



HOUSATONIC RESOURCES RECOVERY AUTHORITY

MINUTES

Thursday, September 24, 2026 10:30 a.m.

Via Zoom

Members or Alternates Present

Bethel, Dan Carter
Bridgewater, Eric Gsell
Brookfield, Steve Dunn
Kent, Eric Epstein
New Fairfield, Pat Del Monaco
New Milford, Suzanne Von Holt
Newtown, Fred Hurley
Redding, James Gracy
Ridgefield, Rudy Marconi
Roxbury, Barbara Henry
Sherman, Don Lowe
Wilton, Toni Boucher

Others Present:

8	Bruce Walczak, First Selectman, Newtown
1	Fred Hurley, Newtown
7	Jason Belt, IWS
1	Ryan Gatewood, IWS
5	Jennifer Heaton-Jones, HRRRA
11	Wilton, Ross Tartell
10	Bridgewater, Alan Dinho
3	
9	
1	
1	
<u>7</u>	
64	

Members Absent:

Danbury, Weston

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman P. Del Monaco at 10:35 a.m. with 64 votes present from 12 towns.

Public Comment:

No Public Comment.

Chairman and Members' Comment:

The Chairman emphasized the importance of all member municipalities adopting the recommended ordinances to help address ongoing quorum challenges. She also expressed concern regarding the significant number of non-compliant haulers identified in the Director's Report and noted that consistent adoption of the ordinances would strengthen enforcement efforts and improve compliance throughout the region.

Director's and Tonnage Report:

J. Heaton-Jones reviewed highlights from the written Director's Report and tonnage reports (Attachment A).

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BRIDGEWATER | BETHEL | BROOKFIELD | DANBURY | KENT | NEW FAIRFIELD | NEW MILFORD
NEWTOWN | REDDING | RIDGEFIELD | ROXBURY | SHERMAN | WESTON | WILTON

- MSW tonnage to date is currently 101% for the FY and 112% for the same month last year.
- Recycling tonnage to date is 112% for the FY and 121% compared to the same month last year.
- Executive Director provided an update on several regional solid waste, recycling, and organics management initiatives.
- She reported that HRRRA continues to work closely with the newly formed Northwest Resource Recovery Authority (NRRA) as it advances its long-term strategy to become self-sustaining. The Torrington Transfer Station was conveyed to the NRRA by the State and has been operating under an MOU with HRRRA since July 1, with Interstate Waste Services (IWS) operating the facility on the NRRA's behalf. The NRRA is expected to release an RFP for operations beyond July 2027. She noted that the authority continues to face challenges from private-sector interests that have created obstacles to its success and have contributed to tensions among stakeholders involved in regional system management. She advised the Authority that the NRRA may approach HRRRA in November to discuss a possible extension of existing agreements, development of a new partnership, or other collaborative strategies intended to support the long-term success of regional waste management services in Western Connecticut.
- An update was provided regarding regional hauler compliance efforts. Ms. Heaton-Jones highlighted ongoing concerns regarding non-compliant haulers and reported that staff member J. Baum continues to prepare the 2026-2027 hauler registration packets.
- Ms. Heaton-Jones also reported that the agreement for the Newtown ASP Composting System has been fully executed. She noted that the project is expected to serve as a model for municipalities across Connecticut by demonstrating how residential organics can be processed through a public-private partnership while generating revenue for the municipality rather than increasing costs.
- The Authority received an update on the Materials Management Infrastructure (MMI) and Sustainable Materials Management (SMMR2) grants. Both grants have been fully executed, and HRRRA staff are currently working with member municipalities to implement funded projects. She advised members that a third round of Sustainable Materials Management funding is anticipated in December and encouraged municipalities to begin identifying potential projects related to waste reduction, organics collection, and transfer station infrastructure improvements.
- Ms. Heaton-Jones reported that the region's 19 MetroSTOR SmartBins have collectively diverted more than 33 tons of organics to date, describing the results as impressive given the relatively short time the program has been in operation.
- She also provided an update on the ongoing single-stream recycling audit. Photographs were shared illustrating significant contamination found in the recycling stream, including diapers, vacuum cleaners, car seats, basketballs, organics, bagged recyclables, and soiled cardboard. She explained that the audit is intended to evaluate both the composition and value of the material stream, which directly influences processing costs and tip fees. Members were advised that increases in tip fees could result from the audit findings if contamination levels remain high.

