

**Gratiot Area Solid Waste Authority**  
**April 4, 2019**

A special meeting of the Gratiot Area Solid Waste Authority was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Chairman Schooley at the Alma Municipal Building. A quorum of the Authority was present.

Authority members present: Matthew Schooley and Kurt Giles.

Authority members present: none.

Others present: Matt Biolette (Republic Services), David Ringle, Keith Risdon, and Rosemary Horvath.

*Approval of Agenda*

**Motion by Giles, seconded by Schooley, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried with unanimous voice vote.**

*Approval of Minutes*

**Motion by Giles, seconded by Schooley, to approve the minutes of May 31, 2018, as presented. Motion carried with unanimous voice vote.**

*New Business*

Matt Biolette, Republic Services, presented notice from Isabella County Material Recovery Facility about a new processing fee schedule due to changes in the recycling industry. Biolette offered a power point presentation explaining how China's environmental policy changes have resulted in greater costs for processing recycling, while at the same time reducing the value of the recycling commodities. He asked the City of Alma to help bear the newly added costs of processing curbside recycling.

Biolette told Authority members there are options for changing the program from weekly curbside collection to monthly or quarterly collection, or possibly a city drop-off site.

Discussion followed on changes in the items that can be recycled. Biolette explained that glass generally costs more to process than it's worth, and quite often broken glass will contaminate cardboard or paper in single-stream recycling. Changes in the quality and material of plastic products have also reduced what can be recycled. Not everything marked with a recycle symbol is recyclable. Public education about what can and cannot be recycled will be vital if we wish to keep recycling a viable business. Biolette said there is much talk in the industry about who should bear the cost of public education.

Discussion returned to the added costs from Isabella County MRF. Biolette asked Authority members to revisit the proposed contract amendment from the May 31, 2018 meeting. Members reviewed the amendment language and made changes. The increase in processing fees is \$85/ton. Biolette said Republic has been paying \$40/ton since they took on our contract until the amount of material based on contract collection could be determined. Biolette offered to continue paying that portion, if Alma & St. Louis would take on the balance of the increase. The balance would work out to approximately \$0.34/household per month effective with the next contract year starting May 1, 2019.

Members of the Authority and others present went on to discuss future direction and predictions. Biolette presented his annual report. He said Republic recommends switching to a cart program for recycling and collecting once a month. There will be an initial investment for carts. Grants are available, but they don't cover legacy costs or placement costs, and carts have to be owned by the municipality.

Biolette suggested making carts the responsibility of the solid waste contractor instead of the City. Ownership of the carts could go to the City at the end of the contract. He said there are many benefits to switching to a cart program for recycling. It's typically cleaner for the community and poses less risk for solid waste truck drivers. He proposed switching programs with the beginning of a new contract.

**Motion by Giles, seconded by Schooley, to accept the proposed amendment to the 2017 contract with Republic Services regarding an increase of \$0.34 per house per month, effective May 1, 2019. Motion carried with unanimous voice vote.**

*Public Comment*

Recording Secretary Sara Anderson suggested changes to the current City of Alma Solid Waste booklet and asked for input regarding recycling information.

**Motion by Giles, seconded by Schooley to adjourn the meeting at 3:50 p.m. Motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.**

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Sara Anderson, Recording Secretary

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Date of Approval