



City of Broken Arrow
Minutes
Broken Arrow Municipal Authority
Special Work Session

City Hall
220 S 1st Street
Broken Arrow OK
74012

Chairperson Craig Thurmond
Vice Chair Scott Eudey
Trustee Johnnie Parks
Trustee Debra Wimpee
Trustee Christi Gillespie

Thursday, October 10, 2019

Council Chambers

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Craig Thurmond called the meeting to order at approximately 5:15 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: 4 - Christi Gillespie, Johnnie Parks, Scott Eudey, Craig Thurmond
Absent: 1 - Debra Wimpee

3. General Authority Business

A. 19-1261 Presentation and discussion regarding the Broken Arrow Pilot Project Report and recommendation of the Citizen Recycle Committee

Chairperson Thurmond stated the presentation regarding the Broken Arrow Pilot Project and Report had already been heard; the purpose of this Special Work Session was discussion.

City Manager Michael Spurgeon thanked City Council, the Recycling Committee and Kate Vasquez with GBB Consulting. He asked Mr. Russell Gale to speak.

Assistant City Manager of Administration, Russell Gale, reviewed a brief history of the Recycling Project which started in 2016 with surveys, continued research, Committee organization, Pilot Programs, results and Committee recommendations. He noted the Committee recommended converting from twice a week to once a week pickup, providing one 96 gallon recycling cart to each customer, allowing customers to opt-out of recycling service without fee reduction, reducing bag vouchers by 50% upon recycling cart implementation, issuance of trash carts within three years of recycling cart distribution, and replenishment of the sanitary truck fleet with automated trash trucks. He reported if the Authority (BAMA) chose to approve these recommendations Staff and BAMA would be required to identify a date to implement trash cart usage and eliminate the trash bag voucher program, decide whether the City would offer multiple size trash carts, determine service levels for seniors and those with disabilities, address green waste services and bulk waste services, and design an implementation calendar. He noted BAMA could chose to implement trash cart service at the same time as recycling cart service. He discussed the challenges the City would face if the current sanitary service continued unchanged. He noted the Broken Arrow sanitary customer base was growing by 1.7% annually.

City Manager Spurgeon reported he chose to keep his opinions to himself during this process in an effort to enable the process to run its course organically and better enable others to form unprejudiced opinions. He stated he was kept fully updated during the entire process. He indicated this was an important public policy decision and the Authority had a

responsibility to be deliberate in its decision making. He commended the Recycling Committee for its efforts.

City Manager Spurgeon reported he had experience with solid waste service transitions and would be able to ensure any transition was smooth and efficient. He stated there was community support for recycling services, as well as new trash service. He indicated manual trash collection, as was currently conducted by the City of Broken Arrow, was not sustainable. He stated it had been more than thirty years since cities began transitioning to automated trash pickup. He noted trash service was the only City service provided which had not evolved in an effort to be more efficient and effective. He stated it was time to consider alternative ways of conducting trash service. He discussed the difficulties with the current trash service.

City Manager Spurgeon stated his recommendation to the Authority was built upon the Citizen Advisory Committee recommendations: 1) Provide recycling carts to all customers. 2) Transition to once a week pickup for trash and recycling. 3) Stop providing trash bags immediately and utilize the bag funds for cart purchase, as well as trucks and other necessary equipment. 4) Implement trash carts immediately. He stated he believed moving from twice a week pickup to once a week pickup with continued bag use would cause difficulties with trash bag build-up. He discussed these difficulties including personal trash cart purchase, garbage odor, etc. 5) Direct Staff to develop a plan for disposal of green waste. 6) Remove trash from General Services and institute a separate Sanitary Department. He recommended hiring a Director of Sanitary Services to run the Department.

Chairperson Thurmond indicated he agreed with City Manager Spurgeon's recommendations. He stated he felt it was important to add a smaller cart option as many residents complained the carts were difficult to maneuver. He stated he agreed Broken Arrow was "behind the times" regarding solid waste services. City Manager Spurgeon noted it would not be difficult to provide cart size options; however, it was important to ensure the automated trucks would be able to pickup and tip the various carts. Ms. Kate Vasquez noted with the use of rear lift trucks a smaller cart was not a problem operationally; however, side arm lifts, as used with recycling trucks, struggled with smaller carts.

