



**City of Broken Arrow**  
**Broken Arrow Citizens' Recycling Committee**

**Minutes**

**May 1, 2017**

The regular meeting of the Recycling Committee was held on Monday, May 1, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. in the City Hall Main Conference Room.

**Present were:**

**Committee Members:** Russell Peterson (Chairman), Michelle Bergwall, Tom Chatterton, Scott Eudey, Tom Hahn, Jim Hoffmeister, Johnnie Parks, Dawn Seing, Jill Spurgeon, Peggy Striegel, Chris Taylor, Becky Wood.

**Absent were:**

**Committee Members:** E.J. Hardwick

**Resource Team:** Graham Brannin, Russell Gale, Lee Zirk.

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Russell Peterson.

**II. Roll Call**

Roll call was conducted.

**III. Approval of Minutes, April 10, 2017 Minutes (March 13, 2017 Minutes not ready)**

Chairman Peterson stated the April 10, 2017 Minutes were available.

MOTION: A motion was made by Becky Wood, seconded by Dawn Seing.

**Move to approve April 10, 2017 Minutes.**

**Motion carried unanimously.**

The Minutes were approved.

**IV. General Discussion and Possible Recommendations**

A question was posed by committee member Peggy Striegel if the Sanitation Department budget was breaking even or operating with a deficit or profit. Lee Zirk, General Services Director, stated it was his understanding Broken Arrow's Sanitation Department was close to breaking even when operational cost and revenue were compared. He stated a large portion of the fees went into the pilot and overhead; any remaining funds went to supplement the BAMA account. Russell Gale, Assistant City Manager of Administration, stated when reviewing the four years up to 06/30/2016, Broken Arrow did break even. However, in November 2016, Broken Arrow moved Waste Management to Covanta; as a result, disposal fees were substantially less. He stated Covanta was a further distance, and slower in terms of trash disposal; therefore, in order to maintain current routes in a timely fashion, an additional crew was required and this would offset the reduction in landfill fees.

A member stated she noted in 2015 there was a significant loss; there was over \$1 million in capital outlay. She asked if the City had to buy trash trucks. A member responded the City bought several trucks. He stated Broken Arrow ordered equipment near the end of the fiscal year, so the money was encumbered, but was not paid for, or obtained, until the following fiscal year. A member stated the fiscal year was July 1 until June 30.

A member asked if a financial evaluation had been done which included the use of New Solutions by Broken Arrow. Chairman Peterson stated Kate Vasquez would make a financial analysis for two separate proposals, and it was the Committee's goal over the next few weeks to narrow the options for recycling down to two options to submit to Ms. Vasquez for modeling. He felt New Solutions was an "offline option." He stated New Solutions was willing to work with Broken Arrow and offered to pick up carts or bags for the City. He said the Committee needed to decide which type of service was recommended, present that to the City Council, and mention New Solutions as an option to provide the chosen service. A member commented the Committee needed to express how much time was spent in review of the cost for in-house sanitation versus third party delegation.

Chairman Peterson reviewed the pie chart which detailed the Sanitation fees and stated \$1.18 per month was being charged for bags.

A member noted Broken Arrow's Sanitation Department was currently doing a good job staying within budget, even with twice a week pickup. She expressed the City of Tulsa paid the disposal fees for New Solutions at Covanta; therefore, it was difficult to compare Broken Arrow's service to New Solutions' services. A member stated Kate Vasquez addressed this in an email to the Committee. Ms. Vasquez wrote there were other fees that should be examined with New Solutions, and the Committee and Broken Arrow needed to consider whether the City wanted to employ the same service in the same manner as Tulsa. A member stated New Solutions' charge to the City of Tulsa was approximately \$6.85, which left approximately \$9 for other costs. A member commented this was what needed to be modeled.

A member said he made a phone call to the City of Tulsa and inquired how many employees of the City of Tulsa had New Solutions absorbed and discovered none were absorbed by New Solutions. Chairman Peterson stated the employees of the City of Tulsa's Sanitation Department were moved into other departments in the City of Tulsa. A member expressed this needed to be a part of the cost/benefit analysis. He mentioned he went to New Solutions, discussed this, and New Solutions expressed a willingness to hire Broken Arrow Sanitation employees; however, New Solutions did not pay the same amount as the City of Broken Arrow.

