

**APPROVED MINUTES OF THE  
HAMILTON COUNTY SOLID WASTE  
POLICY COMMITTEE  
In person & Zoom**

**DATE:** January 19, 2022

**TIME:** 1:30 p.m.

**PLACE:** Hamilton County Environmental Services  
250 William Howard Taft Road  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45219

**PRESENT:** **Policy Committee Members**

Pierce Bruner, Student Representative  
Tony DiPuccio, Generator Representative, Chair  
Denise Driehaus, County Commissioner, Chair  
Bob Gedert, Public Member, Vice-Chair  
Karen Hurley, General Interest Member  
Greg Kesterman, Hamilton County Public Health Representative

**Staff**

Michelle Balz, Solid Waste Manager  
Gage Bradford, Community Specialist  
Mary Copenbaker, Business Outreach Coordinator  
Elise Erhart, Outreach Specialist  
Brad Johnson, Director  
Ali Khodadad, Operations Manager  
Mike Kramer, Assistant Director  
Susan Schumacher, Assistant Solid Waste Specialist, Clerk

**Others in Attendance**

Lisa Anderson, Hamilton County Budget Office  
Nee Fong Chin, Prosecutor's Office  
Sally Dannemiller  
Craig Davidson, Hamilton County Public Health  
Carrie Davis, Child Advocacy for Jobs & Equity  
Chuck DeJonckheere, Hamilton County Public Health  
Katie Evans, Best Way Disposal  
Dean Ferrier, Rumpke  
Kurt Grossman  
Matt Hittle, Ohio EPA  
Debbie Kastens  
Marie Kocoshis  
Tim Mara, Oxbow  
Gina Marsh, Chief of Staff for Commissioner Driehaus  
Bryan Peak, Hamilton County Sheriff's Office  
Sandy Stehlin  
Kathy Trent, Waste Management  
Matt Tietsort  
Lisa Wynn  
Molly Yeager, Rumpke  
Ellissa

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513-245-7901

**ABSENT: Policy Committee Members**

Sue Magness, Largest Municipality Representative

Matt Wahlert, Township Representative

**1. INTRODUCTION/OPENING COMMENTS**

Ms. Driehaus called the meeting to order at 1:32 pm and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

**2. CLERK'S REPORT**

Ms. Driehaus stated for the Committee members that were on the Subcommittee to vote on the November 10 and December 2, 2021 Rules Subcommittee minutes and entertained a motion to approve these minutes. Mr. Gedert moved; Mr. DiPuccio seconded and the minutes were approved.

Ms. Driehaus entertained a motion to approve the November 17 and December 6, 2021 Policy Committee minutes. Mr. Kesterman moved; Ms. Hurley seconded. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Tim Mara:**

Mr. Mara stated that first, he wanted to let you know that he appreciated the prompt response he has been getting from Susan Schumacher and Michelle Balz to his questions. They have been quick to supply related documents.

Mr. Mara stated that with regard to Item 5A on your agenda, the next steps in administering solid waste rules, he wanted to point out to you that Rumpke has three pending permit applications – the renewal of the Title V air permit, the application to increase the AMDWR, and the new access road and related work.

Mr. Mara stated that although Rumpke's application to increase the AMDWR is dated December 6, 2021, by letter dated December 17, OEPA informed Rumpke that its application was deficient in several respects. Rumpke submitted supplemental information purporting to address those deficiencies on December 21. Therefore, December 21 should be regarded as the date of a complete submission by Rumpke, which date is after the County Commissioners' adoption of rules on December 16. For that reason, the AMDWR application should be regarded as one which falls under the county's rules and Rumpke should be notified to submit its application to the county for hearing and possible approval or rejection by the county.

Mr. Mara stated that similarly, Rumpke's application dated December 16 for a new access road and related facilities is dated December 16, and so Rumpke should also be notified to submit that application to the county for hearing and possible approval or rejection by the county.

Mr. Mara stated that he also wanted to briefly address Item 6B on your agenda. He understands that your consultant, Karen Luken, will be making a presentation and giving an overview on the stakeholder input sessions which he understands includes solid waste service providers, businesses, and local governments. Mr. Mara stated that he is disappointed to find that there are no stakeholder sessions for environmental groups and other non-profit service organizations nor for citizens in general. He believes that input should occur concurrently with other sessions and furthermore, general citizen input should not be relegated to merely responding to a draft plan update just before adoption.

