

**MINUTES OF MORGAN CITY
COUNCIL WORK MEETING**

APRIL 9, 2024; 6:03 P.M.

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS
PRESENT:**

Mayor Steve Gale, Tony London, Jeff Wardell, Eric Turner, Jeffery Richins and Dave Alexander

STAFF PRESENT:

Ty Bailey, City Manager; Gary Crane, City Attorney; Denise Woods, City Recorder; and Stephanie Howard, Utility Clerk

OTHERS PRESENT:

Preston Lee, Operations Manager – Wasatch Integrated Waste Management District, and Lori Lee; Nathan Rich, Executive Director – Wasatch Integrated Waste Management District; Collette West, Sustainability Specialist – Wasatch Integrated Waste Management District; and Cindee Mikesell, Morgan County Deputy Clerk

This meeting was held in the Council Conference Room of the Morgan City Offices, 90 West Young Street, Morgan, Utah. The meeting was streamed live on YouTube and available for viewing on the City's website – morgancityut.org.

This meeting was called to order by Mayor, Steve Gale.

PRESENTATION – WASATCH INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
Nathan Rich, Executive Director and Collette West, Sustainability Specialist

Nathan Rich, Executive Director – Wasatch Integrated Waste Management District, gave a brief history about the "District." He explained Wasatch Integrated is a Special Service District owned by Davis and Morgan counties, along with 15 cities within those counties that we serve, with the exception of Bountiful, that operates the landfill off of Legacy Highway. Our service area encompassed approximately 325,000 residents, and the District managed about 325,000 tons of municipal solid waste annually. This equated to roughly one ton of waste generated per person per year. With a staff of 73 full-time employees, Nathan serves as the executive director, reporting to a 19-member board. Council Member London was on the board Morgan City.

Nathan stated the mission statement of Wasatch Integrated Waste Management District emphasized its genesis, dating back to the late 1980s, focused on constructing and operating a waste energy facility, representing progressive solid waste management at the time. The District aimed to maintain fiscal integrity while promoting waste reduction, reuse, and responsible waste management practices. Originally named Davis County Solid Waste Management and Energy Recovery Special Service District, legislative changes in 2005 or 2006 led to the adoption of the current name, reflecting an integrated approach to waste management. This approach aligned with the EPA's solid waste management hierarchy, prioritizing waste reduction, reuse, recycling, energy recovery, and landfilling in descending order of preference. Despite efforts to divert waste from landfills, the District recognized the importance of maintaining well-operated, environmentally compliant landfills. The District acknowledged the unique challenges and variations in waste management among different communities, emphasizing the need for tailored solutions. Continual efforts were made to improve the performance of the solid waste system while operating within the District's constraints and local waste characteristics.

Nathan referred to a slide from the presentation which showed the current integrated system. He stated the green waste recycling and composting facility served as the largest recycling component of the District's system, diverting approximately 25,000 tons of green waste annually. This facility exemplified upcycling by transforming locally sourced, low-value materials into higher-value products, such as quality wood chips and compost.

Nathan explained the recycling facilities at the landfill and drop-off points provided options for residents to dispose of household hazardous waste and electronic waste responsibly, diverting materials from landfills. These services were offered at no cost to District residents. The landfill thrift store, operational for five or six years, served as an educational platform and facilitated the reuse of materials. Additionally, the landfill gas to energy project generated approximately 2.5 megawatts of power from landfill gas, with plans underway to upgrade the gas to pipeline quality for sale as renewable natural gas. A recent addition to the system was the Davis Material Recovery and Transfer Facility, which transferred waste to extend the lifespan of the landfill and processed recyclable materials. The closure of the waste energy facility in 2017 resulted in increased waste disposal at the landfill. Efforts to prolong the lifespan of the landfill focused on diverting waste through initiatives like the green waste program and recycling. Another approach involved transferring waste to a regional landfill, albeit at a higher cost. Planning efforts since the closure of the waste energy facility in 2017 aimed to align with future waste management needs. In 2022, consulting firm GBB was engaged to develop recommendations. The material recovery facility was intended to process municipal solid waste (MSW) for recycling, with plans to divert organic waste for anaerobic digestion and engineered fuel production. However, challenges arose, including the unsuitability of materials for digestion and issues with the cement plant's feed system. Consequently, in November 2022, the decision was made to cease MSW processing, as the equipment was not effectively diverting recyclables.

