

Draft

**CHITTENDEN SOLID WASTE DISTRICT
IN-PERSON/ZOOM MEETING
February 28, 2024 - Regular Meeting**

PRESENT

BOARD MEMBERS:

Bolton	-----
Burlington	Lee Perry
Charlotte	Ken Spencer
Colchester	Liz Hamlin Volz
Essex	Alan Nye
Essex Junction	-----
Hinesburg	Rick McCraw
Huntington	-----
Jericho	Leslie Nulty
	Tom Joslin, alt.
Milton	Henry Bonges
Richmond	
Shelburne	Margy Wiener
	Matt Lawless, alt.
So. Burlington	-----
St. George	-----
Underhill	Paul Ruess
Westford	-----
Williston	Caylin McCamp, alt.
Winooski	Bryn Oakleaf
	Rachel Kennedy, alt.

STAFF: Sarah Reeves, Amy Jewell, Jen Holliday, Josh Estey, Brian Mital

OTHERS PRESENT: None

AGENDA:

1. Agenda
2. Public Comment Period
3. Consent Agenda
4. Solid Waste Management Fee
5. Other Business

1. **CALL TO ORDER and AGENDA** - Chair Paul Ruess called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD** – No public present.

3. **CONSENT AGENDA** – Accepted as presented.

4. **Solid Waste Management Fee** – S. Reeves shared a PowerPoint presentation on the solid waste management fee (SWMF). She explained that this is used to fund District activities, including fully funding admin, finance, compliance, and safety, outreach and communications, IT, and maintenance and roll-off. The fee is administrative and charged on per ton on all Chittenden County trash sent to a landfill. The fee established in

in 1993 was \$17.61/ton, increased to \$22/ton and is currently \$27/ton, with a proposed \$30/ton fee in FY 25. She explained that this fee is authorized in CSWD's Charter and the specific per ton fee is laid out in CSWD's Ordinance. She reviewed a chart showing the percentage breakdown of where the SWMF is used across programs. She noted that excess revenue from the SWMF is now set up to go to reserves and a waterfall reserve process is in place, so once the first reserve maximum is met, it falls to the next designated fund and so on. She said that all generators of waste pay the fee, which is incorporated into haulers' bills. Haulers are charged that fee at either the landfill or the transfer station. CSWD pays the fee for all material brought to the transfer station from DOCs, ORF, and the Depot. Casella pays the fee for MRF residue as part of their facility operating contract. The SWMF revenue is remitted to CSWD each month. She noted that she is researching historical information outlining how the initial fee has been set. We are looking at the needs of the budget and have determined that a \$3 increase is needed to help fund the Closed Landfill Reserve. She noted that the initial fee raised to \$27/ton was estimated to last until FY 18, and we are now just proposing raising it in FY 25. She said that some of this money will be used to increase the reserves, including the need for further funds in the landfill post-closure reserve, because of anticipated increased costs. S. Reeves reviewed sister District fee mechanisms, which include establishing the fee in a district's annual budget. Some districts charge a SWMF only and others have both a SWMF and a per capita fee.

P. Ruess noted that the current SWMF is \$27/ton, which is \$0.135 per pound. He noted that a 30 lb. bag of trash would be about \$0.40 in SWMF. The \$30/ton SWMF would be \$0.45. M. Wiener asked if CSWD changed to a per capita fee if it would be billed through property taxes. S. Reeves said it would. A. Nye noted that CSWD did charge this to member communities for several years in the early 1990's but got away from this model and communities are appreciative.

K. Spencer asked for clarification of the excess money and the waterfall amounts. He noted that post-closure landfill was mentioned but not shown in the FY23 use of fees. S. Reeves said that we can decide where the excess money is directed and previously have not added additional funds to the post-closure reserve but will be designating money there now. The intent is to fund the reserve to \$1,000,000.

