



Rome-Floyd County Solid Waste Commission



Tuesday January 26, 2021 8:30 AM
Zoom Meeting

PRESENT: Commissioner Mark Cochran, Rome City Commission
Commissioner Larry Maxey, Floyd County Commission
Commissioner Bonny Askew, Rome City Commission
Mr. Sammy Rich, Rome City Manager
Mr. Jamie McCord, Floyd County Manager
Mr. Gary Burkhalter, Floyd County Assistant Manager
Mr. Chris Jenkins, Rome Public Works Director
Mr. Justin Messer, Rome Assistant Public Works Director
Mr. Bruce Ivey, Floyd County Special Projects Manager
Mr. Aaron Carroll, Rome Engineering Services Director
Mr. Michael Skeen, Floyd County Public Works Director
Ms. Toni Rhinehart, Rome Finance Director

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND MEETING SCHEDULE

Commissioner Cochran called the meeting to order and nominated Commissioner Watters as Chair. Commissioner Askew nominated Commissioner Cochran as Vice Chair. The nominations were approved by common consent.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Cochran asked called for approval of the November meeting minutes. Hearing no objections, the minutes of the November meeting were approved by common consent.

Commissioner Cochran asked for an overview of the Solid Waste Commission. Mr. Rich stated the Solid Waste Commission was formed by a long-standing agreement between the City and County, in which the jointly owned Landfill is managed by the City, while the Recycling Center is managed by the County. Mr. McCord added that Phases 1 through 3 at Walker Mountain were closed in the early 90's. The City and the County created Site 2 (Phases 4 -9) as the Joint Solid Waste Commission. Mountain 4 through 9. Leachate is piped to the Waste Treatment Plant which is something that most landfills aren't able to do. We are currently in Phase 8. It is managed very well and we will be secure for many years to come.

Mr. Jenkins noted all the Landfill capital improvements are funded from our tipping fees. We grow that fund in order to have the ability to cover the development of new phases as well as

closure and post closure costs of completed phases without the need for SPLOST projects. He noted that last year, closure costs for a completed phase totaled about \$7 million and were totally covered by the Solid Waste Commission Fund. He added that this fund is also used to cover one third of the deficits in the Recycling budget, which is affected by swings in market rates, while the City and County governments each cover one third.

Mr. McCord added that while *disposal* is handled jointly and funded by the Solid Waste Commission Fund, the *collection* side is handled separately by the City and County, although we work together on the yard waste program, which is a great savings to both the City and County. The City and County are managing these operations very well and will be secure for many years to come.

OLD BUSINESS

2020 Overview

Mr. Jenkins gave an overview of our 2020 activities. He reported the construction of Phase 8 at Walker Mountain Landfill was completed. He also noted that last year we dealt with our continued environmental responsibility for the former Recycling Center site in North Rome. He noted that although we have sold the property, all previous owners bear continued responsibility to address the environmental issues that resulted from the former Fox Manufacturing business located on the site decades ago. Since it was placed on the State Hazardous Site inventory in the 1998, we have continued to monitor and report contaminants in the soil. Last year, we hired a new consultant, Maxis Engineering at approximately \$24,000 per year to perform the mandatory analysis of the soil and submit reports to EPD on our behalf. He noted that EPD has changed its risk reduction standards recently which should reduce or end our obligations in the future.

Mr. Jenkins noted that last year we hired consultant Abbie Goldsmith, to prepare a rate study to evaluate our solid waste disposal operation to ensure our tipping fees continue to be sufficient to cover our costs for the construction of future phases at the landfill. The study compares four different scenarios so we can evaluate the effect different tipping fees will have on our long-term obligations. Ms. Goldsmith has been working on this for a little over a year and we were hoping to have an in-person meeting where we can have a thorough discussion and review of her findings. We are planning to have her come to our March meeting. Hopefully we can meet in person by then.

Mr. Jenkins reported that both the City and County collect yard waste debris and jointly dispose of it at the City's mulch yard located on Vaughn Rd. The material is ground for us by International Paper (IP) at no charge to us, then haul it back to their facility to be used as fuel. He added that we have had an excellent relationship with International Paper for some time. Mr. Rich noted that this is a mutually beneficial public/private partnership that has enabled us to eliminate what would have been a big expense. Staff met with IP last year and they expressed a desire to continue this relationship.

Mr. Rich added that grinding would be a major expenditure for the City that we have been able to eliminate. He noted that recently, we have received a proposal by a local entrepreneur who would like to take over the grinding operation with new equipment that will convert it to a fuel source. They would expect the City to pay a \$65,000 per year service fee for their service. Mr. Rich added that we have not been seeking proposals but he wanted the Commission to be aware that this one has come to our attention.

Mr. Carroll stated that in 2020 we were nearing capacity on phases 4 through 7, so we began getting plans ready to construct Phase 8. He noted we have over 900 acres at Walker Mountain with plenty of areas that we can expand in the future. Plans for Phase 8 were prepared by Atlantic Coast Consulting (ACC), whose president, Murray Griffin, worked with Jordon Jones and Goulding during the original plans for the landfill Site 2 back in the 90's, so we have a great deal of history with Mr. Griffin. In December 2019, we gave the Notice to Proceed to the contractor's T and K Construction, who were also the contractors on Phase 7. The contract time was 210 days with substantial completion by July 10th 2020. We opened to start to receiving waste by the end of July. He noted that constructing the landfill is similar to constructing a swimming pool. It has to be lined, leachate must be collected to protect the groundwater. The clearing for Phase 8 was completed in January 2020 and the base grading was completed by February. In March, the clay liner was placed with natural material that met the required permeability and the liner was complete in April. In May, the textured geomembrane liner was placed and the pea gravel was placed to make the drainage layer in June. He noted berms were also constructed to limit the amount of rainwater that is converted to leachate. The project cost was a little over \$6 million.

