00	\$60.00	\$ 60.00
#2 HDPE Natural/ton			\$ 1,500.00			\$1,150.00	\$600.00		\$750.00	\$630.00	\$650.00	\$ 650.00
#2 HDPE Mixed/PIG/ton			\$ 80.00			\$ 35.00	\$45.00		\$20.00	\$15.00	\$40.00	\$ 15.00
#5 PP/ton			\$ 150.00			\$ 115.00	\$100.00		\$100.00	\$85.00	\$85.00	\$ 85.00
MIXED Glass Strategic	\$ 20.00	\$ 20.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00	\$25.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00	

- **Budget Discussion:** SEMREX is currently experiencing a down year financially and is approximately \$17,000 under budget. An estimated \$7,000 in additional revenue is still expected before year-end, resulting in a projected year-end deficit of approximately \$10,000.

The Tech Committee and Olmsted County have been working on operational and organizational improvements, including:

- Expanding membership opportunities
- Updating branding and logos
- Developing tiered membership structures
- Increasing regional participation and benefits
- Leveraging Waste Wizard as a key member benefit
- Improving legislative influence and grant opportunities

Additional efforts underway include:

- Developing a brochure/prospectus to recruit new members
- Improving operational processes
- Creating a member website
- Utilizing additional Olmsted County staff to assist with load scheduling
- Evaluating more cost-effective website platforms

It was noted that commodity marketing strategies may change once the Olmsted County MRF becomes operational.

Commodity Marketing Discussion

Mills are requesting additional material volume, and there may be opportunities for improved OCC pricing through cooperative storage and shipment timing.

Anthony Wittmer discussed evaluating alternative OCC buyers rather than relying solely on Liberty Paper. Georgia-Pacific (GP) has consistently offered higher pricing than Liberty Paper. GP purchases for five mills and may offer better pricing when supply levels decrease.

Agreements Reviewed

1. Fiscal Management Agreement with Olmsted County remained unchanged at \$3,000.
2. Professional Services Agreement with Olmsted County decreased from \$48,500 to \$35,000.

Goodhue and Fillmore Counties have both expressed interest in SEMREX participation.

Motions

Professional Services Agreement

Motion to approve the Professional Services Agreement:

- Motion by Mike Ankeny (Mower County)
- Second by Brian Harguth (Waseca County)

Motion passed unanimously

Fiscal Management Agreement

Motion to approve the Fiscal Management Agreement:

- Motion by Brian Harguth (Waseca County)
- Second by Mike Ankeny (Mower County)

Motion passed unanimously.

2026 Budget

Motion to approve the 2026 Budget:

- Motion by Jim Purfeerst (Rice County)
- Second by Nicole Ekstrom (Freeborn County)

Motion passed.

Olmsted County MRF Project Update

Mike Cook provided an update on the Olmsted County Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) project.

Facility Overview

The facility will support two operations:

- Fuel cleaning
- Single-stream recycling processing

Materials to be recovered include:

- Ferrous metals
- Aluminum
- Plastics
- OCC

Single-stream recyclables will be processed using optical sorters.

Project Status

- Structural contract awarded last month
- Remaining construction and equipment contracts expected this spring
- Target operational date: Mid-2027

Facility Details

- Total building area: 49,000 square feet
- Existing tipping floor will be expanded
- Materials will be dumped onto the floor for sorting rather than into a pit
- Space has been reserved for future organics processing operations

Waste Processing

A process flow diagram was presented. Approximately 10% of incoming garbage material is expected to be diverted.

Projected material composition:

- 17% fines and organics
- 73% pit-bound material

Currently, fines would be landfilled. Material recovered from the back end of the system would instead be directed to the Olmsted Waste-to-Energy Facility (OWEF).

Staffing Discussion

Jeff Schneider asked about staffing needs. Current estimates range from:

- 12–14 staff initially
- Potential addition of 5–7 more staff depending on volume

Equipment

- Single front-end shredder
- SSI size reduction and bag opening system
- 18-inch nominal size output
- Capacity: 60 tons per hour

Single-Stream Recycling Discussion

Marcus asked how Olmsted County plans to attract single-stream material without designation authority.

Mike Cook responded that competitive pricing and geographic proximity will be key advantages.

Potential partnership models with SEMREX members may include:

- Contracting arrangements
- Brokerage services
- Flat monthly processing fees
- Reduced brokerage fees
- Potential discounts for SEMREX members

EPR Discussion

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation may significantly impact recycling economics by providing reimbursement opportunities for recycling certain materials.