**Kurt Grossman:**

Mr. Grossman stated that there were some errors about him in the November 17 minutes that he put in the chat that need to be corrected.

Mr. Grossman stated that he is concerned with this Committee continuing to use the County Prosecutor's as its legal counsel since the County Prosecutor recently took a position contrary to this Committee. Mr. Grossman stated he would like to suggest that Mr. Albin Bauer who served the Subcommittee be expanded in his duties to be counsel to this Policy Committee as he thinks it would avoid some conflicts of interest.

Mr. Grossman stated that also in dealing with conflicts of interest, the new Township Representative, he understands, has received funding from Rumpke but also is representing a township that has a settlement agreement with Rumpke that puts him in a position where he cannot protest certain actions that this Policy Committee has to consider. Mr. Grossmann stated that he would like to suggest that legal counsel has to check on whether there is a conflict-of-interest situation there in his serving in both capacities.

Mr. Grossman stated that when the new rules were established, he understands that they did not get formally published in the Enquirer or other media they should be published in. Mr. Grossman stated that he did not know if Ohio law requires that but as a safety measure you would want to do that. As a lawyer admitted in this State, he thinks he is bound to say that.

Mr. Grossman stated that that was the sum of his comments today and thanked the Committee.

**Saundra Stehlin:**

Saundra Stehlin introduced herself as a Lawrenceburg Road resident. Ms. Stehlin stated that she lived directly down the hill and downwind from the proposed Bond Road Rumpke Dump addition. She is representing her neighbors on Lawrenceburg Road and today also the "Dump Fighters" group.

Ms. Stehlin stated that for decades, we have been told that solar and alternative energies are not enough to power the country. Last year, solar, wind and geothermal accounted for 20% of the country's residential electricity needs...globally, it was 30%, according to the EIA, the Government Energy Information administration. Cities, counties, corporations, and countries have finally come to their senses when it comes to the changes that need to be made for the NEAR future.

Ms. Stehlin stated that for decades, Hamilton County has been led by the nose by Rumpke, who has convinced everyone that their methods are the only way to dispose of solid waste. Their profits and not the health of residents have been their driving force. Rumpke has played fast and loose with Environmental Laws and EPA variants and exemptions. The rules that were passed in 2021 by the Hamilton County Commissioners are a good start to reining in a company that seems to have no desire to change their ways. Our group, which is the core of the former "Stop the Stink", "Ditch the Dump" and "Stop the Bond Road Expansion" groups will be at every monthly meeting and fighting hard at every turn to make sure that one way or another, the new rules will be followed and there will not be any new landfills in Hamilton county. Let the surrounding states and counties deal with their own solid waste.

**Marie Kocoshis:**

Ms. Kocoshis stated that she wanted to reiterate what Mr. Mara said about public participation. Ms. Kocoshis stated that she represented the League of Women's Voters and she thinks they would be happy to participate in the stakeholder group about the Hamilton County Solid Waste Plan.

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### Carrie Davis:

Ms. Davis thanked Commissioner Driehaus for all her work on the rules and leading this County into an entirely new direction that is going to have so many improvements here and outside our jurisdiction.

Ms. Davis stated she came into the meeting late and didn't get to benefit from hearing everybody else's comments. Ms. Davis stated that she sent Committee members a copy of her public comments because she doesn't believe the public is being afforded anywhere near adequate time to comment, participate, or contribute to the direction the Committee and County is going in. Ms. Davis stated that we need a better way.

Ms. Davis stated that the most concerning line in the agenda was how are we going to include the landfill operators which she supports completely; they have to be involved. She is very concerned about how the Committee will involve the non-profits from the environmental area and the individuals in the community and non-profits representing the community needs.

Ms. Driehaus stated that the Committee was having a very hard time hearing Ms. Davis due to her cutting in and out. Ms. Driehaus stated that she did receive and was sure the rest of the Committee received her comments via email and she is assuming they are similar to what she was saying now but unfortunately, we can't hear her. Ms. Driehaus apologized and stated that she hoped it wasn't on our end.

Ms. Driehaus thanked Ms. Davis for her participation.

Ms. Driehaus asked if written comments are available to please email to the Clerk.

#### 4. **R3SOURCE REVENUE UPDATED/ANALYSIS from 2020**

Ms. Balz stated that in comparing 2021 to 2020 all but December is included. Revenue is holding steady from 2020. There is a slight increase of about five percent in which most of that is out-of-district waste.

