

OKALOOSA COUNTY SOLID WASTE PUBLIC WORKSHOP
MEETING MINUTES

July 09, 2009

Okaloosa County Courthouse, Crestview, Florida
BOCC Meeting Room

Cindy Halsey made the introductions and stated that a hardcopy of presentations will be provided upon request. She also stated this is the fourth workshop and we will be discussing pickup and disposal options.

Cindy introduced Darrel James from the Institute for Senior Professionals (ISP), affiliated with Northwest Florida State College. (The presentation can be viewed by selecting "A Regional Survey of Municipal Solid Waste Management in Okaloosa and Walton County".) Darrel began by reading the following disclaimer; "Data contained in this briefing was obtained by the IPS Environmental and Natural Resources Focus Group members during the latter half of 2008 from governments, companies, and the internet. This is a survey, not a research project, and reflects a snapshot in time. Northwest Florida State College bears no responsibility for the accuracy or currency of the data presented".

Darrel stated the ISP team visited some facilities to better understand their functions and operations and brought special attention to the St. Lucie County operations. They met with and collected information from parties in Okaloosa and Walton Counties. Then they looked at what is going on nationally.

In the past solid waste was burned at home or an open dump. In 1965 the Federal Government developed the Solid Waste Disposal Act and with several developments since then the final result has been that landfills must isolate waste piles from groundwater and limit air pollution. He pointed out that physically encapsulating waste piles remains the dominant landfill practice in North America today. When looking at the national perspective, 2006 was the most recent data they could get. It showed Americans generated about 251 million tons of trash with 12% of the materials combusted with energy recovery and 55% were discarded in landfills. This data does not include construction and demolition debris (C&D).

Paper, glass, tires and plastics are all recyclable and comes from current packaging. All class 1 landfills in our area have been closed and as of 2003 the lifetime of a landfill was 21.3 years. It appears that the landfill capacity within feasible transport distance is not an expandable commodity. The State of Florida perspective includes all landfills including C&D and cannot be compared to other data obtained. Currently garbage is picked up and trucked to an out of county landfill. Slides were shown of a current landfill and the construction of a new landfill. Today's landfills have many layers and are very expensive.

Okaloosa County gets the majority of their solid waste from the commercial sector and 12.5% of all solid waste is recycled. Okaloosa County exports all waste. Walton County has similar numbers to Okaloosa with less recyclables. Collection contracts in rural areas are open market and all other areas are contracted out with some taking care of their own. Our waste currently goes to Springhill Regional Landfill in Cambellton, Fl. which is owned and operated by Waste

Management, Timberlands Sanitary Landfill in Brewton, Al., owned and operated by Allied Waste and Santa Rosa County Landfill in Milton, Fl. It was noted that a lot of contracts are renewing between 2010 – 2013. A comparison of recycling was shown that compared national, Florida, Okaloosa and Walton Counties trends. Recycling in our area is very low. There are no penalties for not participating and small containers for recycling are provided. One idea is to pick up garbage one time a week and recycling one time per week. There is currently no regional recycling center in Northwest Florida. Recycling is strictly on a volunteer basis. It was noted that so many in our area have dropped out of a recycling program due to finances. Recycling should be mandatory and should be single stream. The ISP group could not determine when the Springhill Landfill being used would completely fill up. Eglin and Hurlburt do their own collections and no one issues data on what they are doing. The Household hazardous waste (HHW) program does not offer easy access and has lots of opportunity for improvements.

Recommendations: Address these issues as a regional area, not as an individual and create a regional MSW workshop with continuous planning and cooperation. Okaloosa County should explore cooperation with Walton County on their Plasma Arc Gasification (PAG) initiative. Make it easy and raise public awareness. Engage the West Florida Regional Planning Council and educate voters.

PAG is not new but it has not been determined if it is cost effective. Walton County will eventually turn PAG into diesel. Hurlburt Field has the most exciting program and it should be operational by next year. The St. Lucie Solid Waste Baling and Recycling Facility site has been in operation since 2002 and showed slides of various operations on their site. They compact daily which saves money annually. St. Lucie County is as large as Okaloosa and Walton Counties combined. Mr. James presentation ended and there were no questions presented.

Cindy gave the history of the Okaloosa County landfills and gave the current issues at the landfills that are still in long term care. The costs associated with these issues are passed onto our customer through tipping fees. She stated we will continue to work with the current recycling containers until the new contract can be reached. We are looking at a five year contract so we can watch for which new technology will be the best.

Cindy introduced Dominica from Waste Management who presented a CD showing their new technology. The CD was of the Miami/Dade County landfill. Their recycling center uses conveyer belts and bales the recyclables. They also have agreements with different vendors for various recycling. Single stream recycling makes it easier for homes and all of Okaloosa's recycling goes to their Orlando facility. She stated education is very important. They can handle all paper products and they have trucks that can pick up garbage and recycling. The recycling center has magnets to assist with the separation process. Okaloosa County will look at one or two days a week recycling pick-ups along with providing a 96 gallon recycling bin. Cindy pointed out that since Waste Management changed to a single stream recycling system they have done extensive education regarding recycling. Frank asked about commercial recycling and Dominica stated that Waste Management does mail outs advertising recycling and they have lowered the costs.

Danielle stated that cities regulate all commercial and house-hold recycling programs. Okaloosa County only regulates residential recycling and only for certain areas which is about 75% of the population. She stated that people need to communicate their wishes to the elected officials if they choose to further regulate. Some people are very passionate about regulation. The Board of County Commissioners gave us permission to contract with someone to assist us in drafting our RFP. We should have them in place within the next three months. The hardest thing will be to determine the true lowest bid and to ensure we get the most cost effective contract. This group will help us determine that. Okaloosa County wants vendor in-put and they need to let us know what they can do and what they want to see in the RFP. The RFP should be out by the middle of 2010 with a decision made by late 2010. That gives the County three months to decide and three months to have it in place so it is a smooth transition for everyone. The contract will be for a five year term with a five year renewal clause. The municipalities should be included in the talks with a discussion of long term and closures. There are still significant fines if closed landfills are not monitored properly. Sharing these expenses must be a part of the discussion.

There was no new news to share except a Public Hearing for feedback on the HB7135 mandating 75% recycling by 2020 will be held August 4 in Orlando. Okaloosa County wants the in-put from the public to assist us with our future solid waste management plans. We are fortunate to have two sites for HHW, one is in the north end of the county and the other in the south end of the county. We provide HHW pick up to ten other Counties that get HHW one to two days a year. We feel very fortunate to have our weekly HHW program which is much more than other Counties. Danielle showed how to locate our web-site and the location of the meeting minutes and other information.

It was asked to verify the timeline for the Engineering firm coming on board. Danielle stated it would be as soon as possible within the next three months.

The City of Laurel Hill wanted to clarify that their recycling program had problems with people using the recycling containers for other purposes than recycling. Danielle did clarify people can drop off recycling at the Baker Transfer Station.

No other comments were offered and the meeting adjourned.