

**ULSTER COUNTY RESOURCE RECOVERY AGENCY
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 28, 2024**

The Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency held a Regular Board Meeting on March 28, 2024.

The proceedings were convened at 6:06 PM. This meeting was held at the Agency's Main Office, 999 Flatbush Road, Kingston, NY.

Board members present: Chair/Treasurer Regis Obijiski, Vice Chair James Gordon, Member Andrew Ghiorse, Member Donna Egan and Member David Gilmour.

Staff present: Counsel/Secretary Kenneth Gilligan, Director of Finance and Administration Tim DeGraff, Director of Sustainability Angelina Brandt and Office Manager Melinda France. Executive Director Marc Rider was excused.

From the public: Manna Jo Greene, Ulster County Legislator; Laura Petit, Chair of the Recycling Oversight Committee and member of the Ulster County Reform Committee; and Peter Humphries.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Manna Jo Greene, Ulster County Legislator shared the information regarding an event to increase the awareness of refrigerants. This event will be held in May. If anyone would like more information to contact her.
- Regis Obijiski, Chair stated that if anyone from the public would like an item to be added to the agenda for discussion to send him an email prior to the meeting at robi@ucrra.org.

AGENDA

David Gordon made a motion to accept the Agenda as prepared and seconded by James Gordon. Donna Egan asked that the time for the Zero Waste Meeting be changed to 5:00 PM. 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS/POINTS

Regis stated the following:

- Marc was unable to attend this meeting due to a prior arranged vacation. Marc submitted a 4-page report to the Board prior to leaving for vacation. Regis stated he is very pleased with Marc's first three weeks.
- Marc accelerated the Cornerstone engineering review of the HydroQuest study.

- Marc asked Cornerstone to expand and suggested additional possibilities that the Agency may consider.
- Reports will be provided to the Board.
- Marc confirmed the NYSERDA funding for electric vehicles-2 vehicles for the price of one. Grant will also include charging stations.
- Marc has also begun research on alternative technologies

Marc, Tim and Regis met with County Executive Metzger on March 5, 2024. They discussed her state of the county address in February. She reiterated zero organic waste by 2030. The focus of the conversation was diverting organic waste. They all agreed that it will be a collaborative project.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Manna Jo Greene, Ulster County Legislator added to the Chair's comments regarding the meeting with County Executive Metzger that the law for the food waste has not been promoted the way it should have been, and the law is not being enforced like it should. She suggested maybe working with the Chamber of Commerce.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

David Gilmour made a motion to approve the Minutes of the February 29, 2024, Regular Board Meeting and it was seconded by Andrew Ghiorse. 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent.

David Gilmour asked for clarification regarding the mileage reimbursement conversation from the February 29, 2024, meeting. Donna Egan and Regis Obijiski stated mileage reimbursement would be provided reimbursement if it was for a Board appointed committee.

David Gilmour asked that the February 29, 2024, Regular Board Meeting Minutes be amended as follows:

- On the bottom of page 3 of 9 under **Discussion** add-The ethics form will be mailed from the County to the Board and will be returned to the County.
- On page 7 of 9 under **Mileage Reimbursement Discussion** change the first sentence to read "Due to it not being an authorized Agency purchase, Tim DeGraff requested authorization to reimburse board members to travel to the 549 Reform Committee Meeting and other external committee meetings appointed by the Agency Board."

James Gordon made a motion to move the changes made to the February 29, 2024, Regular Board Meeting minutes and it was seconded by Andrew Ghiorse. 5 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 absent.

COMMUNICATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **The Governance Committee** met on March 11th and 18th. James Gordon, Chair of the Committee provided an update regarding the meetings.

- The Committee discussed the Board Evaluations which were due by March 31, 2024. The tabulation only included 4 of the 5 Board Members. He read a letter he wrote to the Authorities Budget Office (ABO). The letter read as follows:

“To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is regarding the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency self-assessment by the board of directors, for the year ending 2023. The results were obtained using the model board evaluation document helpfully provided by ABO.

Enclosed is the document showing how board members viewed the agency, in a generally positive light, with areas showing good governance and others with room for improvement,

We scored on a basis that "strongly agree" is worth 4 points, somewhat agree worth 3, somewhat disagree worth 2 and disagree worth one. We tabulated returns from four of five board members, thus, the maximum score ("strongly agree" for all four tabulated board members) would be 16.

The maximum score, (16 on all 16 categories) would be 256. We scored a total of 185.

While these tallies are not excellent, they reflect extreme board turnover in 2023, and are likely to be improved with a new cohesive board and new executive director who came aboard as of this March.

The attached document contains the breakdown of our tabulations for each of the 16 categories. I am happy to discuss all this further if need be.