Mr. Gedert stated that 57 percent of waste is out-of-district and out-of-state and 43 percent is in-district and there is a lot of reliance on revenue on those waste streams. There seems to be an out of balance reliance on out-of-district waste streams. Mr. Gedert stated that as we look at and revise the Plan, this is something to look at.

#### 5. **POLICY COMMITTEE ITEMS**

##### a. **Solid Waste Policy Committee**

Ms. Driehaus stated that she and Mr. DiPuccio wanted to talk about the role of the Policy Committee and the role that we are going to play moving forward related to the rules that were passed by the Board of County Commissioners.

Mr. DiPuccio stated that this was something he identified prior to the rules development. His observation was, and this is not the first time this has occurred, but the Policy Committee seems to have drifted away from our primary goal and obligation which is to set policy. We have crept steadily into more and more into the detailed management of the Solid Waste District and that is why we have a staff and have access to the Hamilton County Health Department as well.

Mr. DiPuccio stated that he wanted the Committee to give this some consideration. This occurred back in 2007 -2008 where the Committee found themselves in a similar position. Mr. DiPuccio stated that he thought there was some kind of strategy meeting with an outside facilitator to really think this through as to what the Committee's responsibility and focus is. We have a very capable staff both with the health

department and the District and he thinks the Committee ought to let them do their job and not dive down into these details.

Mr. DiPuccio stated that this was his overall thoughts. As an example, with the rules, he thinks that at one point the Subcommittee should have stopped if the determination was made that we need rules, we should have given Ms. Balz and the Hamilton County Health Department direction to develop those rules because they are our staff and that is what they are supposed to do versus the Subcommittee going through line by line.

Mr. DiPuccio stated on another side of that, we have done some of that with, for example, the grant program. The Policy Committee doesn't approve every grant that comes through; we have turned that over to the staff; they have the guidelines; they know how to do it and they provide that information back to us and an informational item.

Ms. Driehaus stated that she thinks these two things fold together because now there are rules that have been established and we need to have a construct around those rules through the Solid Waste District. When we are talking about the role of the Policy Committee and staff, both solid waste, Public Health, and the Prosecutor's Office, how do we make sure we have something that is responsive to what the rules dictate we do when an application is asked for and how do we respond to that?

Ms. Driehaus asked Ms. Balz to help the Committee better understand her thinking related to that and the overall structure of the Policy Committee and how we operate currently.

Ms. Balz stated that in Ohio Revised Code, the main focus of the Policy Committee is the writing of the Solid Waste Plan which really does govern programs, etc. What staff is doing right now in developing the Plan is really important. Ms. Balz asked the Committee to read and give feedback on all of the analyses she is emailing the Committee.

Ms. Balz stated that as far as the rules are concerned, we have been looking into putting out a request for information on consultants that would be able to help review that because we do not have the ability in-house to do that.

Ms. Balz stated that she appreciated that Mr. Grossman mentioned the publishing of the rules and that is something we are looking into and it is not as cut and dry as one would think. The Cincinnati Enquirer gave us a quote of over \$7,000 so we are looking into alternatives to get the rules published soon. Ms. Balz stated that staff is looking into how we would take the next step for when a proposal comes in.

Ms. Driehaus asked Ms. Balz in her analysis is she was looking at other solid waste districts and asked what that analysis entailed. Ms. Balz stated that she reached out to her counterparts at other solid waste districts to see if anyone had a request for proposals or how this process worked. She also reached out to Hamilton County Engineers because they frequently do similar engineering work although not solid waste related but did give us some guidance on the process for hiring engineering type firms which is a little different from just a regular consultant.

Ms. Balz stated that first we could put out a request for qualifications and Hamilton County Engineers could send a template of what they use so we can plug in what we would need for a firm that would be reviewing solid waste plans.

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Ms. Driehaus stated that there was a question on the table about whether or not some of the activity has kicked the rules in, rather, the changes from OEPA and we are probably going to need a legal opinion as to whether or not, this is the case in the midst of trying to figure out how we are going to respond to that if it is already happening, what does that look like and if it is yet to happen, what does that look like.

Ms. Driehaus stated that she would entertain comments from the Committee relating to these items.

Mr. Gedert stated that relating to the general comments about the role of the Policy Committee, Ohio Revised Code defines the role of the Policy Committee and it offers broad advise; a broader point of setting policy and governance of the district. But is also specifically states that the Policy Committee does develop rules for the district.

Mr. Gedert stated that this was looked up when we were discussing this with the EPA during our Subcommittee research. The Policy Committee does not manage the staff of the district but there is that broader role of the Policy Committee to provide policy and governance.