Nathan stated the second decision was made to ensure the Davis Landfill's operation for approximately 18 years, aiming to maintain economic viability and operational flexibility. Plans included robust recycling initiatives, with an additional transfer station to be constructed at the Davis Landfill upon reaching capacity. Stakeholder consultations and data analysis informed actions taken by the board in November. Efforts were made to enhance recycling participation, with curbside recycling and green waste programs showing potential for significant waste diversion. Despite challenges with previous recycling efforts, a focus on education and improved program implementation aimed to achieve a 30% landfill diversion rate through these initiatives.

He said the resolution has been drafted, outlining the board's actions. Cities opting not to implement a program face a potential fee increase on the first can. Discussions continue regarding the appropriateness of this approach. The board seeks bundled service, where Solid Waste Services appear as a single line on utility bills, including both garbage and recycling cans. This streamlines billing and encourages participation in recycling programs. This ensures equitable payment for the waste management system, even if residents opt out of recycling. Coordinated educational materials from the District are set for implementation by July 2025, coinciding with the introduction of the fee differential. A hardship policy was developed to address concerns raised by residents during the rollout of the program at the city level.

Nathan explained that under the hardship policy, cities could establish criteria for residents facing financial difficulties, allowing for reduced Solid Waste fees while still requiring participation in the recycling program. Residents could request pickup of their recycling bins if they chose not to use them, alleviating the cost burden for the city. Despite potential higher costs for recycling services, surveys indicated residents' willingness to pay, with most preferring a monthly fee of around \$5. Additionally, the implementation of a mandatory recycling program could lead to reduced need for second garbage cans, potentially saving residents money. Overall, the bundled program aimed to drive down costs, increase recycling participation, and promote environmental stewardship.

Collette West, Sustainability Specialist – Wasatch Integrated Waste Management District, explained the bundled program aimed to reduce costs and increase the impact and diversion of waste. Recycling aligns with natural systems, which are efficient and circular, unlike linear systems that create waste. Transitioning to a circular economy involves various efforts, from product design to material management. Remanufacturing and take-back programs are part of this shift. The goals of a circular economy include eliminating waste and pollution, circulating products at their highest value, and regenerating nature. Implementing a circular economy could lead to significant economic output and environmental benefits, as shown in studies. Increasing recycling programs and diversion efforts can contribute to economic growth and environmental sustainability.

Collette said the district has taken steps to close the loop and recover materials by closing the waste energy facility and opening the material recovery facility (MRF) to process single-stream recyclables. By 2024-2025, the District aims to implement district-wide curbside recycling and expand the green waste program. Effective communication and education are crucial for the success of the recycling program, as studies have shown that lack of awareness leads to lost recyclables. Cities are responsible for purchasing recycling carts, with assistance from grants awarded by the Recycling Partnership. The Partnership also supports communication efforts, including mailers to residents informing them about the recycling program. This also includes distributing flyers, providing signage for recycling carts with instructions, continuing education on anti-contamination strategies, and tagging carts if necessary. The District has also connected with city media contacts to ensure consistent education through newsletters and other platforms. Additionally, they have created a landing page on their website for more recycling education and are available to attend city council meetings and events to educate residents. Tours and meetings are scheduled to discuss the logistics of the recycling program rollout, including information on grants. There is also information provided on where residents can drop off other recyclable materials such as glass, clothing, batteries, and electronics.

Council Member Alexander asked why Morgan City and Morgan County hadn't been approached earlier regarding recycling.