Thank you for making it relatively easy. The document ABO supplied helped with the assessment process and serves as a guideline for discussion and improvement as UCRRA moves through the challenges of 2024.

Sincerely, James Gordon
Chair, governance committee”

- Jame Gordon discussed the Board Evaluation tabulation sheet. He believed the tabulation sheet would be a good exercise for the Board and could discuss how the Board could improve. James Gordon passed out a copy of the tabulation sheet to discuss at a later date.
- The Committee also discussed the Governance Committee Charter. The committee felt that the By-Laws needed to be revised prior to preparing the Governance Committee Charter.
 - Regis Obijiski stated he appreciated the work that was done regarding the tabulation sheet.
 - Marc Rider is working on the By-Laws.
- **Zero Waste Committee Meeting** met prior to the Regular Board Meeting. Donna Egan, Chair provided the Board with an update.

- No meetings were held last year due to no committee
- The meetings will be held monthly prior to the Regular Board meeting
- This month the committee discussed ZWIP (Zero Waste Implementation Plan)
- The main focus moving forward will be organics
- Regis thanked Donna for taking the lead as Chair
- **Finance and Audit Committee Meetings** Regis Obijiski, Chair of the committee provided the Board with an update on both committees.
 - The Finance Committee meeting was held on March 18, 2024.
 - Main topic was reading and understanding an independent financial audit
 - David Gilmour and Donna Egan are committee members
 - Andrew Ghiorse and James Gordon attended out of interest
 - Used the 2022 audit due to it being the most recent audit
 - Next Finance Committee is scheduled for April 15th at 6PM
 - Main topic of discussion will be investments
 - The Audit Committee met on March 21, 2024
 - Guest speaker was Thomas Smith, CPA partner at EFPR Group
 - Mr. Smith provided a PowerPoint presentation
 - Auditors reported excellent financial statements presented by Tim DeGraff
 - There was a small decrease of \$120K in net worth (\$16 Million)
 - The auditors did not issue a management letter-no problems
 - The auditors reported no risk of material mis-statements
 - The 2023 financial statements are posted on the Agency's website

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE-previously provided to the Board. Marc Rider was excused due to a prior arranged vacation.

RECYCLING PROGRAM UPDATE (Recording 35:30-56:28)

Angelina Brandt, Director of Sustainability update included the following points:

- **Master Composter-Recycler Program**
 - Recruitment launched for 2024 Master Composter Recycler Program
 - It is a volunteer training and certification course
 - Advertising campaign this month included:
 - Branded social media content published on Facebook and Instagram
 - 30 day digital advertising campaign across the Shawangunk Journal, Hudson Valley One, and Ulster Publishing - accompanied by a print newspaper advertisement across the same three news publications
 - Planned a visit to Radio Kingston to talk about the program live
 - Volunteer program will be featured in the newsletter
 - Had direct communications with local volunteer organizations like Ulster Corps, SUNY New Paltz, SUNY Ulster, and other organizations.
 - Will attend the Bringing Agencies Together meeting next month, to showcase the program to other local nonprofit organizations involved in a range of sectors throughout Hudson Valley

- A flyer will be distributed at some upcoming events like Cornell Cooperative Extension Garden Day (175 attendees), and other Earth Day events
- Will highlight some current volunteer testimonials on social media stories, and promote the opportunity at all upcoming public speaking events
- The deadline to apply is Friday May 17th
- **Tiffin Project**
 - Work began on the grant contract with NYS Pollution Prevention Institute – to initiate the Ulster County Tiffin Project.
 - Staff hosted a kickoff meeting with project partners on March 11th to reintroduce the project scope of work to the partner organizations who wrote letters of support for the grant proposal. Will be following up with 1:1 strategic planning meetings with each of the project partners to further develop and plan the events that will take place later this summer. Staff is having internal meetings weekly as there will be a lot of work ahead associated with this initiative.
 - A press release was published on the blog with details about the project.
- **Acknowledged and welcomed the newest Partner in Composting: First Capital Hauling**
 - First Capital Hauling is a Mid-Hudson Valley small business formed in 2019, with roots in the junk removal roll off rental service. The company expanded to curbside residential collection this year and opted to launch a composting service in addition to curbside collection of residential trash and recycling.
 - Small business with less than 50 customers
 - Hosted a tour for their staff on March 6th and completed an onboarding process to set up their composting account, and worked closely with their management team to ensure their local and state permitting compliance was in order, and consulted on outreach and educational strategies to launch the composting portion of their collection.
 - Service Ulster and Dutchess counties
 - Congratulated First Capital Hauling for coming onboard with the Agency.
- **Bagged Compost Season**
 - Opened pre-orders for the bagged compost season
 - Bagged compost is available through a pre-order program in the online store. Orders received during the week become freshly packaged and are distributed to pre-paid customers each Saturday, beginning April 6th in conjunction with the free electronics recycling program
 - A Customer Feedback Survey solicited comments from all of the customers who purchased bagged compost last year. Out of 140+ customers, received 66 responses while the survey was open for 10 days.
 - An Executive Summary of the survey results was circulated to the Board.
 - 97% of respondents rated their satisfaction with the quality of the compost as 4 out of 5 or higher, with 79% rating it 5 out of 5
 - 92% of respondents found the process to order compost online was 5 out of 5
 - 95% would recommend our compost to others