A member asked if it was the Committee's responsibility to know the credibility of New Solutions. Chairman Peterson responded it was the City Staff's and City Council's responsibility. He stated Broken Arrow might decide to put the job up for bid. He said another negative to consider was a commercial business had the potential to go bankrupt which would cause delayed service for the residents of Broken Arrow; this was less likely for a municipality. A member stated Broken Arrow would definitely investigate the credibility of New Solutions, especially in view of the piggyback possibility. He said he could not imagine Broken Arrow switching to a third party provider without a bid, or without thoroughly vetting all parties.

A member stated if Broken Arrow chose to piggyback on the contract New Solutions had with the City of Tulsa, Broken Arrow would be required to agree to all the terms and conditions in that existing contract, which included the current termination date.

Chairman Peterson stated the current cost of bags was \$1.18 per month, and the cost of two carts would be \$2.00 per month. A member mentioned the City of Tulsa used a Title 6 Trust to finance carts initially; however, currently the City of Tulsa was putting money into a savings account for future cart purchases.

A member expressed she felt the biggest considerations were labor and capital outlay for trucks; labor was more intensive with bags and there was more worker's compensation risk with carts. Trucks were more expensive; however, there was less labor. She stated these costs would all balance out, and the Committee needed to focus less on the above and more on carts versus bags. Chairman Peterson agreed and stated it had been determined mixing bags and carts was a poor choice due to the greater possibility of contamination. He stated the two primary options to consider, not including third party service, were: two carts, one for recycling and one for garbage, 96 gallons each, or continued bag use, adding a translucent bag for recycling. Chairman Peterson's thought was Broken Arrow could keep the current bag cost approximately stable with a reduction of the number of trash bags distributed when the recycling bag was added, and residents could purchase additional bags if needed. A member stated it would be necessary to require residents to use the provided translucent bag only for recycling; residents would be required to purchase extra recycling bags directly from Broken Arrow as no other bag could be used. She stated this made it more difficult to use bags as

opposed to carts for recycling, and more difficult for the City to manage. A member mentioned that American Waste, another commercial company, required the use of clear bags for recycling; this appeared to be the standard.

A member asked where Broken Arrow purchased bags. Lee Zirk responded Waste Zero, a bag manufacturer which promoted pay-as-you-throw practices in the northeast. Discussion of bag use and purchase continued regarding use of store bought bags, persuasion of retailers to carry recycling-specific bags, what happened when carriers exhausted their supply of required bags, clear bags difficult to find in stores, and recycling bags potentially used for garbage.

Chairman Peterson asked if the Committee concluded the only two options to be considered were the use of carts or the addition of a recycling bag to the current practice. He asked if any member had another idea to be presented to the Committee. He mentioned the switch to carts had gotten negative feedback on surveys and in discussion with the public and the Committee needed to keep in mind the switch to once a week pickup was already a big change. Councilor Johnnie Parks stated the Committee should be prepared with data in place explaining to the City Council why Broken Arrow should switch to once a week pickup; that less than 5% of cities in the United States had twice a week pickup. He said the decision to switch to carts was negatively received everywhere initially, and once residents became accustomed to cart use, residents were pleased with the conversion. He stated the Committee should consider presenting an option which included a gradual introduction of carts to Broken Arrow with the selection or volunteer of certain areas to launch cart use. He stated if the Committee decided on carts, it would be helpful if it was presented with an implementation plan, as well as the data to back the decision.

A discussion of carts only for recycling and continued bag use for trash ensued with the negative points that Kate Vasquez frowned on, there was greater risk of contamination, it complicated truck pickup, two differently fitted trucks would be required, and with positive points of residents kept the currently coveted bags and a period of transition to cart use promoted cart support.

Chairman Peterson asked if the Committee decided to promote a pilot program for cart use, would the City of Tulsa be willing to lease carts to Broken Arrow temporarily. A member stated Kate Vasquez would know, and that Ms. Vasquez had mentioned finding funding or a grant for cart purchase. A member stated there were various companies willing to conduct pilot programs for Broken Arrow. He stated once Broken Arrow had success stories from residents the complete conversion to cart use would be easier; likewise, if the pilot program failed then the Committee would know Broken Arrow was not ready for this conversion.

Committee members continued to discuss the benefit of cart tippers versus pulling bags out of carts, the Murph's cart preference, less recycling contamination with carts, more recycling contamination with bags, residents who currently used and preferred carts, the possibility of a \$1.00 discount on sanitation fees if residents purchased carts independently, the quality of carts issued by Tulsa versus store bought carts, bag coupons being withheld from cart users, and allowing residents' continued use of bags if preferred.