Mr. Gedert stated that he believes that the Committee should not be micromanaging the staff. Being involved in the setting of the rules is most definitely part of the role of the Committee. Then the Committee sets the process in place for the management of the rules and that is what this discussion is about, how do those rules become implemented.

Mr. Gedert stated that he believes that there are needs for further rules on composting and anerobic digesters which was mentioned in a prior meeting. He believes down the road, there is needs for further rules for the district and he does not think we should drop that. Mr. Gedert stated that he thinks that is the role of the Policy Committee; to listen to the public and to see what the needs are for the district and set more rules for the district.

Ms. Hurley asked that given the points that Mr. Mara raised about permits that are pending, she knows it has been very quick that the rules have been in place and asked if we know who is going to notify Rumpke about how these rules apply to their permitting process now and what they need to do about it.

Mr. Kesterman stated that this is a legal question that the solid waste district needs to answer; are the rules applicable and this is something the attorney needs to determine.

Mr. Kesterman stated that Ms. Hurley mentioned "Rumpke" but there are dozens of operators in Hamilton County that are impacted by these rules. We probably need to ask the bigger question of has the dozens of operators including Rumpke been notified of the rules.

Ms. Hurley stated that given that, jumping ahead a little, if that were done, then who would notify Rumpke that they need to do these things. Notifying them of the rules would be enough to let them know they need to complete the additional kind of paperwork.

Mr. Kesterman stated, only his opinion and sensitive to both Mr. Gedert and Mr. DiPuccio's comments, he thinks the solid waste manager probably knows that this is a weird period because of the transition into rules. Mr. Kesterman stated that he thinks we, as a Committee could recommend that Ms. Balz seek legal opinion on those and then moving forward, if all the operators are notified, the District, in theory will be notified.

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Mr. Kesterman stated that at least for the one change at Rumpke, his team shared an email with Ms. Balz making them aware that his office was purvey to that permit application and to that deficiency notification but he plans to continue, and he thinks it appropriate for Public Health to continue to make sure the solid waste district, in lieu of the new rules, is aware.

Ms. Hurley thanked Mr. Kesterman for the clarification.

Mr. DiPuccio stated that we don't presently have an administrative structure set up to take care of this so we are starting from ground zero and that is what we are doing; outside assistance which is the first step but there is a whole internal process: notifications, etc. and it is going to take a while to formulate an administrative procedure/process and he would leave this up to the solid waste district to put this together.

Ms. Driehaus asked in order to get a legal opinion related to the permits that are currently moving through the process, do we formally need to have a motion or is this something Ms. Balz asks of the Prosecutor's office after she is given direction to that or do we need a formal motion.

Mr. Gedert stated that he yields to the needs of Ms. Balz as she needs the legal advice. Ms. Balz stated that she can request a legal opinion without a motion. Ms. Driehaus stated that a legal opinion related to whether or not the rules apply to pending applications.

Ms. Driehaus stated that another issue that was raised was if there was any kind of conflict of interest related to the Committee's newest member, Colerain Township Trustee Wahlert. Ms. Driehaus stated that she did not know if Mr. Wahlert would be the appropriate person to ask and stated that she is uncomfortable with the Committee doing it rather than him doing it.

Mr. Kesterman stated that as Health Commissioner, his position, not him personally, has asked on behalf of a Board member so it might be appropriate for the solid waste district manager to ask and she can consult with the Prosecutor.

Ms. Driehaus asked Ms. Balz if she could take care of this.

Ms. Driehaus stated that we have a much broader question about how we are going to set up relative to the rules and Ms. Balz is working on this.

Ms. Driehaus stated the next meeting is in March and asked Ms. Balz and asked if she could have something for the Committee. Ms. Balz stated yes.

Mr. Kesterman asked Ms. Balz if staff needed any budget revisions to help provide updates for some of this? Ms. Balz stated we probably will but won't know what those revisions will be until we receive those proposals.

Mr. Gedert stated that this is an excellent question because when the Policy Committee increases the workload, like the rules that were adopted, a budget amendment is a natural question.

Mr. DiPuccio asked Ms. Balz if the budget was able to be amended without Policy Committee approval. Ms. Balz stated yes.

Ms. Driehaus asked if there was a degree to which it can be increased. Ms. Balz stated that if we dramatically change the programs we set up in the Plan, then we may have to do something with the Plan but we are living up to our obligations of the programs that are in the Plan so this does not change that.