City Manager Spurgeon stated the City would accommodate those with special needs and those who simply could not manage the carts.

Trustee Johnnie Parks stated he had served on the City Council 25 years ago when the Council first considered updating the trash service. He stated the trash service currently provided by Broken Arrow was seriously outdated at this point. He stated as it stood the current trash service was unsustainable and as such, the City would eventually be required to move towards privatization which he did not wish to see. He indicated he supported these changes and the recommendations of the Recycling Committee; however, he felt it was important to implement trash carts and recycling carts concurrently. He noted he would support a decision to implement the trash carts within three years if this was the direction the Authority chose. He noted he would also support concurrent implementation of recycling carts and trash carts if City Manager Spurgeon felt this would ensure the ease of transition to a cart system. He stated the City had spent a considerable amount of time asking and answering pertinent questions regarding recycling, recycling services and trash services and he felt it would be beneficial to post these questions and answers online for public perusal. He noted if the City was forced to move to a private system carts would be implemented. He stated there was currently a good market for recyclables and even if the City could not make money by collecting recyclables, at least the community would not be wasteful.

Vice Chair Scott Eudey stated he served as the City's Trustee for the Metropolitan Environmental Trust (the Met) and residents had asked him why a curbside recycling service was necessary when Broken Arrow had the Met; however, a large number of residents wished to have a curbside recycling program. He stated he was initially concerned for the well being of the Met upon implementation of a curbside recycling program; however, Graham Brannin, the Director of the Met, supported the notion of curbside recycling and wished to be involved in public education regarding recycling. He noted the Met wished to increase its efforts regarding glass recycling and wished to install satellite locations for glass collection. He stated the Met wished to partner with Broken Arrow in the recycling effort. He reported the Met was not concerned about a curbside recycling program negatively affecting the Met. He stated the Met was able to recycle many items a curbside recycling program could not, including electronics, motor oil, etc. He discussed the reasons he felt recycling was important. He stated he wished to immediately eliminate the bag voucher system; he felt this was a wasteful use of City funds. He indicated while he was not overly excited about switching to carts, he did wish to ease the burden upon the sanitation workers, reduce workers compensation claims, and reduce labor costs without eliminating workers. He noted he did not wish to see Broken Arrow transition to private trash service.

Chairperson Thurmond stated he was not necessarily a huge fan of carts either; however, the current system was not sustainable and a change was needed.

Trustee Gillespie stated she fully supported recycling. She stated her constituents' main concern was the transition from twice a week pickup to once a week pickup. She stated she understood City Manager Spurgeon felt the current trash service was unsustainable; however, she was attempting to determine if transitioning to a dual cart system would be more or less expensive than the current system. She wondered if it would be possible to make pickups twice a week: trash pickup early in the week and recycling pickup later in the week. She wondered if this might encourage recycling.

Ms. Vasquez noted private sector customers commonly had trash pickup twice weekly with recycling pickup on one of the trash pickup days. She stated she would not be comfortable with trash pickup one day a week and recycling pickup on another day. She explained this had been tried in the past and it seemed to discourage recycling. She stated converting to once a week pickup for both trash and recycling would encourage participation in the recycling program as it necessitated siphoning off recyclables into the recycling cart to make room for garbage in the garbage cart. She noted that continuing with twice a week trash pickup and adding a recycling route would add expense. She stated once a week pickup worked well in the pilot programs and worked well in many cities. She reported approximately 5 out of every 6 cities with a population of more than 10,000 residents utilized once a week pickup.

