

Meeting: Regional Waste Advisory Committee (RWAC) Meeting
Date: Thursday, April 20, 2023
Time: 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
Place: Zoom meeting
Purpose: *The purpose of the Regional Waste Advisory Committee is to provide input on certain policies, programs, and projects that implement actions in the 2030 Regional Waste Plan, as well as to provide input on certain legislative and administrative actions that the Metro Council or Chief Operating Officer will consider related to implementation of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan.*

Members in Attendance:

Marta McGuire, Metro
Alondra Flores-Avina, Trash for Peace
Sharetta Butcher, North by Northeast Community Health Center (NxNE)
Lindsay Marshall, City of Tualatin
Christa McDermott, Community Environmental Services, PSU
Audrey O'Brien, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
Eben Polk, City of Portland
Thao Tu, Vietnamese Community of Oregon
Beth Vargas Duncan, Oregon Refuse and Recycling Association (ORRA)
Ryan Largura, City of Troutdale
Andrew Bartlett, City of Hillsboro

1. CALL TO ORDER & MEETING OVERVIEW

Marta McGuire (Metro) brought the virtual meeting to order at 8:31 am and previewed the agenda.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no comments from the public.

4. State Clean up funds update

Marta McGuire introduced Jon Mayer, Lisa Clark, Stephanie Rawson and Cayla Pruett from Metro.

Key points of the presentation included:

Presenters reviewed the allocation of the 10-million-dollar state funding, and highlights of connected work.

Stephanie Rawson shared an update on the RID Patrol Program. Established in 1993, this program provides cleanup of dumped and abandoned trash in public spaces and works with public landowners with trash impacts. These services are provided in partnership with Central City Concern, as well as an internal workforce transition program. In the last 12 months RID has cleaned more than 6,500 sites, removed more than 1,000 tons of waste and has an average response time of three days, receiving more than 12,600 cleanup requests.

Cayla Pruett shared an update on the Regional Refresh Fund. This program is a low barrier funding program that provides sponsorship dollars for community lead cleanup projects in underserved communities in the metro region. Its goal is to advance solid waste service equity. The state funds that were awarded to Metro allowed the Regional Refresh Fund to increase the funding limit for projects. The program has awarded \$300,000 in 2023 and the program has been formally adopted as a long-term program.

Lisa Clark shared an update on the state cleanup funding project. The state legislature sent 10 million dollars to Metro to expand existing programming to demonstrate significant impacts in response to the pandemic. Metro was focused on three categories; expand cleanup crews along high visibility right of way, invest in partnerships, and remove key problematic items. Major projects have been derelict boat removal, local government program and nonprofit funding and sharps collection. Collectively these efforts have cleaned 1,016 tons of waste, held 2,620 cleanup events, cleaned 3,241 miles of highway, cleaned 200 graffiti tags, removed 58 derelict vessels and 22 abandoned RVs.

Member Discussion:

Ms. Butcher asked why the 1% of regional refresh funds for graffiti is so low when there is so much graffiti in the city? Ms. Pruett replied that graffiti is a challenging project and is not sure why it is a less popular cleanup. Often painting a mural is more expensive than what the refresh funds can provide.

Mr. Bartlett asked what the regional refresh funds generally pay for? Ms. Pruett replied that this program is meant to be flexible, so as long as funds support the approved cleanup project, they can spend the funds on more than disposal costs.

Mr. Bartlett asked if RID will go onto railroad property. Ms. Rawson replied RID has performed cleanup upon railroads. It can be tricky since railroad property is considered private property. Ms. Rawson has been in contact with the railway to create a partnership for further work on railways.

5. WPES Budget Update

Marta McGuire presented the WPES Budget Update.

Key points of the presentation included:

Ms. McGuire reviewed the Metro budget process. The budget process is year-long, and currently, the budget is in the adoption phase. WPES's work is guided by the Regional Waste Plan and guided by three principles: service and community investment, planning and partnerships, and regional garbage and recycling operations, culminating in a \$123.8 million total operating budget. Council prioritized key equity metrics to support the budget. Examples of indicators used to measure the equity metrics are the median hourly wage of Metro solid waste workers, youth leadership and programs, and dumped garbage cleanup.

WPES held budget forums to collect feedback from local governments, industry and community partners to help shape the proposed budget. Feedback included a desire to balance costs with services, resiliency and transparency, and focusing on collection events. This information was used to inform the proposed budget. Proposed additions to the budget were restoring the cost of living increases to grant programs, establishing the regional refresh program as a long term program and building capacity in the standards and compliance division.

At the beginning of 2023 Council set three investment target areas which are environment, economy and housing. Examples of WPES's work that supports these target areas are, the household hazardous waste services, food scraps recycling MetroPaint and grants to local governments.

Member Discussion:

Ms. Butcher asked what percentage of managers and professionals are people of color. Ms. McGuire replied with details from the Regional Waste Plan Progress Report, that people of color are overrepresented in front linework and underrepresented in managerial positions.

Mr. Bartlett asked if the additional position in the compliance department would be supporting the fee transparency work? Ms. McGuire replied that that position would be focused on authorizations and licensing at facilities. This would be a regulatory position. We are working toward a conversation with Council about rate transparency that would come out of the policy and planning team.

Mr. Bartlett asked about the late changes to the fee rate, and is it accurate that the direction around fee predictability is now tabled? Ms. McGuire replied that WPES will be receiving further direction on this in the coming months. Council has a desire to look deeper at fees and how they are set. Mr. Bartlett shared that the earlier local governments have information the better for their planning processes.

Ms. McDermott asked how will Metro reconcile the issue that we want tonnage to decrease, while we rely on tonnage for funding. Ms. McGuire replied that this is always a great question. Hopefully the recycling modernization act can help fund the disposal and recycling of materials. We are looking on how we can more deeply engage RWAC in the budget engagement process.

Ms. Vargas Duncan thanked Ms. McGuire for the presentation and that she knows discussing the budget can be difficult and looks forward to hearing about the process earlier in the next year at RWAC meetings.

Final Remarks

Ms. McGuire asked for the approval of the March meeting minutes. Ms. Vargas Duncan moved to approve the minutes, Ms. Butcher seconded. All approved.

Ms. McGuire asked for the approval of the April meeting minutes. Mr. Largura moved to approve the minutes, Ms. McDermott seconded. All approved.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 10:00 a.m.