Ms. Driehaus stated that notification needs to be provided to the public in the form of publishing the rules, which was raised in the public comments, but also notification to the operators that it might impact and asked Ms. Balz to make sure the operators are aware. Ms. Balz stated yes and thinks it would be appropriate to send a letter. Ms. Balz stated she would like to work with Hamilton County Public Health to get a good list.

Ms. Driehaus asked Mr. DiPuccio if he was suggesting that the Committee does a different kind of meeting or a deeper dive into the work of the Committee. She heard him say that this is something that had been done in the past and did not know if he was suggesting that the Committee take this up or if this was just a passing observation.

Mr. DiPuccio stated that this is just an option at this point. He hasn't had a chance to go back and look at the information if he still had it as far as how it was structured, what the goals were, the process, etc. He would like to see if he could find the information.

Ms. Hurley stated that when Mr. DiPuccio was discussing his vision of the Committee, the example he mentioned was the rule making and asked if there were other examples recently. Mr. DiPuccio stated that not recently, but the grant program. Some grants would be \$500 and we need to give staff the discretion.

Mr. DiPuccio stated that there is going to be gray areas. He thinks the solid waste district has an overall approach that has been laid out for example, plan revisions. But anything that involves major changes in direction in terms of how we are going to do things and does not have specific examples but could find some on previous agendas.

Mr. Gedert suggested that if any member of the Committee observes a direction towards micromanagement, then we raise the issue at that moment for discussion.

Ms. Driehaus stated that we have a lot of work that will be taking place between now and the March meeting and asked Mr. DiPuccio to give this further thought and maybe come up with a recommendation for the group.

**b. Waste Industry Representative**

Ms. Driehaus stated that as we all know, Mr. Riddle resigned and wanted to take a moment to thank him for his service to the Committee. But because of that, we don't have a formal way for the major operator in the county to present to the group related to the activity at the Colerain site and the Bond Road site.

Ms. Driehaus stated that she was talking to Ms. Balz about this and what it might look like. Ms. Driehaus asked the Committee for feedback on how we might want to or not formalize some kind of presentation from Rumpke moving forward.

Mr. DiPuccio stated that he would give some background about how the waste industry representative came to be. It was never intended to be Rumpke as a representative and was not the basis for doing it. It was as an ex-officio member to have a representative from the waste industry who provides a lot of services throughout the county.

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Mr. DiPuccio stated that originally, the first representative was someone from Waste Management then, the waste industry companies that operated within the District would provide nominations to us and then the waste industry would probably rotate representatives in and out. It was Waste Management for a couple of years then Rumpke.

Mr. DiPuccio stated that he thinks there is a missed perception that this was specifically set up for Rumpke and it was not. We may have had difficulty finding a waste industry representative who would want to serve in that role. One approach to that may be that if you are going to send out notifications on the rules to the companies that operate within the County and decide you want to continue to have an ex-officio member, you may ask them if they could provide input on it.

Mr. DiPuccio stated that you could go with a trade association that has a local Ohio chapter anyway and they would have local members of that which is National Waste and Recycling Association and stated that he could get the information for Ms. Balz.

Mr. Kesterman stated that he would recommend another legal opinion on whether we are allowed to have an ex-officio member. Mr. Kesterman stated that this may have been part of Mr. Riddle's decision to step away.

Mr. Gedert stated that a larger question is what is the purpose of an ex-officio on the Committee? Can it be done and is it legal and the second would be the larger purpose. He sees the larger purpose of being additional input and if the additional input is from the waste industry side of the perspective that we may not hold, then that may justify an additional perspective of an environmentalist position as an ex-officio as well to add perspective as well.

Mr. Gedert stated that he sees Mr. Mara's perspective from his comments. Not for balance, that is not the point but if the purpose of adding the waste industries ex-officio position is to add industry perspective, that might be also the purpose for adding an environmentalist to the Committee in an ex-officio position.

Mr. Gedert stated that first he thinks we ask the question of is it legal to add an ex-officio member. He assumes an ex-officio position is a non-voting member of the Committee and thinks research needs to be done there.

Mr. Kesterman stated that he has been attending these meetings fairly consistently for ten years although only held the role on the Committee the last two. Mr. Riddle's position as an ex-officio member was used mostly by the Committee as someone to ask revenue questions to.

Mr. Kesterman stated this would help the District look into the future for the number one operator. Not only the number one operator, but the number one funder of the District. Any grant programs or any future plans this Committee was making really hinged upon what the operator was anticipating and this was Mr. Riddle.

