

**ULSTER COUNTY RESOURCE RECOVERY AGENCY  
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
JULY 20, 2021**

The Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency held a Governance Committee Meeting on July 20, 2021. This meeting was at the Agency's Main Office located at 999 Flatbush Road, Kingston, NY 12401. There was also a call-in audio option available through Webex.

The proceedings were convened at 12:05pm.

The following Board members were present: Committee Chair JoAnne Myers, Member Katherine Beinkafner, and Charles Landi. Member Lisa Mitten was absent.

The following staff members were present: Executive Director/Controller Tim DeGraff, Director of Operations and Compliance Charlie Whittaker, and Director of Sustainability Angelina Peone.

From the public: Reporter Bill Kemble from the Daily Freeman, and Deputy Comptroller Alicia DeMarco from the Ulster County Comptroller's Office.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Katherine Beinkafner motioned to approve the corrected minutes of the June 14, 2021 Governance Committee Meeting and seconded by JoAnne Myers. (Corrected Alicia DeMarco's spelling of first name and added an "unidentified individual" to who was present from the public) VOTE: Ayes: 2; Nays: 0; 1 absent (MITTEN). The motion passed.

**COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

A Regular Board Meeting will be held on Monday, July 26, 2021 at 12:00pm at the Agency's Administrative Office.

**ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Cell Phone Policy**

The Committee and staff discussed the draft cell phone policy. The draft cell phone policy was prepared by Ron Coons, the Agency's safety consultant.

JoAnne Myers said the policy should be edited to add that there should be no cell phone use except in emergencies, and to add that hands-free use in vehicles is not allowed.

Charlie Whittaker agreed and said that there should be no cell phone use except during break times.

JoAnne Myers said there should be some discretion, such as for people who have issues with childcare, etc.

Charlie Whittaker replied that he is reasonable, and if an employee is having those types of issues they should discuss it with him.

JoAnne Myers said that she would like to add something about "safety first" and "reasonable discretion" into the policy.

Tim DeGraff said he will make some changes and highlight those changes for the Board to see on the second draft.

JoAnne Myers said that this policy should include everyone on site, with the Agency's Board and employees required to sign an acknowledgement.

Angelina Peone asked for clarification because during tours and educational programs she does encourage participants to take photos (while being mindful of safety).

Tim DeGraff said photography is allowed with permission from upper management, which she is, so her groups may be encouraged to take photos.

#### Other Policies

Charles Landi said recently that he was concerned with an employee giving Tim DeGraff a hard time. He said that the Agency's written policy on abusive employees might not be strong enough.

Charlie Whittaker replied that they always have the option of calling the police if needed. Plus most of the issues they've had have been ex-employees which are not covered by the personnel policy.

JoAnne Myers said a standards of conduct policy would cover everyone on the property.

Charlie Whittaker said in general the Agency's employees are great at deescalating situations with angry customers.

#### Compost Program Policies

Tim DeGraff said that previously they had discussed putting compost out to bid and the consensus was that they would not do that.

He stated that he wanted to make sure the Committee was ok with the delivery list that the staff posts to the website. He said that Ken will review any legal disclaimers that will need to be added.

JoAnne Myers said there must also be a clear process for requesting to be on the list.

Tim DeGraff said he spoke with Greg, who used to run the Onondaga site, about resale and issues with sales tax. He said the only time the Agency should have to deal with sales tax is if bagged compost is sold at the Agency's locations which he would prefer not to do. He said he would rather have agreements with local businesses to sell the product.

Katherine Beinkafner asked for clarification about what lists would be on the website.

Angelina Peone said that the website has a master contact list for food waste management services which lists other food waste composting sites in the county, food scrap drop off locations for residents, links to information about the laws, links to education, consulting, etc. It does not expressly say that specific locations sell compost. There is also a list of all commercial haulers that are permitted by the Agency to drop off trash or recycling as well as food waste haulers. She said there is currently no list of places to purchase compost, and if they were to create one there would be questions such as: do we include all locations where you can buy compost (including all greenhouses, garden centers, home improvement stores, etc.) or just local compost producers? Do we include locations in neighboring counties, or focus the list on Ulster County only? Do we include blended products, topsoil, mulch, etc. or keep the list to just compost? It would take a lot of staff time to do this research if including hours, names of products, or other information. She said if the Board does want the staff to create such a list they will certainly do that.

JoAnne Myers asked how the sale of bagged compost will be described on the website.

Tim DeGraff talked about putting a description for bagged compost next to the current information listed for bulk compost. He also discussed the possibility of the public being able to pre-order compost online and pick up at the Agency on specified days, like the rain barrel and compost bin sale that Angie ran. He said he'd like to have that ability for paying invoices anyway but he has not been able to get to that project yet. He said the first step is finding out how the Agency wants to sell its bagged compost, whether at the Agency or at local retailers.

