



H·R·R·A  
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**HOUSATONIC RESOURCES RECOVERY AUTHORITY**  
**SPECIAL WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, February 10, 2016, 9:00 a.m.**  
**Room 133 Brookfield Town Hall**  
**100 Pocono Rd, Brookfield, CT 06804**

**Members or Alternates Present**

Bethel, Matthew Knickerbocker	8
Bridgewater, Alan Brown	1
Brookfield, Steve Dunn	7
Danbury, Joel Urice	36
Kent, Bruce Adams	1
New Fairfield, Mike Gill	6
New Milford, Suzanne Von Holt	12
Newtown, Herb Rosenthal	12
Redding, Jeff Hansen	4
Ridgefield, Rudy Marconi	11
Sherman, Ruth Byrnes	2
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**Others Present:**

Sheldon Conn, Brookfield Alternate  
Susan Chapman, New Fairfield First Selectman  
Dolores Schiesel, Kent Alternate  
Fred Hurley, Newtown Alternate  
Pat Llodra, Newtown First Selectman  
Julia Pemberton, Redding First Selectman  
Maureen Kozlark, Ridgefield Alternate  
Lynn Waller, Public  
Ed Spinella, All American Waste  
Ryan Bingham, Winters Bros.  
Tiffany Carlson, Recycling Educator  
Jen Iannucci, HRRRA Director  
Cheryl Reedy, HRRRA Assistant Director

**Members Not Present**

None

**Call to Order:** The workshop was called to order by Chairman Gill at 9:00 a.m. with a quorum of 99 votes present from ten municipalities. Alan Brown with Bridgewater’s 1 vote entered the workshop at approximately 11:20 a.m. **No votes were taken during the workshop.**

**Purpose of Meeting:** Chairman Gill welcomed all those in attendance and explained that the workshop was the first step in investigating future options for solid waste services in the HRRRA region when the current MSW disposal and recycling processing contracts terminate in June of 2019. He stressed the importance of the involvement of the Chief Elected Official from member municipalities in the process over the next year.

**Presentation:** Chairman Gill gave a slideshow presentation covering the following items:

- a. History, Purpose and Organizational Structure of HRRRA
- b. Existing Solid Waste System in the HRRRA Region

- c. Municipal Solid Waste Responsibilities/Mandates/Liabilities
- d. Services Now Provided by HRRRA to Assist Municipalities
- e. Likely Future of Solid Waste in the State of CT
- f. Possible Future Options for Solid Waste Services in the Region

There were the following questions/comments on the presentation:

- H. Rosenthal noted that in the battles between WES and the former owner of the White Street transfer station, all the public sector legal fees were paid by HRRRA and not the municipalities.
- J. Urice thought that there would not be enough meeting time set aside to make a decision prior to December 2016 if the discussions occurred only at the 4 additional HRRRA meetings scheduled for the year.
- H. Rosenthal pointed out that there is no end date to the concurrent ordinances passed by each municipality joining HRRRA so HRRRA as an organization will not cease to exist in 2019.
- C. Reedy noted that while HRRRA might exist, its funding sources would terminate in 2019. She also discussed in a bit more detail the State's plans for the next ten years with packaging EPR, unit based pricing, the Comprehensive Materials Management Plan about to be adopted.
- H. Rosenthal noted the municipal liability if MSW that can be tied as originating in a particular municipality ends up in a landfill or some other site that causes pollution.
- R. Marconi asked if disposing of MSW in a landfill that meets EPA regulations protects municipal liability from pollution.

10:15 -10:30 a.m. Members took a break and then came back into session.

**Discussion of Regional vs Local Options for Solid Waste Services in the Future:** The consensus of the group was that the municipalities would like to continue to work together on solid waste and explore regional options for the future. No municipality made a formal commitment and not all had decided which way they preferred to go. Comments from each municipality are characterized below:

**Newtown:** F. Hurley felt that no town should ever try to go it alone, that most municipalities, especially the smaller ones, would have to add staff to fulfill their statutory solid waste responsibilities without HRRRA. P. Llodra said that the region had the opportunity to do something very good environmentally and was more powerful as a group. She also reminded members that the state is trying to force more regional cooperation and collaboration and that towns can't keep doing things the way they've always done them in the past because of the state's financial problems. She thought perhaps a regional collection system could be set up using one of the state's regional performance incentive grants. P. Llodra said that Newtown sees the benefit of HRRRA, especially from the way in which the Authority helped the Town make its case against the unpermitted facility in Hawleyville. H. Rosenthal noted that franchised regional collection system would cost about half of what consumers are now charged for solid waste collection. F. Hurley added that municipalities don't have to franchise haulers, they can franchise the days of the week for collection.

**Kent:** B. Adams said that Welsh Sanitation from right across the border in NY State talked with him every year about servicing the town but he did not know where the ultimate disposal location was for Welsh. Based on Kent's size and location, the case for going it alone may be different than for other communities. L. Schiesel said that when commodity prices were higher that the town might have benefited from a little additional revenue from marketing its own recyclables, but that would have to be netted against the cost to do so. At this time, according to B. Adams, he thinks Kent would like to stay with HRRRA and work as part of a region for the future.