Mr. Gedert suggested to see what other solid waste districts are doing in that perspective. Do they have ex-officio inputs processes? Ms. Driehaus stated if they do not, how do they get the information they need from the Industry? She thinks that industry perspective is very helpful and we are trying to figure out a way to bring that information and perspective into the work of this Committee.

Ms. Driehaus stated it looks like we need a legal opinion on the nature of an ex-officio member to this Committee to see if that is legal and pursue it from there who we would like to have serve in that role. If we find that it is not legal, then is there another way to gain that perspective.

Mr. Gedert stated that our goal is waste reduction and recycling so maybe add that thought of a recycling industry representative of an ex-officio member. Someone we can tap into the world of recycling.

Mr. Bruner asked what the difference was between an ex-officio member and someone like a contact that you could consistently go to for information. Mr. Driehaus stated that the ex-officio member sits on the Committee as a non-voting member and has a place on the Committee and a regular avenue for input.

Ms. Driehaus stated as opposed to having them come and do a presentation periodically or provide public comments.

Ms. Driehaus stated that Mr. Hittle may have information to add to the ex-officio discussion. Mr. Hittle stated that he did not know of other solid waste districts across the state that had ex-officio members. Mr. Hittle stated that either the Public member or the Citizen member cannot have any affiliation with the waste industry and the other one does not have that distinction.

## **6. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

### **a. 2020 Hamilton County Diversion Rate**

Ms. Balz stated that the 2020 Diversion Rate is fifty-five-point seven eight percent which is fantastic. This number means that we are diverting over fifty-five percent of the waste generated in the county whether that be recycling or composting.

Ms. Balz stated of the four largest counties in Ohio, Hamilton County has the highest rate. The other counties are Cuyahoga, Franklin, and Montgomery.

Ms. Balz stated that there was a slight decrease from the fifty-six percent of 2019 and most of that was the exempt waste and industrial diversion. We saw an increase in the tons collected through residential/commercial recycling which is fantastic.

Ms. Driehaus asked if trends were available. Ms. Balz stated yes and she would email to the committee.

Ms. Balz stated that although this number is great, we could be diverting forty-five percent more.

Ms. Hurley stated that the diversion rate was a couple of percentage points lower than last year and when she was reporting on the specifics, they were all better and asked this to be explained. Ms. Balz stated that part of it was the industrial numbers came in a little lower. These numbers are based on purely voluntary surveys that staff collects and can vary year to year as to who replies and what numbers are received. Ms. Balz stated that she believes the diversion is much higher but it is difficult to measure.

Ms. Hurley asked relating to the composting, where are these coming from because many of the grants that have been given are for community composting and asked if we had any sense of how that is impacting the diversion rate.

Ms. Balz stated that the District can claim tonnage from small scale community composting but are not allowed to claim backyard composting by residents and any efforts in that get captured by the reduction of the landfill numbers.

A brief discussion ensued regarding revenue, tonnage, and tipping fees.

**b. Hamilton County Solid Waste Plan Update**

Ms. Driehaus stated that Ms. Balz will comment on this but knew that Karen Luken was ill and was unable to attend. Ms. Driehaus stated that Ms. Luken would come to our next meeting.

Ms. Balz stated that she will present the Economic Incentive Analysis which she shared a few weeks ago. We will then talk about our stakeholder sessions as well to address some of the public input we'll have.

Ms. Balz explained that Ohio EPA has a list of analysis districts must complete. The Economic Incentive Analysis is one of them and they are mainly looking at what programs we offer to incentivize waste diversion.

Ms. Balz stated that grants will be covered by another analyses and we will focus on the Residential Recycling Incentive Program, but there is also a part that asks about Pay As You Throw programs.

Ms. Balz stated that even though she is talking about the Economic Incentive Analysis today, the Committee is welcome to send her comments over the next few months. The primary audience for this analysis is Ohio EPA and will be included in the Plan but we do not anticipate most members of the public reading every single analysis. There will be chapters that summarize a lot of this.

Ms. Balz went through her presentation and at the end asked the Committee the following questions:

- Do you think R3Source should add a minimum threshold amount for communities participating the RRI program?
- Should R3Source continue spending almost half of its budget on residential programs?
- Would establishing regional meetings help foster collaboration among communities?
- Should District staff do more to promote volume-based waste programs?