Michelle Bergman concluded the options should be narrowed to two carts or one cart for recycling and bags for garbage. A member asked how many trucks were in the sanitation fleet. Lee Zirk responded there were 14 trucks which picked up for half of Broken Arrow on Monday, half on Tuesday, and then repeated the cycle Thursday and Friday, as well as several reserve trucks. A member asked the cost of retrofitting a truck. It was stated to be approximately \$2,500 per truck. A member suggested, given the low cost of retrofitting trucks, Broken Arrow could give residents individually the choice of bags or carts. Chairman Peterson stated this would be an administrative nightmare.

Ms. Bergman suggested giving residents in the pilot program the option to not participate, to continue to use bags. A member responded the point of the pilot program was to force everyone within the chosen area to use carts and evaluate residents' reactions to the program once concluded. A member responded residents should always be given the option not to participate. A member commented selection of the area to roll out the pilot program should be carefully considered to ensure success. A member stated she did not feel Broken Arrow was going to get much resistance to carts. Other members disagreed. Conversation continued concerning 47% residents used bags, 53% residents used carts, new residents wanted carts, current residents wanted bags, choosing the right area for the pilot program, etc.

A member mentioned consideration should be given to the economic impact of cart use, and abiding with the most commonly used method for recycling/trash pickup was an advantage. He stated long term residents of Broken Arrow may not understand, but in terms of business and growth for Broken Arrow this was a positive change.

Chairman Peterson commented happy residents do not vote; unhappy residents vote. Councilor Scott Eudey stated this was a legitimate voting pattern which should be considered. Chairman Peterson pointed out negative votes primarily arise from the more economically depressed areas for bond issues, and he would suspect this was where the negatives arose with anything the City Council and Committee chose to do. He stated anything the Committee proposed would receive negative feedback as change always would.

Chairman Peterson asked the Committee if there was a consensus that the two options were now two carts versus trash bags and a recycling cart. Discussion ensued and a member noted if the Committee presented the proposal with use of two carts as the recommended option the City Council could choose to go with the trash bags and single cart for recycling option if the Council felt it was the better choice politically. Councilor Eudey stated research and analysis with data to support the options was essential, and presentation of a preferred option with support data was highly beneficial to the City Council.

A member stated the pilot program needed to cover a large area. Dawn Seing recommended choosing the Childers Middle School area and the elementary schools which fed into it or Oliver Middle School and the elementary schools which fed into it as the pilot program area. A member inquired how many elementary schools fed into the middle schools and if the Committee could propose unfolding the pilot program at both middle schools. Ms. Seing explained Wolf Creek, Lynn Wood, and Leisure Park Elementary School fed into Oliver Middle School, while Aspen Creek, Spring Creek and Oak Crest Elementary School fed into Childers Middle School. A member asked how many houses were in these areas. Ms. Seing responded both middle school areas covered approximately two-fifths of Broken Arrow, and she would recommend choosing one middle school area for the pilot program. Chairman Peterson stated one middle school area was roughly 7,000 customers involved in the pilot program. Ms. Seing felt this was a good number.

A member asked if the pilot program involving the carts was to be rolled out alone or alongside the recycling program for the entire City of Broken Arrow. Councilor Johnnie Parks stated the pilot program should be rolled out alongside recycling for the entire City of Broken Arrow giving residents the option to recycle or not recycle as desired. A member agreed the recycling carts should be phased in at a reasonable pace to the whole of Broken Arrow leaving bags for trash in place, while the pilot program would be to test the two cart system. A member suggested it was a better idea to do a true pilot program alone for a short period of time, maybe two months, prior to introduction of recycling carts to Broken Arrow. A member felt the pilot program should be rolled out approximately two years prior to the recycling program due to funding and finance issues. A member pointed out if the pilot program was successful Broken Arrow might pass a bond issue to purchase carts. Chairman Peterson said he felt the pilot program should be in a limited area for a three-month period, followed by a survey and six months to assess the survey, and then use the hopefully positive feedback as publicity. Ms. Seing stated this was a reasonable plan; following a six-month pilot program and survey, the Committee should make the proposal to the City Council with an implementation plan. The Committee was in agreement. Chairman Peterson agreed with the proposed pilot program, one middle school/three elementary school areas, two carts for each resident, three months to experience the program for the residents, followed by two months to conduct and assess a survey leading to a proposal and implementation plan for presentation to City Council.