MPCA Update – Ben Crowell was unable to attend. Anthony will provide an update to the meeting notes:

- The governor's budget is not yet finalized. Will be bringing forward some sort of bonding bill for Cap. Assistance planning. We don't know what that will be just yet as it has not been finalized. PCA will take a crack at battery and E-waste product stewardship plan.
- C&D rule – the earliest adoption of rule changes would be the end of 2026.
- Resource management report – a draft report will be available for public comment in early 2026.
- Packaging EPR – PCA is reviewing a very rough draft.
- Applications for Greater MN Recycling Grant are under review. Notice of awards will be sent in the next month or two.

- Climate Smart Food System Grants via EPA, PCA has \$33 million available for food waste prevention.
- SCORE – in the final stages of reviewing draft 2024 report. Barring any major setbacks, the report will be published by the end of this year (2025).

Conversions in RETRAC will not be possible. However, PCA has developed a conversion spreadsheet. Ex: 10,000 gallons of paint, put in the conversion table and it will spit out the breakdown.

Member updates

Blue Earth:

- HHW facility transitioned to winter hours with strong participation.
- Recycling volumes have declined approximately 25% over the past year as businesses seek alternative outlets.
- Landfill development continues with a new saddle cell.
- Litter containment improvements have been successful.

Freeborn:

- Ordered sharps containers for drive-through HHW events.
- Exploring solar installation at the HHW facility through grant funding.

Mower:

- Received a grant for solar installation.
- Successfully marketed French fry containers from a tipped truck load through GP.
- Material required hand unloading/loading using Sentence to Serve participants and staff assistance.
- Received \$50/ton for the material.
- Due to strong relationships with GP, Mower County is now separating newspaper from mixed paper.
- Newspaper currently markets at approximately \$200/ton.
- Sorting is being completed with Cedar Valley Services.

Olmsted:

- Launching a public outreach campaign focused on:
 - Recycling education
 - Battery disposal awareness
 - Recently received a multi-family food waste grant.
 - Launching an artist-in-residence educational program using reclaimed materials.
 - Applications are expected within the next few weeks.
 - Interviewing for an additional outreach staff position.

Rice:

- Tipping fees will increase beginning next year.

- Brush and tree disposal, previously free, will now include minimal public charges.
- Overall landfill tonnage and recycling volumes are both down.
- Seeing reduced inbound waste and recycling from other counties due in part to designation.

Steele:

- Hosting its first Fix-It Clinic in March.
- Enviro Show scheduled for May 2026.
- Solid waste plan nearing completion.
- New Public Works Director will oversee more landfill responsibilities.
- Katie's role will focus more heavily on recycling programs.

Waseca:

- Fully staffed again.
- Compost operations are performing well and are now screened.
- Opened a seasonal reuse center within the HHW building to recover reusable materials from the waste stream.
- HHW facility is closed for winter.
- No tipping fee increases planned this year.

Red Wing:

- Waste volumes have declined and the facility aims to maintain capacity utilization.
- Since 2022, Red Wing has coordinated with metro county landfills to receive additional waste.
- Increased incoming tonnage significantly around Halloween.
- Current incoming waste averages approximately 200 tons/day, up 50–60 tons/day.
- Waste deliveries to Xcel Energy increased from 140 tons/day to 213 tons/day.
- Program currently scheduled through February 15.
- Revenue could increase by nearly \$1 million annually if continued long term.
- Benefits for Xcel include proximity, transportation savings, and reduced costs.
- Interesting items recovered from the waste stream included:
 - \$7,000–\$9,000 in cash, turned in by an inmate worker
 - A WWII-era samurai sword with original maker's marks, which may be displayed in the conference room

Dodge:

On January 22, 2026, at 11:30 a.m., Dodge County will host a panel discussion on Deconstruction and Reuse featuring:

- Melissa Wenzel (MPCA)
- Alex Baldwin (Better Futures)
- Joe Odendahl (American Dumpster Rental)
- Rita Cole (Dodge County Reuse)

Next JPB Meeting – Friday, June 12, 2026, hosted by Dodge County

Motion to adjourn
Motion – Nicole Ekstrom (Freeborn County)
2nd – Mike Ankeny (Mower County)
Motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by
Rita Cole
Dodge County

Optional tours offered following the meeting:

- Dodge County Transfer Station
- Dodge County Reuse Facility