

**ULSTER COUNTY RESOURCE RECOVERY AGENCY
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

March 26, 2026

Meeting began at 6:07 PM and ended 8:18 PM

This meeting was held at the Agency’s Main Office, 999 Flatbush Road, Kingston, NY and was live streamed on Youtube.com @UCRRA5008.

ROLL CALL

Board Members

James Gordon	<u> X </u>
Donna Egan	<u> X </u>
Erica Brown	<u> X </u>
Mike Baden	<u> X </u>
Chris Hurlbert	<u> X </u>

Agency Staff

Marc Rider	<u> X </u>
Timothy DeGraff	<u> X </u>
Angelina Brandt	<u> X </u>
Tim Weidemann	<u> X </u>
Nancy Lam	<u> X </u>

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

After rollcall, the Chairperson led the body to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Members of the public that were present at the Regular Board Meeting (RBM): Former Legislator Manna Jo Greene, and Poppy Cannon Reese, member of the Recycling Oversight Committee

- **Poppy Cannon Reese** (Town of Wawarsing) reported success with local Repair Café events, having repaired approximately 65 items that would otherwise have gone to landfill. She emphasized strong community support and interest in continuing the initiative.
- **Manna Jo Greene** (Former Legislator) emphasized the importance of the “collaborative process”. She stated that perhaps it would be beneficial for the Agency to have collaborative conversations with the public and proposed a public forum hosted by the League of Women Voters to foster collaborative dialogue.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mike Baden moved to approve the Agenda, and Chris Hurlbert seconded the motion.
5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

➤ Minutes of January 8, 2026 Regular Board Meeting
Chris Hurlbert made a motion to adopt the minutes as written and it was seconded by Donna Egan.
5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent.

➤ Minutes of February 19, 2026 Regular Board Meeting

Mike Baden made a motion to adopt the minutes as written and it was seconded by Erica Brown. 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent.

COMMUNICATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next Scheduled Meetings:

- Regular Board Meeting (RBM) is scheduled for Thursday, April 23, 2026 at 6:00 PM

PRESENTATION

Melissa Everett, PhD (Executive Director, Sustainable Hudson Valley (SHV)), and Casey Plasker (Founder CEO, Circulaly PBC) presented the Circular Economy Strategic Plan for Ulster County, developed as a thought partnership with the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency.

Background and Purpose

- The plan responds to the fact that waste contributes 12% of carbon emissions, positioning circular economy as a climate action strategy.
- It aims to move beyond traditional zero waste efforts by creating dynamic markets and systemic solutions, not just promoting behavioral change.
- The final strategic plan is concise (under 40 pages) and the result of intensive collaboration, especially with Tim Weidemann UCRRA Coordinator of Performance & Development.
- **Vision:** Maximize circulation of products and materials; minimize extraction and waste.
- **Mission:** Achieve through collaboration across government, business, and community.

Scope and Limitations

- Not comprehensive; does not cover all waste streams.
- Not a replacement for the Zero Waste Implementation Plan.
- Focuses on leverage points to “unstick” the current system and enable upstream diversion.

Methodology and Key Focus Areas

- Used a software recommended by Tim Wiedemann called ArcGIS Business Analyst to analyze consumer spending and business revenue in key material categories.
- The Presentation prioritized two high-impact, hard-to-recycle streams that also had economic value:
 - Building Materials (~25% of retail consumption in Ulster County)
 - Clothing and Textiles (significant environmental and economic footprint)
- Identified disconnects between consumer spending and business activity to uncover circular economy opportunities.

Collaborative Process

- Engaged ~450 organizations, businesses, and researchers across the Hudson Valley.
- Hosted five collaborative gatherings:
 - Four hybrid sessions at the Kingston Library
 - One virtual session
 - Total participation: 53 individuals

The Reuse Innovation Center (RIC)

- Presented as a **catalytic project** with multiple functions:
 - Brings together entrepreneurs and innovators
 - Develops collection, distribution, and storage infrastructure
 - Provides business support for reuse enterprises
- Seen as a replicable model for other material streams (e.g., organics, electronics).

3–5 Year Goals:

- Develop infrastructure for reuse, remanufacturing, repair, and recycling.
- Establish a cross-sector working group for implementation.
- Expand markets for reused materials.
- Replace planned obsolescence with durable, repairable products.
- Create new funding mechanisms.
- Advocate for local policies supporting circular practices.
- Develop education and workforce programs.
- Promote materials innovation (e.g., panelized biomaterials).

Key Implementation Strategies

- Establish a Coordinating Working Group to guide implementation and prevent silos.
- Create Collaboration Platforms—online tools and regular circular economy summits (e.g., May 15 event).
- Launch Catalytic Projects—starting with the Reuse Innovation Center.
- Improve Marketing and Logistics:
 - Shared business services for circular enterprises.
 - Invest in materials brokering software (e.g., Rheaply, Orbit Exchange).
- Develop Funding Partnerships with county, state, and economic development agencies.
- Advocate for Supportive Policies

Discussion and Next Steps

- The plan/presentation was praised by the Board for making the circular economy actionable and tangible.
- A key question: What are the “quick wins”- to get momentum?
 - Recommended first step: Form a coordinating body to unify efforts and break work into manageable pieces, since intrinsically this is very complicated.
 - Discussion about the state organizations (Empire State Development-ESD) taking interest in circular economy – not just DEC.
 - Integrate findings into Ulster County’s 10-year Solid Waste Management Plan.

Further Discussions:

- Building Code Challenges: International Code Council (ICC) codes do not recognize reused structural materials, creating perceived risk.
 - Advocacy underway to include salvaged structural lumber in ICC codes.
 - New York advocates plan to attend a hearing in Hartford, CT (April) on proposed changes.
 - Precedent: Tiny house provisions added to 2025 ICC code—shows rapid change is possible with organized advocacy.
- A Board member raised concerns about economic impact on private waste haulers whose revenue depends on disposal of waste. Is there a way to bring them into the fold?

- Transition to reuse could threaten tipping fee income, potentially causing resistance.
- Shift can be reframed as opportunity:
 - Haulers can save through cost avoidance (avoiding tipping fees).
 - Example: Curbside collection of reusable goods for donation to The RIC generates value.
- Some major companies are already adapting:
 - Waste Management: Runs curbside reuse programs.
 - Casella: Invested in Circular Economy School at University of Vermont.
 - Past hauler roundtable was under-communicated; continued engagement is essential to build trust and co-develop solutions.
- A member from the public with textile warehousing experience inquired about feasibility of a textile recycling facility in southern Ulster County, focused on mechanical recycling (e.g., shredding into padding).
 - Challenges: High labor costs, taxes, and regulations in New York vs. states like North Carolina.
 - But precedent exists: Reju, a chemical recycling plant, opened in Rochester.
 - emphasized interest in mechanical (not chemical) recycling due to potential community concerns.

GENERAL REPORTS

➤ Committees and official meeting reports by Board Members

Chris Hurlbert Chair of the Zero Waste Committee (ZWC) provided the rest of the board with a status update for the first ZWC meeting on March 19, 2026 at 6PM:

- The first ZWC meeting of the year was held with strong alignment among members and no major disagreements.
- 2025 diversion data showed a decline in materials (like cardboard-OCC) diversion- however upon discussion and further look into the data, it can be interpreted positively as upstream reduction- in other words more items are being reused before hitting the floors to be recycled/reused.
- ZWC plans to add up to three community members in non-voting advisory roles.
- Meeting frequency will stabilize to every 6–8 weeks.
- Public comment focused on the NRG proposal and Zero Waste Implementation Plan, echoing prior concerns.

Mike Baden Chair of the Audit Committee provided the rest of the board with a status update for the first Audit Committee meeting which was right before the RBM on March 26, 2026 at 5:15PM

- The external audit was clean, with no findings, and auditors praised Tim's financial reporting as highly accurate.
- Despite strong performance, a growing financial gap was highlighted: expenses are rising faster than revenues, even with adjusted tipping fees.
- A 10-year trend (pages 61–63) illustrates this imbalance.
- Auditors expressed support for a dedicated county property tax fund, though acknowledged political hurdles.

James Gordon, Chair then stated he attended a lobbying effort at the State yesterday to get the governor to not

change the CLCPA (Climate Leadership & Community Protection Act).

- He stated that he had met and spoke with a very knowledgeable person, about the Agency's programs and plans for implementation, such as RIC and RePOWER and zero waste, but that there is no funding
 - However, despite being knowledgeable this individual still failed to recognize the agency's financial constraints- and just repeated what James Gordon said to implement programs such as RIC/RePOWER-this conversation underscores a systemic issue: policymakers often assume program implementation without adequate funding; that there will be a lot of work ahead of the Agency when communicating their goals and mission to policymakers and the public.
- Marc Rider, Executive Director then highlighted that we *are* doing the RIC, RePOWER Plan as it is a part of our 10 year plan- and that for some reason there is a misunderstanding with some people that just because the Agency is moving forward with Global NRG, that the Agency is not also proceeding with Zero Waste plan. He mentioned that at some point the Board will likely need to adopt a resolution to officially adopt the Zero Waste Hierarchy -to reinforce agency priorities.

Erica Brown, the member liaison to the Recycling Oversight Committee (ROC) spoke to provide an update on when the next ROC meeting will be: **April 8, 2026 at 5PM.**

➤ **Recycling Program Update-Angelina Brandt, Director of Sustainability**

Angelina Brandt, Director of Sustainability provided the following updates:

- February 27 was National Straw Day, marked by giveaways of reusable utensils and bottles at the Agency's main office.
- Social media campaigns emphasized Valentine's Day themes, including battery recycling and e-greeting cards.
- The outreach team refined its strategy and offered to present it to board members upon request.
- Other than that, no other outreach events which is normal for this time of year.
- **NYSAR3 Legislative Advocacy Day (February 24, Albany):**
- Angelina Brandt represented the agency at NYSAR's Legislative Advocacy Day, attended by over 200 waste and recycling professionals.
- Key budget priorities advocated:
 - \$3.25 million for the NYS Center for Sustainable Materials Management
 - Increased state composting grants (\$5 million requested; executive budget proposes \$2.5 million)
 - Funding for reuse, repair, and deconstruction
- Legislative priorities included:
 - Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)
 - Bottle bill expansion
 - Mattress recycling EPR
 - "Right to Repair" legislation
- Angelina Brandt delivered a speech from a municipal perspective, and led two meetings with legislators alongside master composter-recycler volunteers.
- Both legislative chambers agreed on \$3.25 million for the Center, a positive sign.
- A sign-on letter urging full funding will be circulated

The Board did not have questions for the Director of Sustainability.

➤ **MSW Tonnage Report, Recycling Report, MRF Cost Center Analysis and the Treasurer's Report- Tim DeGraff, Director of Finance & Administration**

Tim DeGraff provided the following updates:

MSW Tonnage Report

Tim informed the Board that the full monthly reports (MSW, C&D, recycling) delayed until April due to reporting lags- but will catch up after April.

- January:
 - MSW: 61 tons over target
 - C&D: 924 tons under target
- February trends similar, attributed to:
 - Severe winter weather slowing construction and hauling
 - Broader economic slowdown
 - Regional trend confirmed via inter-county comparisons (e.g., La Mela in Ulster, Taylor in Orange) – there's a stop in building construction at the moment.
- A board member asked if C&D is not flow-controlled in Ulster County- the Executive Director confirmed. Only MSW is flow-controlled.

Recycling Tonnage Report and MRF Cost Center Analysis

Tim DeGraff noted 1 month of info is not much to go on, but with Recycling, there is similar trend:

- OCC (Old Corrugated Cardboard): Slight increase due to private hauler deliveries.
- Food Waste: Declining trend — from ~360 tons/month (Q1–Q3 2025) to ~230 tons (Q4); 241 tons in February, down from 318 in December.
- Glass: a board member asked if there is a reason for the sharp drop — Tim DeGraff responded that glass is “hit or miss” because the loads are generally really heavy; only two small boxes received in early February. Glass tends to ebb and flow as the year goes on.
- Wood Chips: a board member asked about wood chips; Tim DeGraff responded that volume dropped to zero due to no grinding services since fall 2024; backlog cleared previously, adding that some towns may now grind independently.

MRF Operations and Capital Planning

- January- similar trend to end of 2025; markets are still down
 - Net revenue: \$15,452
 - Personnel expenses: \$36,503
 - Operating expenses: \$16,038
 - Net loss: \$37,000
- Merchandising Revenue: Only \$21,403 — markets remain depressed.
 - Example: A plastic load sold for \$38,000 in January 2025; no such sale occurred this year.
 - Plastic Markets: One type (likely PET) now has negative value — cost of 4¢/lb to dispose, down from 20–40¢/lb.

- Agency is holding bales for market recovery, but storage is becoming constrained.
- Glass Processing: As of February, glass is being sent to Tomra at significantly lower costs.
- Profitability could have been achieved if favorable plastic markets had been accessible.
- Current tipping fee: \$86/ton, considered high but allows break-even operation.
- The MRF is ~20 years old (built early 2000s) and requires major upgrades; Approved capital plan includes:
 - Two new bailers: \$500,000 each (\$1 million total)
 - New glass breaker and in-feed belt
 - Total renovation cost: ~\$1.5 million

A board member had a question about why the Agency doesn't outsource getting rid of the materials:

- Discussion over continuing in-house sorting vs. outsourcing: Outsourcing to single-stream facilities like Republic Services would cost \$120/ton, \$34 more than current.
 - Agency's dual-stream system produces cleaner, more marketable recyclables
- Shifting to single-stream would require haulers to collect directly, eliminating agency's role at MRDCs — a major operational shift.
- County legislature intended recycling to be free for towns, creating resistance to charging fees.
- Even with dual-stream countywide, the agency would still lose ~\$40/ton due to high costs.
- Currently, agency receives only ~15% of county recyclables; most go through private haulers using single-stream.

Treasurer's Report

Tim DeGraff mentioned the audit report that includes all of the financial statements – per the auditor, the Agency received a clean audit with no findings, confirming that the agency is in a strong financial position despite potential future cautionary factors. Tim DeGraff first provided a recap for December's year-end report since he did not attend last month's Board Meeting:

- Revenue and Expenses: The report notes that volume is down, and revenue from the sale of recyclables has decreased. Conversely, recycling service fees on items like mattresses have increased (1:33:34 - 1:33:57).
- Budget Variances: The actual fuel surcharge was lower than the budgeted amount; however, it is expected to increase significantly in the coming month, potentially reaching 10-12% (1:33:59 - 1:34:28).
- Operating Revenue: For the month of January, the agency reported a net operating revenue of \$20,845 (1:38:11 - 1:38:13).
- Financial Reporting: The board was directed to the 'Letter of Transmittal,' 'Management Discussion and Analysis,' and the 'Statistical Section' of the financial/audit report for a clearer understanding of the agency's performance narratives and data (1:32:48 - 1:33:31); no need to read all of the footnotes.

Tim DeGraff then provided an update on the January's treasurer's report:

- Tonnage and Revenue: Tonnage for the month was noted as being down, impacting revenue. Specifically, the agency generated \$28,100 from the sale of recyclables, a figure lower than the previous year due to the absence of a large plastic sale that occurred in January of the prior year (1:36:56 - 1:37:11).

- **Personnel Expenses:** There was an observed increase in personnel expenses compared to the prior year. This was attributed to year-end accruals and the payment of federal and state unemployment taxes that are typically settled in January (1:37:11 - 1:37:43).
- **Maintenance and Operational Costs:** Composting operations expenses for January were \$4,514, significantly lower than the previous year because the agency did not have to replace the screener drum. Similarly, maintenance costs for the closed landfill were \$8,969, lower than the prior year because no major pump or panel replacements were required (1:37:43 - 1:38:11).
- **Net Financial Result:** After accounting for these factors, the agency reported a net operating revenue of \$20,845 for the month of January (1:38:11 - 1:38:13).

Mike Baden made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report for the record and Donna Egan seconded it. 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent.

Executive Director, Marc Rider Updates

Marc Rider provided his Executive Director Updates stating the following:

Composting Operations and Supply Challenges

- Severe compost shortage expected to deplete supply by mid-April, earlier than usual.
- **Causes:**
 - Organics Inc., source of ~two-thirds of food waste, has not fully resumed operations.
 - High demand: A Port Ewing landscaping customer took double last year's total; one customer removed 30 tons (possibly for resale).
- Current hauler limits: 25 tons/trip, max two trips, with exceptions during shortages.
- Marc Rider, Executive Director needs to review policy to confirm if he has the authority to further reduce limits, under certain circumstances.
- Past concerns about fair distribution and monopolization remain relevant, and the Agency continues to monitor that issue closely.
- Compost sold at \$40/ton (up from \$30), but supply issues risk missing spring planting season.
- Bagged compost is more profitable: \$250/ton (50 bags at \$5 each) vs. \$40 bulk.
- Bags are currently plastic due to cost and durability; compostable alternatives (\$10–12/bag) are too expensive and prone to degradation.
 - Future idea: Encourage customers to bring their own bags.
- **Outreach and Market Expansion:**
 - Interest in expanding compost sales to Home Depot or Lowe's, following Tim DeGraff's earlier vision.
 - Tim DeGraff recommends speaking with Greg Gelewski (Onondaga County) at the next Organic's Conference in April, who successfully scaled sales via wholesale distribution.
 - Exploring incentives for MRDCs to resume compost collection:
 - Provide bins
 - Support transport (without requiring on-site processing)
 - Address past barriers like cost and time
- **Upcoming Agency Events**
 - April 4th Agency resumes e-waste collection and bagged compost sales at Agency's Ulster Transfer Station
 - April 25th Agency will hold first Household Hazardous Waste Collection event at the New Paltz Transfer Station. Registration will tentatively begin April 1st.

- **Stakeholder Meetings**

- Feb 26 HVAQ Meeting- This meeting was well attended; Marc Rider presented “Together Toward Zero” Presentation and the Agency’s plans for the Global NRG project. There was robust discussion and they shared their concerns; Marc Rider stated he assured them that the Agency would take into consideration as the project progresses. HVAQ again requested that the Agency pause until the Legislature finishes their Zero Waste Plan; Marc Rider informed them that would be difficult given there is no timeline for a finalized plan.
- March 4-Energy and Environment- Gave a brief update which focused on the Agency’s upcoming events like E-waste and HHW collection.
- March 17-Town Supervisors Association- Gave similar updates to the EE meeting. Fielded questions about the spoke and hub programs for both compost and reuse.

- **Mattress Recycling Updates**

- After a slow start in January, as of March 14th the Agency recycled 642 mattresses (55 percent). The March percentage is roughly 75 percent, which is a great improvement.

The Board did not have any questions regarding the Executive Director Report.

RESOLUTIONS AND BOARD NOTIFICATIONS

- **Resolution #2673 Re: Authorizing and Approving Agency HRA and FSA Health Insurance Related Plans**

Mike Baden made a motion to approve Resolution #2673 and it was seconded by Chris Hurlbert.

The Board then had a discussion regarding the Resolution. Marc Rider first explained that under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), the Agency’s HRA and FSA plans needed to be updated:

- Required every 5 years or after major changes (e.g., retirees added in 2025).
- Resolution does not have financial impact, as it is just to provide updated information to employees and ensures compliance and audit readiness.
- Effective January 1, 2026, with delayed approval due to insurance renewal timing.
- Retroactive date ensures use of current documents; failure to approve risks non-compliance

A board member asked if the Insurance providers (MVP, Guardian) ever come to meet staff during open enrollment; Marc Rider confirmed they do give a presentation at the office and that there is an agency part-time staff that also supports these types of questions.

A vote was taken and Resolution #2673 was approved unanimously by the Board. 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent.

OLD (UNFINISHED) BUSINESS

Tim Weidemann provided the Board with a status update on the UCRRA Goals.

Strategic Planning and Performance Tracking

- Annual Goals Update submitted with audited financials by March 31 as part of ABO’s Mandatory PARIS Report.
- Used to review 2025 progress, assess Q1 2026, and guide director discussions.
- Mission roadmap visually links goals to mission, with objectives and KPIs beneath.
 - How are some of these tasks/goals measured? KPIs include both quantitative (e.g., MailChimp subscribers) and binary (“did it happen?”) metrics.
 - Some objectives (e.g., “mitigate odors”) are vague and hard to measure — acknowledged as a work in progress.
- Directors are refining goals; process is iterative and evolving.
- Currently, organizational goals are not tied to employee reviews, but future integration is expected.
- Goals are closely aligned with the Solid Waste Management Plan; updates will feed into its next revision.
- Stakeholder feedback is encouraged to improve clarity and measurability.

Timeline and Accountability

- April 1: One-on-one check-ins with directors to assess 2026 progress and adjust goals/KPIs.
- Summer 2026: Finalize 2027 goals for budget planning.
- June: Next major update expected.
- KPIs assigned to specific directors, though not detailed here due to overlapping responsibilities.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (if necessary)

The Board did not enter executive session as an executive session was not necessary for this meeting.

ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn March 26, 2026, Regular Board Meeting at **8:18 PM** was made by Mike Baden and it was seconded by Erica Brown. 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 Absent.

April 23, 2026

Motion to approve the above transcribed Minutes of March 26, 2026 Regular Board Meeting was made by _____, seconded by _____.
_____ in favor, _____ opposed, _____ absent.

The Minutes were approved by the Board.

Transcribed by: Nancy Lam, Esq., Agency Counsel, Secretary.

Signatures:

James Gordon, Chair

DRAFT