



Agenda

Southeast Minnesota Recyclers' Exchange Technical Committee Meeting

Date: **Friday, November 15, 2024**

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

Location: **Waseca County Highway Department** – 1495 5th Street SE, Waseca

Chairperson: **Molly Kjellsvig**

Note Keeper: **Tammy Bramer**

Time	Information Items	Presenter
10:00	1. Call to Order & Approve Minutes	Molly Kjellsvig
10:05	2. Director's Update	Sharon Schriever
10:15	3. SEMREX Joint Powers Board Agenda	All
10:20	4. Budget	All
10:30	5. MPCA Update	Ben Crowell
10:45	6. Member Updates	All Staff
11:55	7. Next Meeting – January	All
12:00	8. Adjourn	

Notes:

If you cannot attend, please contact Sharon.

SEMREX Tech Committee Meeting

October 18, 2024

Present: Scott Martin (Olmsted), Sharon Schriever (SEMREX), Rita Cole (Dodge), Tammie Bramer (Waseca), Ben Crowell (MPCA), Marcus Thompson (Mower), Jeff Schneider (City of Red Wing)

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

Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve by Tammie, 2nd by Marcus. Motion passed at 10:01 am.

Director's Update:

Prices are trending down of OCC, Aluminum, & Steel. Some improvements in the plastics markets Poly up 33% and HDPE Natural up 11%, however mixed grades (1,2&5) and colored HDPE are all down. While it appears the new paper mill in Duluth is up and running, sorted office paper is still trending downwards. The issue is likely similar for both paper & plastic, there is a higher use of virgin resources related to less contamination and cost. To date, SEMREX's total revenues are up 73% over 2023 in spite of volumes marketed decreasing over the same period.

Member Discussion:

Chemical plastic recycling may pose a challenge in the future for recycling operations that currently sort plastic by type. Chemical recycling uses catalysts to break mixed plastics down to monomer bases and does not require a pure stream. While this method of recycling is still recycling and thus better than disposal, it may present a need for operational modifications should it be a viable alternative.

The group discussed Revenue share as an option for offering new and existing customers to increase material volumes managed through SEMREX. By providing entities that have available materials an option for utilizing existing member facilities as a destination for loose or baled recyclable material of smaller volumes. This would allow both the destination facility and the source entity to share a revenue stream currently unavailable. The idea is that SEMREX would facilitate the payments to simplify the process. Members seemed to generally be in favor of learning more as long as revenues exceed the cost of processing, storage and transportation.

Legislative Platform:

Boat wrap discussion on whether the Product Stewardship Bill passed last year included boat wrap, it was inconclusive. Will the SEMREX Legislative Platform mirror the platform adopted by MNSWAA and the AMC. Largely, yes these platforms align.

Motion to Approve Legislative Platform made by Scott, seconded by Rita, Motion passed.

Member Discussion:

Generally, members are satisfied that SEMREX meets recycling needs, but should SEMREX take a broader approach to include positions on waste processing for material recovery and advocate more for issues related to garbage such as the Waste Management Hierarchy and other Municipal Solid Waste related

concerns? There were some in agreement but we need to better identify how such positions would look and ultimately materialize.

MPCA Update:

Ben expressed his admiration of the spirit of cooperation and openness of working with SEMREX, no problem Ben. Greater MN Grant round is open, \$250,000 max per award. Wood waste grant is also open and available for review. Recent discussion of C&D management and the need for lining these landfills going forward was had in Rochester, and around the state, discussions were lively and congenial.

Member Updates:

Olmsted County has had a great year to date for both recycling and HHW operations. No big issues, good staffing, exceeding revenue projections significantly so far. Mike Cook, former project manager for Olmsted's MRF project has moved on to a different position outside of Olmsted, much of his work has been transferred onto other Olmsted staff. Project development and design is on-going including equipment, staffing, and floorplan reviews. There is a preliminary count of necessary staffing. Olmsted is working with RRT out of New York on this project. The preliminary schedule is to break ground in early spring of 2025 with a completion date in late 2026. Olmsted is working on a potentially extending the compost pilot program, grants, and legislative appropriation funding in the next session.

Waseca County is done with HHW for the year, waiting on Rice County to send out another load. Waseca staff are also exploring the potential for Re-Use giveaways to the public. Staff would place items that have been brought to the main facility and paid to be disposed of and pull items that may be in good condition or have value and set these items aside for the public to take as is without charge. A new loader was purchased and the old loader has been used as a trade. Prices are set to go up in November so it is a good time to purchase. Staff will look to see if there is a cost savings in not having to pay state taxes on items that are purchased for solid waste and used on-site. Staff is also trying to complete their County Solid Waste Plan.

Mower County is running smoothly and maintaining the status quo for high customer service standards in spite of being understaffed due to HHW staffer on maternity leave. Mower may be considering a staff addition in 2025. E-waste collection/drop-off has seen a significant increase with the new addition with approximately 35,000 lbs collected since opening. There may be some restructuring in Public Works that could mean changes to the County administration.

Dodge County new transfer station building RFP is out and bids are due back on November 1, 2024. Dodge also received Grant Funding from a state sustainability grant for the Reuse Building that will provide all those things necessary to occupy a building in Minnesota year round (Heat, Cooling, Insulation, bathrooms, sewer holding tank, water) congratulations Dodge! The road improvement/construction will be going through in 2025 and a park will be opened up in the buffer area adjacent to the Solid Waste facility. Rita was visited by a kind lady from Scotland who presented recently at a reuse seminar in the metro.

City of Red Wing says things are going well for the operation and waste volumes diverted from Olmsted and area landfills should exceed 5,000 tons for the year. This has been accomplished in large part due to the purchase of a new slow-speed shredder which has been able to manage the oversized and bulky waste stream to generate usable Refuse Derived Fuel. This has had a significant reductive impact in transportation costs, disposal costs, and transportation emissions while allowing for additional recovery of ferrous metals. Staff have been working at very high levels and all positions are currently filled.

Next Meeting will be held in Waseca on November 15, America Recycles Day.

Motion to adjourn Marcus, 2nd from Rita. The meeting adjourned at 11:45

A tour was provided to anyone interested following the meeting.