**Ridgefield:** R. Marconi said it is important to know sooner rather than later which municipalities are on board for continuing as a region. He urged all CEOs to go back to their communities and take a vote on whether their municipality is on board or not for continuing as a region after 2019. He asked if HRRRA could franchise collection in Ridgefield and prevent haulers who are not part of the system from picking up there.

**Brookfield:** S. Dunn asked what the advantages were of a municipality going it alone as opposed to staying as part of the region for solid waste. He thought HRRRA was doing a fine job and that he had plenty of things to do without worrying about garbage. S. Conn said he didn't want to take on the additional jobs that would be required locally without HRRRA. S. Dunn asked if it made sense to use municipal snow plow routes for regional franchised collection routes.

**Sherman:** R. Byrnes said that Sherman would not consider leaving HRRRA and going it alone for solid waste.

**New Fairfield:** S. Chapman said that New Fairfield would be staying as part of the solid waste region after 2019.

**Danbury:** J. Urice said he was not sure whether regional franchised collection was less expensive, but regardless that it was a subject for discussion at another time. Danbury, he said, has not yet decided whether it is in the City's best interest to stay as part of a solid waste region in the future or go it alone. The City may hire a consultant to help them decide what options are in the City's best interest.

**Bethel:** M. Knickerbocker said he agreed that the value of HRRRA and working as a region has been proved. In the short term, through 2019, the organization will have to figure out how to become more financially efficient. He wants to see future disposal/recycling contracts that are not locked in for a long number of years and can take advantage of the incentives of the free market. In Bethel, he noted, it would be very difficult to franchise collection because of the number of local haulers located there.

**New Milford:** S. Von Holt said that the previous Mayor wanted to pull out of HRRRA then years ago, but she feels there is power in numbers and thinks the current Mayor may have a different point of view.

**Redding:** J. Hansen said that the transfer station in town already takes more of his time than the Highway Department and he would not want to take on additional responsibilities. J. Pemberton

agreed and asked how franchised routes could be designed for rural communities like Redding. She said that she relies on J. Iannucci the HRRRA Director and wants the strength that comes from numbers in dealing with the state on solid waste issues.

**Bridgewater:** A. Brown asked whether there was any stomach in the region for government taking over the solid waste collection system. J. Urice said, “No cotton pickin’ way!” H. Rosenthal pointed out that the workers comp cost for municipal employees to do solid waste collection would be too high to make it a financially competitive option compared with the private sector.

**Public Comment:**

- L. Waller urged HRRRA to stay together with its existing membership and not expand to include too many people with meetings that might occur outside the region. She thought that HRRRA had grown up to be strong in the area and that she was very proud of the organization and its members. She asked whether WES wanted to keep HRRRA’s business after 2019.
- R. Bingham said that Winters Bros. enjoys working with HRRRA. The town where he was mayor, Torrington, is a franchised collection town. Such a collection system is a BIG change with political consequences. It is a good way to get unelected. Winters Bros. would be concerned about what would happen to smaller haulers with a franchise system.
- E. Spinella urged the Authority to keep it simple and try to manage only what each municipality now controls, its municipal buildings, schools and transfer stations. The waste industry is changing rapidly and private haulers are the best suited and most nimble to be in the marketplace. Municipalities should not get involved with residential or commercial solid waste collection. Future contracts should be much shorter than the original 28 year MSW disposal contract. And finally he urged the Authority not to franchise collection because it would put struggling small haulers who are just trying to make a living and who are part of the fabric of local communities out of business.

**Next Steps and Meetings:**

L. Schiesel asked what a MSW disposal contract would look like after 2019. M. Gill imagined that there would be no put or pay, that there would be a program fee, that there would be a designation of where the waste would go, and that it would be no longer than 5 years with a 5 year option. M. Knickerbocker asked if there were other RRFs in the state other than WES that might be interested in HRRRA’s waste. M. Gill asked if HRRRA should remain as a separate legal entity after 2019 or become part of the regional services offered by the COG. And J. Iannucci noted that 30% of the waste stream is organics and three anaerobic digesters (ADs) are in the DEEP permitting process right now – another important piece of the puzzle. P. Llodra asked if a meeting could be set up focused entirely on state solid waste mandates.

The following next steps were agreed upon by consensus:

1. Additional HRRRA workshop meetings will be scheduled throughout 2016 in order for municipalities to be ready to make decisions no later than December 2016.
2. The next workshop will be devoted to state mandates with representatives from DEEP, the Legislature's Environment Committee and from CCM/COST invited to present information to the members. It will be set up through a Doodle poll sent out to members once participation dates can be confirmed with those to make presentations.
3. Another workshop will include haulers from the HRRRA region as well as representatives of towns/haulers now operating with franchised collection services.
4. Another workshop(s) may be necessary for more complicated issues such the changes that packaging EPR would require in the solid waste collection and processing system, what municipalities would have to do to adopt unit based pricing for solid waste collection and how to include organics collection and processing in a solid waste system over the next 20 years.
5. Staff will get information from legal counsel on municipal liability for solid waste that ends up in a landfill.
6. M. Knickerbocker and P. Llodra will survey WestCOG members to determine of any of them are interested in participating as part of a solid waste region after 2019 and/or learning more about it.
7. Staff will get preliminary information on how franchised collection systems can work and what their expected cost savings are.

**Adjournment**

Without objection or vote the meeting was effectively adjourned at 11:54 a.m.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Cheryl D. Reedy  
HRRRA Assistant Director**