Mr. Gedert stated that he liked the minimum threshold idea and thinks that the current spending pattern is not moving the needle and thinks a change in pattern would help. He thinks changing the pattern of expenditure every two or three years might help there.

Mr. Gedert reiterated the question of should R3Source continue spending almost half of its budget on residential programs? He proposed changing the revenue package a little and exploring the second-tier revenue idea and the new revenues spent on the commercial/industrial sector and keep this budget for the residential.

Mr. Gedert stated that if a new revenue stream could be brought in, put it all in the commercial/industrial and create a similar incentive program for the commercial/industrial stream.

Mr. Gedert stated that he liked establishing the regional meetings and expanding the collaboration to all the stakeholders which takes a lot of labor and this is staff's choice but thinks taking in stakeholder input from the community representatives as well as the community is always helpful.

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Mr. Gedert stated that regarding volume-based programs, he has been very involved in his career on volume-based programs throughout many states and it is a hard conversion but no community he has worked with has regretted the conversion.

Mr. Gedert stated that U.S. EPA is planning a grants program in the next year using infrastructure dollars and he will let the Committee know when those dollars are released. He thinks using grant dollars to promote volume-based waste programs would help but there are also consultants available.

Ms. Hurley stated that within the last few meetings, it was mentioned that the county would provide a model contract for waste disposal and factored into this would be curbside recycling as a package deal. Ms. Hurley stated that she did not know what kind of financial incentives would have to be a part of that but it seems like that would be money really well spent and if you are trying to increase the diversion rate, if you could get more communities to buy into curbside recycling that was not subscription, thinks this could be a real game changer.

Ms. Hurley asked Ms. Balz if there was any sort of research available for doing this sort of thing. Ms. Balz stated that staff helps communities going out to bid with their requests for proposals and help them integrate recycling in that. This has been done in Sharonville, Silverton, and Lincoln Heights.

Ms. Balz stated that staff has plenty of information available to assist communities with this and gave examples.

Ms. Hurley stated that part of her idea is that this would be mandatory. Mr. Gedert stated that this would be set in a county-wide policy which we do not have. Ms. Hurley questioned if the Commissioners would be open to this.

Mr. DiPuccio stated that the RRI program was originally seed money and not intended to be thirty-years of operation money. Also, the 48 communities wanted to run their own programs and did not want the county telling them what to do with their trash and recycling which is why there are not mandatory programs.

Mr. DiPuccio stated that it is an immense amount of money and our return is not all that great. Mr. DiPuccio asked why the commercial and industrial sector seem to be doing so much better? Mr. DiPuccio stated that it is driven by economics and expanded on his statement.

Mr. DiPuccio stated that maybe it is time for us to say, what do we really want to do with the RRI Program. We can talk about making these changes which are going to have some positive impacts but are we fighting an uphill battle that is not going to change. He thinks making mandatory waste/recycling collection is going to be a very hard sell to communities. To approve the Plan that says we are going to require you to do this.

Mr. DiPuccio stated that the broader view back is that we are getting our revenue from dollars that are from a fee from the landfill that come from the commercial, residential, and industrial users of those landfills. The District is taking the dollars, reshuffling, and sending it back out which is a concept that maybe needs to be rethought.

Mr. DiPuccio stated that we have seen it work on the commercial and industrial side but on the residential side it is not due to not having that same economic incentive or otherwise, we would have very robust curbside recycling programs in all communities and thinks this is a bigger question that we need to ask ourselves.

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Mr. Bruner stated that going back to encouraging communities to increase their diversion rate so they earn more funds and asked if any thought has been giving to changing the dollars per ton to provided more financial support to those communities lower on the scale while encouraging those higher to still keep doing what they are doing.

Ms. Balz stated that the values can be changed but right now, it increases four dollars for every tier. Mr. DiPuccio stated that this would work for some communities and some it would not work for and discussed the reasons.

Mr. Gedert spoke of “trash theft” in his township which is neighbors not subscribing for trash services then sneaking their trash in with their neighbors. Mr. Gedert stated he spoke to the Public Works Director about it who was aware. Mr. Gedert mentioned to him if he would be in favor of some type of mandatory ordinance from the county and he said absolutely yes but also mentioned that it would not come from the Trustees as they would not be in favor; it would have to come from higher up.

Mr. Gedert stated that trash theft is happening all around the township and universal recycling is not happening because they are so worried about the trash collection. Mr. Gedert stated that he believed this was happening in other parts of the county and thinks we need some sort of universal program across the county and spoke of enforcement.

