

Whatcom County

Council Public Works & Health Committee

COUNTY COURTHOUSE
311 Grand Avenue, Ste #105
Bellingham, WA 98225-4038
(360) 778-5010



Committee Minutes - Final

Tuesday, April 9, 2024
1 PM
Hybrid Meeting

HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 1:25 P.M. (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil, OR CALL 360.778.5010)

COUNCILMEMBERS

Kaylee Galloway
Jon Scanlon
Mark Stremler

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

Call To Order

Committee Chair Jon Scanlon called the meeting to order at 1 p.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 3 - Kaylee Galloway, Jon Scanlon, and Mark Stremler

Also Present: Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, Todd Donovan, and Ben Elenbaas

Announcements

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2024-166](#) Ordinance amending Whatcom County Code 8.10, Solid Waste and Residential Recycling Collection

Ted Carlson, Sanitary Service Company, gave a background on this item and spoke about how Sanitary Service originally came to the recommendation to the City of Bellingham to move from a three-bin method for recycling to a single bin. He answered whether a vehicle change to a larger side-load truck would prompt other changes such as regulations for street trees to accommodate the truck. He stated they would be using the same collection vehicles that they use for garbage and for FoodPlus! (food scraps, food-soiled papers, yard waste, and approved compostable packaging) which would have the same clearance. He answered whether we would be getting more product recycled, considering all the variables, if they make this change. He stated most people agree the volume of recyclable material is going to go up, and there is a desire for more recycled material from producers because of legislation that requires producers to use recycled content. He thinks, with all the variables, there will be a net gain in terms of recycled material. Nothing in this would preclude somebody from building a sorting facility here in Whatcom or Skagit County and they would love that. He answered whether the City's climate impact analysis included the transport costs of the material to Woodinville, Washington, and stated it did, but it is not actually an added trip because the trucks and trailers are already going down there.

Carlson and Jennifer Hayden, Health and Community Services, answered what education initiatives have looked like in other places to teach the community and whether they have helped. Carlson stated it is part of the agreement with Bellingham to continue education and he and Hayden described their education efforts.

Kayla Schott-Bresler, Executive's Office, answered whether the ReWRAP Act was on the Legislative agenda this past year, and stated they can look at that.

Carlson answered how they will handle the materials that do not qualify for the three bins, and he stated they will still have curbside service for those things (car batteries, used motor oil, and short section metal).

Hayden answered what the policy implications are if the Council does not feel comfortable moving forward with these code amendments and whether they would just keep the status quo system. She stated there is no state law that says they have to make these changes but the infrastructure that Sanitary Services has (trucks) is aging and the trucks are nearly impossible to source since most of the country has already moved on to the single-stream system.

Carlson stated it would be challenging operationally to have two different systems. It would be several years before they would be able to make the full transition to single-stream even if the Council adopts the code.

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive, asked whether there is good money being paid because producers need recycled content due to mandates for their production, and what is stopping the State and Federal governments from making investment into sorting facilities so the financial burden is not on the collector. Carlson spoke about investments that have been made and stated they support producers paying for recycling to help it make more financial sense so that there can be more investment, but it is hard to build a collection program that relies on commodity pricing to help buy down the price of the system since commodity pricing is so volatile.

Carlson answered whether citizens can expect a decrease in rates if they go to a different system, and stated he does not know if they can expect a decrease but his company can control their costs better, meaning smaller increases over time.

Elenbaas stated the language here is dealing with collection so at some point, the material could all just be blended together anyway. If they do not pass this, they may just be hamstringing the locally-owned company with higher costs and not getting a better result in the end.

Carlson stated right now everything except for paper and cardboard is being commingled downstream (even if they are collecting it separately), and not

passing this could make the collection costs higher. He answered what they are separating and what they would be combining. There used to be more separating of materials before Northwest Recycling closed in January of 2021, but that is not happening now. What was being separated before is now going down to Woodinville and getting mixed in with everyone else's commingled material, and Sanitary Service is paying as though it was single-stream-collected.

Scanlon stated that if Councilmembers have questions to send them in.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:41 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Jon Scanlon-via email 4/16/2024

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Jon Scanlon, Committee Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

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