JoAnne Myers said that we should stick to Ulster County, and include information about contacting neighboring counties' Recycling Coordinators if they are looking for compost outside of Ulster County.

Katherine Beinkafner said she thinks the bags should only be sold at retailers.

Tim DeGraff said that would be the easiest route. He explained more about the process of the public purchasing bags online, and said that he would price it to include sales tax. He said that if the Agency is selling bags of compost directly, we will need to collect sales tax. If another entity is selling the product then they are the ones who will collect the sales tax. The Agency does not have to collect sales tax on bulk sales of compost, and does not need to collect a resale certificate from anyone who purchases it here and then resells it.

Charles Landi asked how far away the Agency is from bagging.

Charlie Whittaker said management has discussed bagging a certain amount (maybe about 100 tons) and storing it until next year so that it has a better moisture content. Logistics still need to be figured out. He said 200 tons is currently set aside. He wants the product to be cooler when it's bagged and dry

out more before it's sold. Mold can grow if the compost is very moist and although it isn't harmful customers don't understand that.

Tim DeGraff asked Angelina Peone if the US Composting Council's rack cards mention anything about mold in the compost.

Angelina Peone said that the rack cards that the Agency distributes to people does not mention mold that can appear in the bags. Actinomycetes is a type of filamentous bacteria that occurs naturally in soil. It is part of the soil ecosystem and totally normal. It can look like 'gray spider webs' in the finished product. People sometimes see this gray matter in the compost and aren't familiar with it. She said that may be a good question for the FAQ page on the Agency's website.

Charlie Whittaker said that they don't want to bag more than can be sold within a certain period because eventually compost does go bad due to it being a living thing. He believes compost stays good for three or four years. So the Agency needs to be able to sell what it's making so that it doesn't go bad. He also talked about how the Agency is very picky about the wood chips it accepts for the compost. The Agency does some shared services with the towns to get good quality wood chips, which benefits the towns and the Agency.

Katherine Beinkafner mentioned the shortage of food waste which has led to a shortage of finished compost.

Tim DeGraff explained the challenges of rolling out new programs that have been planned to help with that issue. Challenges include Covid restrictions (that were eased but now coming back), as well as the implementing of new laws and finding ways to fill the gap between those laws.

Charlie Whittaker said a big challenge is finding haulers to pick up food waste from businesses, which has always been an issue due to logistics.

Tim DeGraff spoke about things that the Agency already does but should be formalized as policy:

- No paying ahead and/or reserving compost
- No donations of compost
  - This goes along with the Agency's general policy of no donations of any kind, which stemmed from organizations wanting nickel cans.
  - Angelina Peone said an exception would be small samples of compost.
- Distributing the US Composting Council's STA brochure with each compost sale
  - Angelina Peone said that the rack cards are very informative and include the benefits of compost as well as the different ways to use and apply it.
- Mortality compost cannot be sold to the public

He also stated that the Board and staff need to come up with a policy related to when to limit compost sales and to how much. Landscapers and other businesses sometimes purchase large loads which leaves nothing for the residents. He referenced an email from Tom Kacandes which supports limiting smaller loads.

JoAnne Myers agreed that loads should be limited.

Tim DeGraff said they could limit it to one load per customer per day, but that could cause the Agency not to sell enough compost.

Charlie Whittaker noted that limiting people to one load a day may make it more difficult for landscapers or gardeners who need larger amounts.

Tim DeGraff noted the Agency's new Compliance Officer Larry Ricci will be overseeing the compost from a compliance standpoint and new procedures will be implemented to help with communication about compost availability.

Katherine Beinkafner stated that she does not agree with limiting compost to one load per person because some gardeners need to make multiple trips in one day and don't have time to come once a day.

Charlie Whittaker said it really should be first come first serve.

Angelina Peone discussed the perception that recycling and composting is free for the Agency, when in reality there are major overhead costs to these programs. The reason the Agency runs these programs is for the environmental benefit.

#### **ADJOURN**

Katherine Beinkafner motioned to adjourn the July 20, 2021 Governance Committee Meeting at 1:25pm. Seconded by JoAnne Myers. 2 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent (MITTEN).

December 6, 2021

Motion to approve the above transcribed Minutes of the July 20, 2021 Governance Committee Meeting was made by Katherine Beinkafner, and seconded by JoAnne Myers. 2 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent (MITTEN).

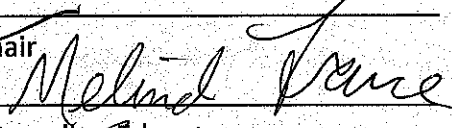
The minutes were approved by the Committee.

Transcribed by: Melinda France and Brenna Whitaker

Meetings are recorded and available upon request.

Signatures:

  
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JoAnne Myers, Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Melinda France, Recycling Educator

  
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Brenna Whitaker, Administrative Assistant