Ms. Driehaus asked if there was an analysis of all county jurisdictions for which ones had requirements related to this and which have trash and recycling. Ms. Balz stated yes and that this information is included in the Residential Infrastructure Analysis . Ms. Driehaus asked Ms. Balz to send it to her.

Ms. Driehaus stated that when looking at the questions, she is looking at where we will get the biggest bang for the buck. She understands the idea of minimum thresholds but if there is a community that is small and they are given a good chunk of money, the bang for the buck probably is not as great as putting that money somewhere else where the population is higher.

Ms. Driehaus stated that this is why we need to be strategic about some of the investments that are being made if we are serious about diverting trash from the landfill.

Ms. Driehaus stated regarding Mr. Gedert’s idea, she would have to see an analysis to think through if the county would play any part in any of this.

Mr. Kesterman asked if, we as a Policy Committee, are trying to get to zero waste, from staff’s perspective, asked where is the biggest bang for our buck? Ms. Balz stated that the commercial sector and investing more time promoting, offering them resources, and trying to get cardboard and other high value materials out of the waste stream.

Mr. Kesterman stated that there were good benefits coming from the residential program and asked if there was a bottom dollar that could provide some benefit and maybe buy less park benches? Ms. Balz stated that we would have to work out that number and has not looked at what would happen if the RRI decreases. In the stakeholder meetings, we have talked the communities and asked them what would happen if the RRI went away but this has only been qualitative and have not run the numbers.

Mr. Kesterman stated that his personal recommendation would be reduce the RRI somewhat to a level that you thought they would continue doing what they’re doing and invest and try and reduce commercial waste in the county.

Mr. DiPuccio stated he liked Mr. Kesterman's comment and the money communities spend on specific uses that do not yield results. Recycled content benches are great but it is probably something they would have bought anyway and it does nothing to improve the rate of recycling.

Mr. Gedert stated that he liked Mr. Kesterman's comment but an unintended consequence is the City of Cincinnati. They have an archaic funding situation where they pay for trash and recycling collection out of property tax and they do not have a decent funding situation. If you take away funding from the county, you decrease funding for their curbside recycling. There is not an alternative pathway to recover that funding elsewhere in their city budget.

Mr. Gedert stated that their recycling budget competes with putting police officers on the street and that is a losing formula. Mr. DiPuccio asked if they just received an infusion of one million dollars a year, from what he heard, that is generated by the commercial franchise fees. Mr. Gedert stated he was unfamiliar with that but knows that are not funding new trucks on the road because of their lack of funds.

Ms. Balz showed and discussed the timeline for the Plan Update. A brief question and answer session ensued.

**c. Waste Reduction Innovation Grant Update**

Ms. Balz stated that Attachment D was an overview of the one application received since the last meeting which was not funded and discussed the reasons why.

**d. 2022 Draft Workplan**

Ms. Balz stated that Attachment E was a draft 2022 Workplan. Staff is still waiting on some of the 2021 benchmark numbers.

Ms. Balz briefly discussed a few programs in the workplan.

**e. Environmental Enforcement Program**

Ms. Balz stated that this is similar to what the Committee has seen in the past but this has all of 2021 complaints received.

Ms. Driehaus asked Mr. Peak if he had anything to add to the report. Mr. Peak briefly discussed the program over the past few years and stated that he has been assisting Public Health.

**7. TENTATIVE FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Ms. Hurley stated that she recalls at previous meetings that the carry-over would be discussed and asked if this could be a future agenda item. Ms. Balz stated that this will be part of the financial analysis.

Mr. Gedert asked if our carbon footprint of methane from our landfills could be discussed. SWACO has a carbon emissions management plan, as a solid waste district and thought this might be something for us to consider as a Policy Committee because of climate change and the climate impacts of methane. Mr. Gedert stated he thought it might be worth our discussion as we are doing a Plan Update.

Ms. Balz stated that methane will be talked about in March.

**8. POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBERS' COMMENTS**

There were no comments at this time.

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**9. UPCOMING DISTRICT MEETINGS**

The next regularly scheduled Policy Committee meeting will be Wednesday, March 16, 2022 at 1:30 p.m. at Hamilton County Environmental Services, 250 William Howard Taft Road, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Cincinnati, Ohio 45219.

**10. ADJOURNMENT (Target Time – 2:00 p.m.)**

Ms. Driehaus entertained a motion to adjourn. Ms. Hurley moved; Mr. Gedert seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.