A member worried forcing people to use two carts could cause the recycling program to fail. A member explained recycling would never be mandatory for anyone. Member Tom Hahn stated he received feedback from many residents who expressed the desire not to recycle if Broken Arrow chose to enforce carts. He stated these residents varied in age from 40 to elderly. A member mentioned the older generation was recycling, and would recycle, and the Committee needed to keep these residents' wants in consideration. He said he just wanted the Committee to conduct a successful pilot program. Chairman Peterson stated the residents in the pilot program area would encounter no change in the current sanitation fee; the City of Broken Arrow would have to cover the expense. Discussion continued considering where the City would save money by switching to a two cart system, whether the pilot area would continue to receive trash bag vouchers, etc.

Chairman Peterson asked if the Committee agreed the two options to be given to Kate Vasquez for financial modeling were 1) two carts, one for recycling and one for garbage, and 2) one cart for recycling and continued use of bags for trash; both options with once a week pickup.

A member asked if Kate Vasquez would conduct the modeling using a third party provider or the City Sanitation Department. Chairman Peterson stated Ms. Vasquez would do the model integrating the current City Sanitation Department; if Broken Arrow desired consideration of a third party provider it was a separate issue. A member expressed he felt residents of Broken Arrow would appreciate continued employment of the City Sanitation Department, and it was both morally and politically the correct decision. A member commented it was Broken Arrow's decision regardless, not the Committee's.

MOTION: A motion was made by Dawn Seing, seconded by Michelle Bergwall.

**Move to present two proposals to Kate Vasquez for financial modeling: 1) Cart for recycling and keep current trash bag system. 2) Two carts, one for trash and one for recycling. Both options operated with once a week pickup.**

**Motion carried unanimously.**

Motion approved.

#### **V. Questions from Committee Members**

Discussion was held regarding when to hold the next Committee meeting. A member stated Ms. Vasquez required time for her modeling. Chairman Peterson proposed 06/12/2017 for the next Committee meeting.

Chairman Peterson stated next the Committee meeting would review Ms. Vasquez's report, then he would draft the final proposal and the Committee would meet to review this proposal and make any necessary adjustments. Chairman Peterson stated he would include how the process started, how the Committee was formed, everything the Committee had done, the survey, the Committee member list, what had been studied, why the Committee had chosen to omit options, and finally the options the Committee had settled upon and why, with supportive data, the financial impact, and the intended pilot program.

Chairman Peterson asked if the proposed pilot program, one middle school/three elementary school areas, two carts for each resident, three months to experience the program for the residents, followed by two months to conduct and assess a survey of the pilot area leading to a proposal and implementation plan for presentation to City Council was acceptable to the Committee. A member suggested asking Ms. Vasquez if three months were enough. A member stated it may not be. Discussion continued regarding whether three months or six months was the better choice for the pilot program, asking Ms. Vasquez her opinion of the time frame, weather/snow affecting the time period chosen, etc.

Chairman Peterson stated he would also include a note of other communities in Oklahoma which currently used the proposed system in the final draft for the City Council, and recommended the Committee also provide rejoinders for possible negative arguments.

Discussion was held regarding backyard or garage-side service for the handicap or elderly.

Discussion ensued regarding what time of year the pilot program should be rolled out and not delaying the pilot program because of winter.

A member stated the public forums would exhibit negative reaction to the changes proposed. He stated the more information the Committee had in answer to the complaints, and the more Committee members attended the forums, the better. He stated it was important, if the pilot program was a failure, the Committee be prepared with an alternative and to remember the ultimate goal was recycling even if the cart system failed. He explained the City Council divided Broken Arrow into four district wards and held a public meeting in each ward. He expressed meetings were heated and the presence of the Committee as an advocate for recycling was vital. He felt the City Council was in favor of recycling and in favor of carts; however, the City Council might choose not to champion recycling and carts if

the residents were in disagreement. A member stated recycling in general was the priority focus; carts should be dismissed if it hindered recycling.

A member suggested considering two pilot programs, one with the two carts, and one with a recycling cart and trash bags. A member responded, for the two pilot programs to be comparable, the ability to track levels of recycling contamination for each program was required. Lee Zirk reciprocated the Committee would need to double check, but he thought American Waste would be able to accommodate Broken Arrow and the two separate trials.