C. McCamp asked how much of the increase will be used for the under-funded reserve and if other ways to fund that have been considered. S. Reeves said that in FY23 CSWD added to the reserve with interest from investments, which last year was about \$140,000 but interest rates will decline, and the need continues. S. Reeves noted that we can move money from the undesignated fund for the post-closure landfill reserve if necessary, and unknown expenses related to PFAS is the reason for the increased funding. C. McCamp said that K. Bogasky is unavailable but asked about raising the fee and if it's a long-term fee increase. S. Reeves said that we will be discussing this next month, including how we go about raising the fee, which is currently in the Ordinance. She said that this was a good discussion at the Executive Board.

S. Reeves reviewed the timing for a proposed change to the SWMF, which includes going to the Board in March for approval to hold a public hearing, holding the hearing, and bringing back to the Board for approval in April. The public has 45 days to petition, with an effective change date of July 1.

B. Oakleaf asked that CSWD provide the data point to compare the increase to inflation over that same time period. K. Spencer said that according to the DOL \$27 in 2013 is equal to \$36 in 2024 and the proposed \$30 is significantly less.

S. Reeves reviewed the pros and cons of moving the SWMF out of the Ordinance and into the budgeting process. She noted this would be discussed with the full board in March.

A. Nye said that in 2013, the SWMF Ordinance change meeting was one of the most heavily attended (by the public) meetings and the haulers appreciated that it was not an annual increase, but one that accounted for future years so that they did not have to do annual changes for customers.

L. Nulty said that building in annual increases to the fee disincentivizes staff to decrease costs. CSWD needs to look at incentives to cost management rather than just raising the SWMF each year.

M. Wiener said that 30% of the tonnage going to the landfill is organics and could be diverted and is there a mechanism to further diversion through the SWMF model. S. Reeves said that trash picked up at the curb is charged the SWMF through the hauler's collection fee, regardless of the amount of trash placed in the cart. The customers pay the same rate whether the cart is full or partially full. If CSWD significantly increased the SWMF, it is likely that haulers would pass that increase on to customers. To limit exposure to an increased SWMF, customers could use CSWD's drop-off centers for trash disposal needs and drop off recycling and food scraps at the same time. Diverting as much recycling and organics from the trash stream reduces DOC customers' overall costs to dispose their solid waste.

M. Lawless said that the proposed increase seems reasonable and agrees that sending a stronger social message to reduce tons disposed is also important.

L. Perry noted the SWMF is just one component of the fee, and the tipping fee is the other. S. Reeves also said the State has a separate \$6/ton fee at the landfill that supports grants and other programs.

R. McCraw asked for information on how the increase will be applied to the landfill post-closure fund and when it would have the \$1 million amount in the reserve at \$27/ton and at \$30/ton.

A. Nye said that the tipping fee used to pay for facility-related services and the SWMF was paying for administrative activities, and they have been blended a bit.

P. Ruess asked how frequently the landfill tip fee is changed. S. Reeves said that CSWD has a contract, but Casella, the private company could change it as frequently as they need to. L. Perry noted in the chat that Burlington's disposal fee charges from Casella increased 10% over the last fiscal year. S. Reeves confirmed that CSWD's charges from Casella have also increased by 10%.

Agenda #5. Other Business – A. Nye asked if CSWD receives tonnage reports on C&D from Myers and organics from the Casella depackaging facility. S. Reeves said that we do receive tonnage information from Myers and would check to see if we're receiving that data from Casella.

S. Reeves said that CSWD will be sending wording to commissioners to encourage them to reach out to Senators for the EPR bill for batteries. The proposed bill will expand EPR to include lithium and rechargeable batteries to the program.

Motion by A. Nye, Second by R. McCraw to adjourn the meeting. VOTING: All Ayes. Motion Carried.

Meeting adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

Amy Jewell, Recording Secretary

I agree that this is an original copy of minutes and they have been approved by motion of the Board of Commissioners at the _____ meeting held in South Burlington.

Amy Jewell, Secretary