Nathan explained the district has historically not been directly involved in recycling programs. Initially, cities implemented recycling programs individually, with the first program starting in Woods Cross. Attempts to consolidate contracts for better pricing were unsuccessful, leading cities to pursue recycling independently. The District's Waste-to-Energy facility closure prompted a shift towards a more integrated solid waste management system, aligning with industry best practices. The location of material recovery facilities, initially distant from Morgan City, added to the challenges. However, with the District's facility opening in Layton, hauling costs improved. As haulers renegotiate contracts and participation rates increase, there's an expectation of potential cost reduction for residents.

Council Member London asked regarding residents who currently contract with a recycling company how difficult will it be for them to convert over to the City's program.

Nathan stated the District engaged in stakeholder meetings with its three haulers, Waste Management, Robinson, and Ace Disposal, to discuss the impact of the recycling program rollout. Negotiations resulted in a plan allowing Ace Disposal to deliver recyclables at no cost during the transition period. This arrangement facilitated the smooth rollout of the program without creating competition among haulers.

Further discussions about the future included potential expansion of the green waste program, with the aim of achieving high participation rates similar to previous initiatives in other cities.

Council Member Turner asked if the program would have the same-day pickup.

Nathan stated negotiating the same-day pickup arrangement with your hauler was encouraged, with the understanding that it would be an individual decision. The District aimed to support residents in any way possible and suggested discussing this matter directly with the hauler. It was noted that Robinson, the hauler, was well-informed about the program and could provide assistance.

Council Member Turner asked Nathan to expand on the green waste program for the future.

Nathan explained about eight or nine years ago, around 2009, the District initiated green waste recycling programs with the aim of diverting grass from regular garbage, which would aid in combustion at the waste energy facility. These programs were rolled out as opt-out programs, where every household received a green waste can, but residents could opt out if they chose to. Despite some initial resistance, cities like Fruit Heights, Centerville, and Farmington saw around 50 to 52% participation rates. This approach proved effective in diverting significant amounts of green waste from landfills, especially during the summer months when grass clippings are heavy. Given this success, there was a plan to expand green waste programs in the future, potentially on an optional basis, considering factors like lawn service usage and individual needs.

Discussion regarding the interest in a green waste program. Stephanie Howard, Utility Clerk, stated there was interest in green waste cans among residents in the City. Many people have shown interest in acquiring a second can, especially during the six-month summer period, to manage their grass clippings conveniently. Some residents prefer this option rather than driving their green waste to the transfer station. Many residents opt for second cans to manage their grass clippings, while others rely on yard care companies for disposal.

Council Member London mentioned the City Council needed to determine the criteria for defining hardship cases, as it was not determined by the District but by the Council itself. This aspect required careful consideration from the Council Members.

Discussion regarding the importance of education and what was available through the District.

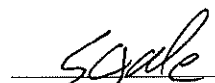
Council Member Alexander stated the biggest obstacle was going to be the mandatory aspect of the program. He asked outside of education how did the District plan to combat that.

Nathan discussed the experience of cities with mandated recycling programs and suggested that pushback might not be significant in the City. They emphasized the importance of using the hardship program to address concerns and recommended having residents come in person to fill out a form to opt out of the program. Additionally, they mentioned the high quality of recyclables from mandatory programs and explained that the equipment can handle some level of contamination. Enforcement of recycling policies was discussed, with emphasis on education and minimal need for punitive measures.

Discussion regarding a tiered rate for the elderly/hardship cases. Didn't want to cause an administrative burden by implementing a tiered rate. Concern was expressed that if there is a hardship rate for garbage the residents will start asking for hardship rates for water, sewer and electric. Interest was expressed in the bundled service, i.e., the garbage service comes with 2 cans. The bundled fee would also cover the maintenance of the cans.

This meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.


Denise Woods, City Recorder


Steve Gale, Mayor

These minutes were approved at the April 23, 2024 meeting.