

**ULSTER COUNTY RESOURCE RECOVERY AGENCY
ZERO WASTE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
JULY 10, 2025 at 5:15 PM
Meeting End Time: 6:14 PM**

ROLL CALL**Committee Members**

Donna Egan x _____
James Gordon Late
Erica Brown x _____

Agency Staff

Marc Rider x _____
Timothy DeGraff x _____
Angelina Brandt Excused
Tim Weidemann x _____
Nancy Lam x _____

James Gordon arrived at 6:12 PM

Andrew Ghiorse was present at the ZWC Meeting.

Present at the Zero Waste Committee meeting were the following individuals from the public: William Kemble of the Daily Freeman, Manna Jo Greene, Ulster County Legislature, and Laura Petite, ~~Ulster County~~ Legislature.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**PUBLIC COMMENT** (recording 9:44-12:37)

Manna Jo Greene, Ulster County Legislature: First, she stated that she was present at the last ZWC meeting and observed that there was a breakdown in communication between UCRRA and Neil Seldman, who was supposed to give a presentation, but who kept on getting off track; she stated that Mr. Seldman does have a lot of great information and she hopes that UCRRA can create another opportunity for collaboration or continued communication.

Next, she stated that Ulster County Purchasing issued a request for qualifications (RFQ) to finish the Zero Waste Plan. She stated that she really wishes to finish this plan, however, notes "the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing". She stated that the legislator, Chris Hewitt (Energy, Environment, Sustainability Committee Chair), was the one who requested the RFQ because there is funding in the budget, but they didn't even run it by him. She asked if Marc Rider had a copy to which Marc Rider first reminded everyone that this is the public participation time, but did state that he has seen the RFQ today. She stated that they could have done a better job, but she was more concerned about the process. She stated that she talked to Chris Hewitt and all the stakeholders, including UC Purchasing, about it so that the communication is better. She thinks Ulster County can be a potential to be a model, but the only way that it will happen is active collaboration.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Erica Brown made a motion to approve the agenda, and it was seconded by Donna Egan. 2 in favor, 0 opposed and 1 absent (GORDON).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Minutes of June 12, 2025, Zero Waste Committee Meeting

Erica Brown made a motion to approve the June 12, 2025 Minutes and it was seconded by Donna Egan. 2 in favor, 0 opposed and 1 absent (GORDON).

COMMUNICATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Zero Waste Committee Meeting is scheduled for August 14, 2025 at 5:15pm.
(There will be a guest speaker on the topic of tire recycling)

OLD (UNFINISHED) BUSINESS (none)

NEW BUSINESS (recording 13:53 – 45:19)

- Presentation by Brian London (Whitehouse & Schapiro LLC) on SMART Association (Secondary Materials and Recycled Textiles). Brian is on the Board of Directors of SMART as President.).

Brian provided a brief overview of SMART as a member. He stated that his company is a 5th generation family business based in Maryland and a member of SMART. Currently SMART has 200 members and is growing internationally. SMART members use and convert recycled and secondary materials from used clothing, commercial laundries, textiles, paper, shoes, purses, etc. from around the world. He stated some staggering and concerning statistics (6-7% of waste is textile, and only 15% gets recovered- 85% of that goes into the landfill, which is about 17 million tons of textile waste), causing state legislators to take interest in the textile waste problem (i.e. California passed the EPR Law - Extended Producer Responsibility). EPR essentially holds heavy producers (like brands and manufacturers) responsible for product management through the product's lifecycle. He believes New York also has a growing legislative interest in EPR. (NYSAR3).

He continued to provide specific statistics, (i.e. 40% will be good enough for reuse; 80% gets bought and turned into mixed rags; and 20% gets put into downstream market, such as Goodwill, private thrift stores). Brian mentioned a company near Ulster County, Rock Solid and encouraged vetting collectors, thrift stores and charities. He apologized for not having a more polished presentation, as he is on vacation right now, but he can send a PowerPoint presentation and other reading materials to UCRRA.

After Brian's presentation, he answered a few questions. Committee Chair Donna Egan asked whether cotton was more valuable than polyester. He explained that it depends, there is a grading and sorting system. Brian also discussed the difficulties his company has with competing with Chinese new clothing stores and brands like Shein, which used to use the De Minimis Exemption trade loophole. Executive Director Marc Rider asked a question about PFAS, how it was affecting Brian's industry as they are being phased out of textile; Marc Rider provided context that UCRRA is planning to open its own reuse center for textiles in the near future. There was a discussion on how SMART can provide tools and resources for UCRRA in that regard. Donna Egan thanked Brian for his time and informative presentation.

- After the presentation Donna Egan asked Marc Rider to explain what UCRRA currently does for textile waste. (recording 46:16-55:15)

Marc Rider stated that UCRRA does not operate MRDCs (Municipal Recycling Drop-Off Centers). Tim DeGraff spoke briefly to provide historical context that there used to be a box outside of the transfer station in Ulster, however it would get rejected by recyclers. Marc Rider continued to explain that currently, there is a

collection box outside of UCRRA that goes to a textile recycling company, which Marc believes is a SMART member.

Donna Egan asked if there is a way to request the tonnage or metrics or data on what is being collected. Marc Rider stated UCRRA does not touch the boxes, as they belong to the recycling company. He said he will speak with Angelina Brandt, Director of Sustainability to ask if UCRRA can request the metrics.

Donna Egan also questioned if UCRRA vets all of the vendors. Marc Rider stated that this recycling company is rather large and as far as he understands they have been good. He stated that a lot of what goes into the collection bins gets exported or goes downstream.

Marc Rider stated that UCRRA is planning to potentially open its own reuse facility for textiles in the next months; whether it is to lease or own the center is not settled but the goal is to divert certain textile goods from the transfer stations.

Donna Egan proffered that UCRRA can use SMART as a tool. For example, SMART could put together a program to give to the MRDCs and for UCRRA to become more involved or collaborative with the town MRDCs. Marc Rider mentioned that he would not be surprised if there was push back from the towns, based on the Agency's experience with organics, as UCRRA's jurisdiction is with the haulers and not MRDCs.

Manna Jo Greene, UC Legislature, raised her hand from the public to provide a comment (recording 55:16). She stated that many of the town's transfer stations may already be doing the collection of textile waste for recycling. She stated that it may be a matter of which town's transfer stations are doing it well and efficiently.

Donna Egan requested the Agency to look at who is currently doing the collection for textile waste and whether there is an opportunity to help them do better. Donna Egan requested the Agency to do research and collect information and vet vendors.

ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn July 10, 2025, Zero Waste Committee Meeting at 6:14 PM was made by Erica Brown and seconded by Donna Egan. 3 in favor, 0 opposed.

August 14, 2025

Motion to approve the above transcribed Minutes of July 10, 2025 Zero Waste Committee Meeting was made by Erica Brown, seconded by Donna Egan. 2 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent (GORDON).

The Minutes were approved by the Board.

Transcribed by: Nancy Lam, Agency Counsel

Signatures

Donna Egan, Chair