Update C&D Closure

Mr. Carroll stated that originally two Phases for Construction and Demolition sites were planned. After Phase 1 was full, we found it would be more cost effective to divert C&D material to the MSW landfill instead of incurring the expense of a constructing a new Phase. At this time, we are working with ACC on this closure process. They have submitted draft plans and reports for the minor modification for our review. We will need to bring monitoring wells in closer to meet the required distance for the final footprint of the Construction and Demolition site.

Mr. Carroll explained that once we complete putting material in a phase, like Berry Hill, we have to stabilize the area and monitor the groundwater for 30 years after closing to ensure there is no environmental impact. He added that we are still monitoring wells around the perimeter of Berry Hill and Phases 1 through 3 at Walker Mountain Landfill.

When Phases 4 through 9 is closed, we will be required install a cap on it to prevent rainwater from producing leachate. We also must provide yearly reports regarding surety confirming that we will have the money needed for groundwater and surface water monitoring for the required 30 years. He noted there are many compliance issues and professional services

required for landfills. Groundwater and surface water monitoring events occur typically in April and October each year.

NEW BUSINESS

ACC Task Order 2021-01 For General Consulting Services.

Mr. Jenkins reported that we have a contract every two years for semi-annual testing at our monitoring wells. He noted that EPD requires a certified professional geologist to certify the monitoring reports which is why we must hire consultants. In the past, we have used Golder and Associates to perform these monitoring events in spring and fall for both Walker Mountain and Berry Hill landfills. They have done a good job for several years for a little over \$89,000 per year, but recently they have had management changes and began to get behind in the reporting last year. This year, we have reached out to Atlantic Coast Consultants (ACG) who did our design and operations plan. They have quoted a price of \$75,688 per year for a two-year contract. Staff recommends that this contract be services approved by this Commission and then forwarded to the City and County full Commissions.

Commissioner Maxey moved to approve the contract with ACC for \$75,688. Commissioner Askew seconded. The motion carried.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Recycling Center

Operations Report

Mr. Skeen reported that year-to-date we were running about half the material we did a year ago because we had to shut down for about two months last year. Many of the trained inmates had been assigned to other detail by the time we reopened. Some of our material goes directly to Paper Recovery so we don't have to handle it. We are paid the market rate less a bailing fee. The cardboard market is very volatile. In 2010, 2011 and 2012, the market rate for cardboard was \$149 per ton, while a year ago it was about \$30 to \$35/ton. After COVID hit, it jumped back up to about \$80/ton. We took in about 834 tons and shipped out over 1000 tons which includes material that went to Paper Recovery. We did one HHW event two weeks ago and served 684 vehicles which was the largest turnout we've had.

Financial Report

Mr. Burkhalter summarized the financial report through the end of November 2020. He noted that revenues were about 60% of our budgeted revenue. We had budgeted \$454,670 and actual received \$271,381. On the expenditure side, it was about 77% of the budget. We had budgeted \$627,306 and actual expenditures were \$481,711. Depreciation was at 87% and salaries and benefits were at 88%. Cash on hand at the end of November was \$9,722.

Walker Mountain Landfill

Operations Report

Finished out the year with a positive from 2019 to 2020 we were up 4200 tons. Garbage was up 2000 tons, and C&D was up 2400 tons. Inert was down 265 tons and tires were up 3.5 tons. We have a grand total of about 130,600 tons for the year as compared to 126,000 for 2019, and 120,000 tons in 2018. At our last meeting in October we were concerned with Republic moving material to a landfill they were purchasing in Gordon County, but that has changed. Their charges have increased steadily from October to November. In October they were at \$77,000 to \$97,000 in November and \$107,000 in December. He believed the reason is that they have an increase in competitors and are slowly losing control of the waste industry they used to dominate in this area.

Commissioner Cochran asked how we measure the volume of waste we take in. Mr. Stone stated we measure capacity by weight per cubic yard. EPD uses 1000 lbs./cu yd. to calculate volume, but since we purchased a new compactor, our compaction has increased to as much as 1800 lbs./cu yard. This will save us a lot of air space and extend the life of the landfill.

Financial Report

Ms. Rinehart presented the November financial report. She noted that operating revenues were up. There is more money coming into the landfill. Revenues are pretty much in line with last year. Interest earnings are down. Expenses are right in line with last year. The cash balance was \$13 million in 2019 but in 2020 we had \$8.1 million due to the expenses associated with the construction of Phase 8. We need to grow that cash balance for the next expenses. YTD our net position is up from \$1.7 million to \$2.5 million.

Mr. McCord stated that we would not be scheduled to meet until March. Commissioner Cochran asked Mr. McCord to ask Commissioner Watters if she would feel comfortable to meet in person in March.

ADJOURNED

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Margaret W. Hollingsworth, Secretary