- During discussion, members raised concerns regarding public education and recycling participation. Questions were asked about whether curbside collection carts could be more clearly labeled to help residents distinguish between municipal solid waste and recycling containers, as many appear similar. One member commented that improper sorting is common enough that they occasionally separate recyclables from trash after household cleaning activities. Chairman P. Del Monaco commended HRRRA's social media outreach efforts, specifically citing the "What's IN and What's OUT" campaign and noting positive engagement from residents in her community. She agreed that haulers should play a greater role in educating customers about proper recycling practices.

Administrative Approvals:

- a.) **Minutes: Motion** by D. Carter, second by F. Hurley, to approve the minutes of June 25, 2026, (Attachment B). **Vote: The motion passed;** with 57 votes in favor, abstention from T. Boucher (WI).
- b.) **Financial Statements:** J. Heaton-Jones reviewed the financial statements through August 31, 2026 (Attachment C). **Motion** by D. Carter, second by D. Lowe, to approve the financial statements through August 31, 2026, as presented. **Vote: The motion passed unanimously;** with 64 votes in favor.
- c.) **Amend 2026-27 FY Budget:** J. Heaton-Jones reviewed the recommended changes to the budget. **(Attachment D) Motion** by D. Carter, second by D. Lowe, to approve the budget amendment to include adding the MMI grant for \$779,750 in both income and expenses, increasing Health Insurance by \$17 and reducing Travel/Mileage by \$17 to balance the budget. **Vote: The motion passed unanimously;** with 64 votes in favor.

New Business:

6a.) 20th Annual Recycling Contest Award Ceremony Day and time

The Director raised concerns regarding the day and time of the 20th Annual Recycling Contest Award Ceremony. Given the significance of the 20th anniversary and the importance of attendance by Chief Elected Officials (CEOs), it was noted that there have historically been challenges with scheduling the event at a time that accommodates their availability.

Following discussion, members considered possible scheduling adjustments. It was ultimately determined that the ceremony time would be changed to **5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.** This adjustment is intended to allow CEOs sufficient time to return to their municipalities for evening board and council meetings, which typically begin at 7:00 p.m.. Members agreed that modifying the time, rather than changing the day of the event, was the most practical solution.

6b.) 2027 Legislative priorities

The Director presented a preliminary list of potential **2027 legislative priorities** and requested feedback from the Board. Items discussed included:

- Vape Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)
- Solar Panel EPR
- Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) EPR

- Amendments to the Tire EPR Program
- Statewide organics management legislation, which is expected to be raised again by stakeholders across Connecticut
- Increased state-level enforcement of waste haulers, including the possibility of requiring haulers to register with the state when registering their businesses through the Secretary of the State

Discussion followed regarding each of the proposed initiatives. Board members expressed general support for all of the items presented and agreed that they align with the Authority's waste reduction, recycling, and stewardship objectives.

The Director indicated that staff will prepare a comprehensive legislative priorities report, including recommendations and supporting information, for consideration and formal Board action at the November HRRRA meeting.

6c.) 2027 Meeting Dates (Attachment E)

Motion by P. Del Monaco, second by D. Carter to approve the HRRRA 2027 meeting dates attachment E, with the modification of the last date to be changed to Thursday, December 2, 2027 at 12pm and include lunch. **Vote: The motion passed unanimously;** with 64 votes in favor, from 12 towns.

6d.) 2027 HHW Dates (Attachment F)

Motion by F. Hurley, second by D. Carter to approve the 2027 HHW dates attachment F. **Vote: The motion passed unanimously;** with 64 votes in favor, from 12 towns.

Adjournment

Motion by D. Lowe, second R. Marconi, to adjourn the meeting at 11:23 a.m. **Vote: The motion passed unanimously;** with 64 votes in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Jen Heaton-Jones