

Roane County Environmental Review Board

Combined Meeting with the Solid Waste Advisory Board

Meeting Date: September 11, 2014

Attendees, RCERB:

Carolyn C. Granger

Scott Gregory

Mary Anne Koltowich

R. L. Pope

David Reichle

Scott Stout

Allen Townsend

Attendees, SWAB:

Tony Brown

Carolyn Granger

Dan Hyder

Mary Anne Koltowich

Becky Ruppe

Ralph Steward

Allen Townsend

Minutes

- Ralph Steward, with help from other SWAB attendees, spoke on Roane County's recycling program and other aspects of the Solid Waste Program. Roane, as well as practically all TN counties, has seen landfill diversion rates increase. Roane has done particularly well, helped in part (in relation to some other counties) by the fact that Roane has more industry than many other counties. When seeking grants for new equipment, Roane County has benefitted by identifying in its reports equipment that will be needed in the years ahead. A new bailing machine is slated for installation and should be completed in the next 3 months or so. The next big improvement being sought is a new sorting line. A grant (Hub and Spoke) of up to \$25k is

being sought for that and chances of getting a grant is fairly good. Planning (layout, electrical needs, etc.) is already underway. Sorting lines at Johnson City and Cumberland County have been looked in the process of planning ours. An improved sorting line may allow the number of staff to be increased at the recycling center (the current line is too crowded for staffing levels to be increased now). An improved sorting line will improve the recycle material "capture rate." The old bailer will be sold. People are recycling more in general, partly because of more opportunities and increased availability of recycling receptacles. Someone asked about the availability of the "blue recycle boxes." The County does have quite a few of these and will even loan them out upon request. There is a need for some paving at one of the recycle centers. The cost was expected to be around \$80 - \$85k, but when bids were received the lowest one was ~\$150k; that's going to be a problem. Something else that is wanted for the recycling program is a shelter for storing recycled plastic. The value of recycled plastic goes down when it deteriorates as a result of being exposed to sunlight and we sometimes have to store it outside. Someone asked whether the decision not to recycle glass was solely based on cost and if environmental benefits were given much weight in the decision. The response was that recycling glass is difficult because there is no real market for it. It is also a safety hazard.

- Mary Anne asked what the RCERB could do to help the Solid Waste Program. The response was that the RCERB could help publicize what the Solid Waste Program is doing. There is also a volunteer program; an example of a volunteer need, is someone is needed to present a recycling program (course materials already available) to K-4 classrooms in schools. There is also a Green Team Committee that runs a litter pickup program. There is a need for more recycle boxes in schools; help to publicize/get funding for that need would be welcome (they cost about \$6k, plus costs for a pad to sit them on and any access drive improvements that might be needed).
- Other activities (not an all-inclusive list) engaged in by members of the Solid Waste Program are litter control activities, including some previous removals of sunken/abandoned boats from river channels (with the help of state and federal agencies). An example was given of the removal of a 40 ft houseboat from the Emory River near Harriman. Boat removal is a difficult/expensive tasks, so they can't do a lot of them.
- An oftentimes unknown benefit of a robust recycling program is an economic one -- helping to attract businesses to an area. More and more businesses are choosing to locate to places that can support their recycling goals/needs.
- Someone recommended that the recycling program develop a Facebook page. The comment was that younger people in particular find information that way more than through a web site.
- The county has benefitted from the wind down of TVA's ash spill cleanup by getting some materials such as stop signs and posts, drain pipe, a carwash for washing salt from trucks, etc. (about \$550k worth of stuff throughout all Roane Co. departments). Roane County has also been successful at getting surplus federal government equipment, often at the cost of transporting it. Some of the equipment obtained in this manner include a pavement grinder, a grader, and a lift.

RCERB-only portion of the meeting (after SWAB adjourned)

- The RCERB voted to approve the July meeting minutes. No meeting was held in August.

- There was discussion of the Wampler's tour, and a recommendation was made for other committee members to attend a tour if the opportunity is presented. Wampler's has a biomass (e.g., switch grass) gasification powered electrical generator (the generator itself is an off-the-shelf unit) and solar panel power. They meet most of their own power needs and have a goal of eventually meeting it all. It is possible that the ash byproduct from the biomass system could be mixed with other material and sold as a high grade mulch. The biomass system has a 7:1 efficiency factor.
- Mary Anne attended and reported on the recent meeting of the ORR Community Alliance (ORRCE). The main focus of the meeting was the need for a new landfill for the ORR. The new landfill will be as big as the current one. The ORRCE has a firm under contract to review DOE's plan, including the lifespan of the landfill, economic impact of the new facility, monitoring wells, well borings, etc. The draft report will be out in the November timeframe. Another topic of the meeting – another round of monitoring will begin soon under the ORR Offsite Groundwater Monitoring Program. The monitoring plan calls for more monitoring towards the south and west of the ORR. Approximately 90 wells will be sampled. There is no indication that there is contamination in the expanded monitoring area – they just want to get ahead of the curve.
- Someone pointed out that the Oliver Springs sanitary treatment plant was recently fined. No details were known about the specific infractions leading to the fines.
- There will be a watershed meeting for the watershed including the Emory River and Watts Bar Lake hosted by TDEC at the Roane County Park at 6PM on September 22. A couple of committee members expressed interest in attending.
- An Environmental Stewardship Program is upcoming.
- David Reichle related a concern with private entities cutting trees on public land to maintain line of site to privately owned billboards. He had expressed his concern to the State and finally received a call back with less than satisfactory result. He was told that these view corridors are grandfathered. The State feels like they are handling it appropriately.
- The probable date for the next meeting is October 9th.