Trustee Gillespie asked if there was any way to keep twice a week pickup, add recycling and eliminate trash bag vouchers. Vice Chair Eudey stated the difficulties arose with running basically three routes (two for trash and one for recycling), as well as with staffing; extra staff would be needed to accommodate this type of system. Mr. Russell Gale stated GBB modeled the system which was presented to the Authority. He explained transitioning from twice a week trash pickup to once a week pickup the number of employees per trash truck could be reduced from three to two; this freed Sanitary Staff to man the recycling trucks and no temporary employees would be required (temp employees were currently often needed). He noted this did not include green waste pickup. He stated having twice a week trash pickup and once a week recycling pickup would increase the number of trucks and staffing needed. Ms. Vasquez noted if the City wished to keep twice a week trash pickup the fleet size would have to be increased to accommodate the new system.

Trustee Gillespie asked about once a week trash and once a week recycling. She stated she believed residents would still be cognizant of recycling in an effort to create space in the trash cart. City Manager Spurgeon stated he worried residents would forget to set out the recycling cart if it was taken up on a different day than the trash. Trustee Gillespie disagreed as she felt residents were used to putting trash out twice a week. Vice Chair Eudey stated Trustee Gillespie's solution would not alleviate resident's concerns regarding garbage buildup with once a week trash pickup. Trustee Parks noted the Recycling Committee researched the possibility of once a week trash pickup and separate once a week recycling pickup and it was discovered recycling became too contaminated with this method. Ms. Vasquez concurred; this method had been tried in the past and a large amount of trash was often found in the recycling bins and/or residents simply would not recycle to avoid bringing the cart to the curb twice a week. Trustee Parks stated he recycled regularly and as such, has not had a need for twice a week trash pickup in the past twenty years. He stated the residents who experienced difficulty with trash buildup would be the residents who refused to recycle.

Trustee Parks reported most residents generated a large amount of trash over the weekends. He asked if it was possible for trash pickup to be conducted in the beginning of the week rather than the end of the week. Ms. Vasquez responded in the affirmative; pickup could be conducted Monday through Thursday or Monday through Wednesday. Mr. Gale reported the shorter the work week was, the longer the route would become, and/or the more trucks would be needed. City Manager Spurgeon stated he would research the cost of Monday through Thursday versus Monday through Wednesday trash pickup.

Discussion ensued regarding removing recycling carts from customers who repeatedly misused the recycling carts and continuously contaminated recycling materials, who would be responsible for keeping track of recycling contamination, educating customers regarding recycling contamination, not storing recycling materials in trash bags, storing trash in trash bags before placing in the cart to reduce smell, the non-sustainability of twice a week trash pickup, researching the cost of following the Committee's recommendations with City Manager Spurgeon's modifications for presentation to City Council, the 20 year life expectancy of the carts, and reallocating trash bag funds.

Chairperson Thurmond asked if the Authority could give direction to Staff at this point. Assistant City Attorney Kim Slinkard indicated the Authority could not give direction to Staff, but could ask Staff questions.

Trustee Gillespie asked about planning for green waste. City Manager Spurgeon stated Staff would thoroughly research the green waste situation and hold discussions with Kate Vasquez, Lee Zirk and Russell Gale regarding possible solutions. Chairperson Thurmond stated only a small percentage of residents put out green waste regularly; however, those residents needed to be accommodated in some way.

Vice Mayor Eudey agreed with Chairperson Thurmond. He stated it was also very important to have a plan in place to accommodate the elderly and residents with disabilities. He stated any decisions regarding recycling and trash needed to include a plan for accommodation, as well as green waste, or at least include clear language indicating a plan would be developed for both.

Trustee Parks noted small amounts of green waste could be placed in trash carts; a separate pickup should not be made for small amounts of green waste.

City Manager Spurgeon stated he would look into green waste and return to the Authority

with information and suggestions.

Chairperson Thurmond stated the BAMA Meeting on November 5, 2019 would include recycling and trash. City Manager Spurgeon noted he would present his findings regarding cost models and green waste at the Meeting on November 5, 2019.

Vice Chair Eudey noted residents would be provided an opportunity to speak regarding recycling and trash at the Meeting on November 5, 2019.

4. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:21 p.m.

MOTION: A motion was made by Christi Gillespie, seconded by Johnnie Parks.

Move to adjourn

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 4 - Christi Gillespie, Johnnie Parks, Scott Eudey, Craig Thurmond

Chairman

Secretary