- The top applications of the compost were for flower and vegetable gardening, distinctly in container gardening practices such as raised beds or potted plants
- 53% of respondents were unaware of the Seal of Testing Assurance certification that the compost bears, despite it being printed directly on the bag, advertised at the time they purchase the product, and highlighted on the educational media they received with their order pick up.
- Highlighting a few customer comments which included:
 - Pleased with the product and packaging
 - Great program, wonderful work, amazing price
 - Impressed with how well organized, helpful and friendly the service is and other compliments about the staff being courteous
 - Convenience of getting the bags loaded into vehicles was appreciated by seniors
 - A few comments shared were about increasing signage, one customer commented about debris in the compost, one comment about the dark color of the compost was confused as being dyed mulch
 - Encourage the Board to read all the comments
- **Misc.**
 - Cool Refrigerant Program
 - Recycling Outreach Team are working with Sustainable Hudson Valley
 - Creating the educational media with everyone who brings in an event starting Earth Day until the end of May
 - Refrigerants will be accepted for Free at these events
 - Many Town Transfer Stations accept refrigerant items for a fee
 - Scrap metal recycling facilities will accept as well
 - Working on opening registration for upcoming April HHW event. Waiting approval from the DEC
 - Staff completed six public speaking engagements, three facility tours, and one special event as noted in the Program Update.

The board and staff discussed how freon is removed from refrigerant units, and how to dispose of fluorescent bulbs.

GENERAL REPORTS

The Treasurer's Report was not presented.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS (Recording 57:00-1:01:09)

Resolution # 2613 Re: Approval of a Rules of Conduct Policy

David Gilmour made a motion to approve **Resolution #2613 Re: Approval of Rules of Conduct Policy** as written and it was seconded by James Gordon.

David Gilmour wanted it noted that the Rules of Conduct Policy is six pages. The board discussed the purpose of the policy, if Marc Rider reviewed the policy, and to see if the legal questions that the Committee had were answered. The Board TABLED the resolution until the next meeting. 5 in favor of tabling resolution #2613, 0 opposed and 0 absent.

OLD BUSINESS (Recording 1:01:30-1:07:36)

- Landfill Study update was provided in the Executive Director’s update.
- ABO Board Self-Evaluation were submitted on March 18, 2024.
- General Ledger Report provided to the Board of Directors by Tim DeGraff at the February Regular Board Meeting
 - 24 page report
 - The ledger covers 3 months
 - The Board was supposed to decide if they wanted to continue to receive the general ledger
 - Andrew Ghiorse made a motion to discuss discontinuing the general ledger and James Gordon seconded the motion for discussion.
 - Each Board Member discussed their opinion on receiving the general ledger
 - The Board voted on discontinuing the general ledger. 1 voted to discontinue the general ledger (OBIJISKI) and 4 voted to continue to receive the general ledger.

NEW BUSINESS-No “New Business” was discussed.

GENERAL REPORTS (Recording 1:08:00-1:11:30)

Tim noted the following:

MSW Tonnage Report

MSW/C&D (February):

Target Tons	Actual Tonnage in	Difference
9,427	9,362	Actual Tonnage was 65 tons short from the targeted tons

SLUDGE (February):

Tim noted that the tonnage of sludge was over the targeted tons by 26 tons.

Recycling Tonnage Report

Tim stated recycling correlates with garbage volume. Decrease from January to February does not necessarily relate to town volume. Most of the recycling is consistent to the prior year.

ADJOURN

James Gordon made a motion to adjourn the March 28, 2024, Regular Board Meeting at 7:33 PM and it was seconded by Andrew Ghiorse. 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent.

April 25, 2024

Motion to approve the above transcribed Minutes of the March 28, 2024, Regular Board Meeting was made by _____, seconded by _____. in favor, 0 opposed, _____ absent.

The Minutes were approved by the Board.

Transcribed by: Melinda France, Office Manager.

Signatures:

Regis Obijiski, Chair

Ken Gilligan, Secretary

DRAFT