A member inquired if the two pilot programs could be two carts and all bags instead of cart and bag. A member responded the cart was the most economical and sustainable choice for recycling.

Tom Hahn asked for a definition for "contamination" and was informed contamination was the non-recyclable materials found within a recycle receptacle. He responded if a resident used a clear bag for recycling there was visibility to ascertain if the bag contained recycling or trash, and if recycling was in a cart the Sanitation Department's visibility would be hindered. Discussion ensued regarding recycling bags and the trouble this caused the Murph, carts being the preferred method to avoid loss of recyclable materials at the Murph, the Murph's preference, and recycling bags being inefficient.

Discussion continued regarding the two pilot programs, which programs should be pursued, presentation to the City Council, and more.

Chairman Peterson envisioned the pilot program would come prior to discussing possibilities with the wards in the public forums. He felt this would better prepare the Committee and the City Council for the ward meetings. Members agreed.

A discussion was held on how best to distribute the survey after the trial period of the pilot program to all participants. Members suggested online surveys, distribution through the schools, City or distribution via USPS.

Chairman Peterson commented the pilot program would push the city-wide recycling program out a year or more. A member suggested consideration of not implementing the pilot program until after the bond issue. Chairman Peterson stated the Committee did not want the City Council voting on recycling within 60 days of a bond issue. A member mentioned voting on the bond issue was in spring; therefore, the pilot program could proceed during this period of time, and the Committee could make recommendations following the bond issue. A member stated the Committee's timeline would not interfere with the bond issue regardless as the pilot program would not be rolled out until September. A member expressed the pilot program should be implemented at least six to eight months prior to the City Council elections.

Chairman Peterson stated Ms. Vasquez was to be made aware of the pilot programs, and also the trucks being used for the pilot program required fitting with the proper equipment. He stated the truck fitting and the carts were expenses to be figured into the financial modeling equation.

A member asked if Broken Arrow still had a relationship with Waste Management. She stated Waste Management offered a grant for half a million carts to the City of Broken Arrow. A member responded Broken Arrow still brought trash to Waste Management's landfill, and he noted Waste Management offered a grant to cities which currently had recycling programs and wanted to improve them, but he felt Broken Arrow was not eligible.

Lee Zirk asked for clarification of the information being given to Kate Vasquez for financial modeling. He asked, in the two cart system, if a person chose to continue with bags instead of carts would Broken Arrow still issue bags, and if in the one cart and bag system would the City still distribute bags. He asked what other changes would be made to the current system; would residents be allowed to set bags of trash out beside the carts for pickup if the bags did not fit in the cart. Chairman Peterson said Broken Arrow currently charged for extra green waste pickup, and could continue to do so. A member responded this could change once the recycling program and cart program went city-wide. A member said she felt the City should not be purchasing bags in any scenario. A member expressed that Ms. Vasquez needed to know of possible changes in order to provide accurate financial models. A member mentioned in Tulsa residents could put out extra bags for pickup, but the City of Tulsa charged extra fees for this. Discussion began concerning a sticker program and the failure of the sticker program in Tulsa.

Discussion continued related to bags outside of cart pickup, fall leaf pickup, policies and changes relative to bulky items, excess waste and green waste, the possibility of “ticketing” residents for extra pickup, the information Ms. Vasquez needed to conduct her financial modeling, current practice of Broken Arrow to charge for more than 10 bags of green waste and unlimited trash bag pickup, bulky pickup rates, charging for any bags outside of the cart, and how many bags of trash a typical household generated.

It was decided to ask Ms. Vasquez to do her calculations in accordance with current Broken Arrow practices and policies regarding excess trash pickup.

A member reiterated the two options to be given to Kate Vasquez for financial modeling were 1) two carts, one for recycling and one for garbage, and 2) one cart for recycling and continued use of bags for trash; both options with once a week pickup.

Current truck routes and truck route changes for the pilot programs were discussed. It was felt it would not be difficult to alter current routes to accommodate the pilot program.

## **VI. Adjourn**

Chairman Peterson reported the next meeting was scheduled for 06/12/2017 at 5:30 PM.

MOTION: A motion was made by Dawn Seing, seconded by Tom Hahn.

**Move to adjourn.**

**Motion carried unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned.