

**ULSTER COUNTY RESOURCE RECOVERY AGENCY
ZERO WASTE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

March 19, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Meeting End Time: 7:14 PM

The Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency held the Zero Waste Committee (ZWC) Meeting at the Agency’s Main Office, 999 Flatbush Road, Kingston, NY and live streamed on Youtube.com @UCRRA5008.

Chris Hurlbert, ZWC Chair, called to order the first ZWC Meeting of the year at 6:00 PM. He began by providing an update on what he envisioned were the goals of the ZWC and the role the ZWC plays in conjunction with the Regular Board. He stated that the ZWC is advisory in nature only and does not have decision-making authority.

The primary functions are to:

- Enhance transparency and public understanding of county waste programs and other initiatives that help the county towards a zero-waste future
- Serve as a conduit for community input, questions and recommendations to the full board (upon majority consensus of the ZWC members)
- Facilitate discussion on zero waste strategies and prepare recommendations to the full board, (upon majority consensus of the ZWC members)
- 3 appointed ZWC Board members will have authority to approve agendas and minutes

ROLL CALL

Committee Members

Chris Hurlbert (Chair)	<u> x </u>
Donna Egan	<u> x (remotely) </u>
Erica Brown	<u> x </u>

Agency Staff

Marc Rider	<u> x </u>
Angelina Brandt	<u> x </u>
Nancy Lam	<u> x </u>
Kevin Treutler	<u> x </u>

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Committee agreed to accept the Agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT

At the beginning of the meeting, nobody was present from the public to provide public comment. See below for details regarding public comment during the middle of the meeting, when a member of the public joined the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Minutes of December 11, 2025 Zero Waste Committee Meeting

Erica Brown made a motion to approve Minutes and it was seconded by Chris Hurlbert. 3 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 absent. (Egan remote)

After the approval of the minutes, Chair Chris Hurlbert handed over the meeting to Marc Rider, Executive Director who provided a presentation on UCRRA Zero Waste Portfolio Update and 2025 Diversion Results.

PRESENTATION:

- **UCRRA Zero Waste Portfolio Update, Marc Rider, Executive Director**

Marc Rider, Executive Director provides an overview of the Agency’s programs and projects related to Zero Waste, since the next item of business is reviewing the results of the County and Agency’s diversion statistics for 2025 (i.e. what is diverted from the transfer station floors) and the Agency’s zero waste portfolio:

2024 Waste Diversion Data (County-Level):

- Agency as a “planning unit” (11:15 - 12:10): Total waste managed in Ulster County: **293,395 tons**
 - **60% landfilled, 32% recycled, 6.4% composted, 1.2% reused.**
 - **40% diversion rate** – county wide - exceeding short-term **30%** by 2030 target

A Committee Member had a question about the item in the chart labeled “Other Waste”. Marc Rider explained that the “Other waste” includes textiles, e-waste, and materials from drop-off sites. Angelina Brandt, Director of Sustainability also provided additional context and said that for the Agency’s waste report, the Agency has requested businesses to provide additional information of other reuse items that they’ve capture that was not mentioned in the main categories, so businesses have provided more granular information (i.e. clothing donation, wood pallet reuse, hanger recycling), which she is happy to share with the Committee if interested. Another question asked by a committee member was how source-separated organics are reused; Marc Rider answered some uses include: animal feed, food donation.

- The data in contrast when viewing the Agency as a “waste & recycling handler” (Recording 14:38 - 15:45):
 - Data only shows **10% diversion rate** at Agency-level compared to the 40%- county level as a planning unit. Marc Rider explains that the 30-60-90% goal needs to be for both the Agency as a planning unit and as a waste/recycling handler. The point to keep in mind is that it is often times more difficult to recycle the items the Agency receives.
 - **Landfill: 90%; Regulated Recyclables: 2.9%; Composting: 6.9%** (including food waste, yard waste, and biosolids); **Reuse: 0%** (currently, though this is expected to increase with future projects- also a point to keep in mind: if more items are being reused/recycled before they even get to the Agency, the numbers will be of course lower) (15:05).

A committee member had a question about capturing Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) data. Marc Rider answered that the Agency is not permitted to collect HHW; however Charlie Whittaker, the Director of Operation does a good job managing that at the base. Angelina Brandt also provided further context.

Capital Projects and Zero Waste Initiatives

Marc Rider then continued to provide an update regarding the main capital projects that deal specifically with zero waste initiatives:

- **Mattress Recycling Program** (19:00, 52:48 - 1:01:00) The mattress recycling program, active since January, showed a significant increase in diversion rates.
 - **January:** 47% of mattresses received were recycled (53:08).
 - **February:** 50% of mattresses received were recycled (59:30).
 - **March (first two weeks):** 72% to 78% diversion rate (55:53).
 - Status: Complete: Equipment ordered; one roof component delayed due to tariffs and weather.

- Challenges include contamination (bed bugs, mold) and past exclusion of box springs from recycling.
 - Approximately 12,000 mattresses discarded annually countywide; ~10,000 come to main facility, ~2,000 go to New Paltz site (not recycled- but the plan is to do so in the future).
 - Angelina Brandt also clarified some questions the Committee members had regarding the percentage of mattresses being captured by the Agency; She stated that because of flow control laws, a vast majority of the mattresses are coming to the Agency because it is considered MSW; Some mattresses are diverted outside tracking via manufacturer take-back programs (e.g., Serta).
- **Secondary Diversion Building:** (Recording: 19:56)
- Status: In planning, currently low priority.
 - Delayed due to pending permit renewal (submitted Oct 2025, expires Apr 2026); agency avoiding permit modifications during renewal process.
 - Purpose: Divert bulky waste, furniture, reusable goods to boost reuse rates when built.
- **RePOWER Project**
- Status: In procurement phase.
 - Contract with Big Reuse expected for review in April 2026; hopefully they can also come by to present
 - Full implementation expected by Q4 2026, with impacts noticeable in 2027.
 - Will integrate textile recycling and energy recovery components.
 - Big Reuse Partnership – Site Selection: Seeking warehouse and retail space in Ulster County.
 - Six sites evaluated; none ideal
 - Some have retail potential (e.g., former Gander Mountain) but no warehousing- and vice versa; Others have space but require major capital investment.
 - Requirements still being finalized.
- **Compost Expansion** (Recording 22:44)
- Applying for Climate Smart Communities Grant.
 - No grant awarded yet; debrief with DEC scheduled for March 23, 2026 to explain why agency was not awarded CSC Grant in previous application
 - Agency may need to explore pilot programs with MRDCs in 2027 budget.

After Marc Rider concluded his overview of the main capital projects, he invited the Committee to ask questions about any of the Capital Project Plan items. One member asked about Alternative Tech Research & Study listed in the 2025 Capital Projects:

Marc Rider explained (Recording 24:06) that this Capital Project Plan was put together prior to the RFP going out for diversion; so that the original idea that there may be an alternative technology study/research done/pilot plan, eventually turned into the RFP; since it was integrated into new project planning, the standalone study is no longer needed, thus the status is marked as “Design”; Agency no longer required to spend \$150,000 in a planning document. Alternative tech research & study is unlikely needed if the Agency goes forward with Global NRG Project.

(Recording 27:52) One member asked about what the executive director thought about the City of Kingston Composting Program

- New voluntary curbside composting program launching spring 2026.

- City of Kingston will send compost to the agency.
- Seen as positive step for local diversion and potential volume boost.
- Model could be expanded to other towns in future.

Before Marc Rider continued with his presentation on 2025 Diversion Results, the Chair Chris Hurlbert allowed a member from the public who just entered the meeting to have an opportunity to make a public comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT (30:00)

Present at the ZWC meeting was 1 individual from the public, Tanya Garment (City of Kingston resident), who arrived late to the meeting and therefore was given an opportunity to provide public comment when she arrived during the middle of the ZWC Meeting. She stated that she hoped the Committee is really listening to what is happening with the anaerobic digestion project, referring to the project with Global NRG. She hopes that the Agency and Committee will have an independent evaluation of the anaerobic digestion beyond what the vendor claims (referring to the Global NRG). She stated her concerns about a need to develop a real, actionable zero-waste plan. She also raised her concerns about plastic recycling practices:

- She stated she is aware that Ulster County co-mingles plastics except for #1 and #2, leading to contamination
- She states there may be a viable market for #1 and #2 plastics and maybe #5 – although she doubts #5 anymore because of the comingling
- Co-mingling results in exporting non-recyclable plastics around the world- “pretend recycling”
- **Waste Stream Trends and Operational Insights, Marc Rider, Executive Director (Recording 31:11)**

Next, Marc Rider, Executive Director provided a presentation on 2025 Diversion Numbers, Waste Stream Trends (Recording 33:03 - 35:05) and Operational Insights; this is the first year the data is provided in tonnages instead of units:

- **Cardboard** (OC Mixed News): 125 tons.
- **Batteries**: 427 units (8.54 tons).
- **Clean Wood**: 142 tons.
- **Electronics (E-waste)**: E-waste numbers showed a decrease compared to the previous year (34:15).
- **Animal Mortality** (Deer): 15 tons, managed through the mortality composting facility (33:53 - 34:01).
- The Agency has a tarp deterrent/ tarp fee of \$5 per DEC. A couple members noted that the fee may be too low and thus not deterring customers from tarping.
- Trend overall tonnages down, partly due to colder weather.
- Food waste up at transfer station (compared to low 2024), but total organic diversion down due to loss of major generator to donation farms after temporary acceptance pause.
- E-waste down to ~24–25 tons despite rising electronics use;
- Freon appliances: 99 tons, slightly down; prior collection drive helped.
- Brush: Up; light iron: Down.
- Cardboard (OCC): Reduced from 190 to 125 tons — a positive trend indicating improved sorting upstream- Over 100 tons manually diverted by staff, avoiding landfill.

Marc Rider welcomed the Committee members to ask questions about the trends and numbers. One member asked if any of the Capital Projects would help effect the trends and numbers; Marc Rider guesses that with the Global NRG project, it is possible it would help with the trend; the numbers may go up, with the bag shredding and mixed waste facility.

On a related note, a Committee member asked whether it would be beneficial for the Agency to have any other type of collection event, similar to HHW and e-waste collection to help with diversion numbers. Marc Rider answered yes, he believes partnering with organizations like the Coolest Recycling Drive (collecting old refrigerant) or those types of programs that collect freon appliances. Angelina Brandt offered her insight and additional context with regard to diversion numbers - she stated that with regard to collection events, most customers generally are not recycling not because of negligence but convenience, for example e-waste collection is only on Saturdays. She stated she looks forward to seeing the numbers for textiles and cardboard go down as a trend. It is also important to note that if people are recycling from the start- before it even hits the floor- the numbers are going to be trending down overall, because it is less items that need to be diverted in the first place.

One member brought up their concern that UCRRA should expand the e-waste collection efforts, whether it be adding days of collection/ making it yearly collection, or helping the transfer stations improve their programs; she noted it should be the Agency's goal to look into these issues and try to solve the problem instead of just accepting the status quo. Marc Rider acknowledges the concern and provided additional information on how the Agency is looking to solve that issue with one of the capital project plans: the new on-site MRDC located here at the agency's facility- with the goal of it being a second diversion space to have possibly have an e-waste drop off location or HHW collection. Marc Rider stated that the previous Executive Director did try implementing a daily e-waste collection at the agency's facility, however it did not increase the e-waste number and resulted with lots of e-waste in the parking lot, and ultimately proved to not be a beneficial program for the residents. He stated the Agency is always evaluating these types of issues and looking to resolve these types of problems. The committee member made one final note that it's her understanding that other municipalities have daily e-waste collection programs that are successful and thus she asks the Agency to reconsider their suggestion.

(Recording 47:00) One member brought up the topics of Textiles and Tires as categories of waste that could be improved upon and referred the Committee to review last year's meeting minutes regarding presentations on textiles and tires. Marc Rider agrees that textile is an important topic and believes the RePOWER Project will help address textiles in a meaningful way (i.e. Big Reuse looking to set collection boxes throughout the county and even some town MRDCs; then partner with organization like RIZU that will do the recycling). The member made a final comment that there were a lot of town transfers station last year that were not doing textile or tire or scrap metal recycling; therefore, she advocated for stronger coordination with the transfer stations- for the agency to help improve the town's programs (Hub and Spoke Model). Marc Rider, Executive Director acknowledges the concerns and stated that notwithstanding the new town contracts, Angelina Brandt, Direct of Sustainability has done a lot of work in trying to improve the education and information that the Town transfer station receives to help them facilitate better programs. The Agency does not oversee or direct the transfer stations as they are operated by the Town; the Agency cannot force the towns to offer these specialty recycling services, but the Agency does make sure the towns are aware of these programs. Each 19 town transfer station has their own reason as to why or why not they are able to offer these specialty recycling programs. The Board member acknowledge the hard work Angelina Brandt and her team does for the Agency.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Committee Membership Discussion:** The Chair, Chris Hurlbert introduced a proposal to add one to three community members to the ZWC. These new community members would be able to recommend

agenda items, recommend guest speakers, ask relevant questions/propose relevant zero waste topics of discussions. The Committee had a thoughtful discussion regarding how the process would take place; whether the community member would have voting privileges (they would not); what type of qualifications the community member would have- overall there was a consensus that equity and representation are important factors when selecting community members to join the ZWC. (Recording 1:00:00)

Ideal qualifications of new members:

- Geographic and demographic diversity across Ulster County.
- Experience in zero waste, sustainability, or operations is preferred.
- Ability to participate constructively and contribute ideas.
- Local residents willing to attend meetings regularly (ideally quarterly or more).
- Capable of recommending speakers, suggesting agenda items, and sharing community insights.

Recruitment strategy:

- Contact ~10 past applicants for board roles (succession pipeline for the Board).
- Advertise through environmental groups, advocacy networks, and public channels (not invitation-only).

Application process:

- Submit CV/resume and cover letter.
- Conflict of interest review will be conducted.
- Keep process simple and accessible. The Chair will draft a job description/application to provide to the ZWC member

There was a question from a member of the Public regarding voting powers of the ZWC. The Board clarified that the ZWC, although there is a quorum of Board Members present, do not vote for anything on behalf of the full board. Again, the ZWC is advisory in nature only. The Chair of ZWC will provide his general updates to the Regular Board, of the happenings, discussions and status of ZWC Meetings, although it should be noted that the Minutes and Video recordings of the meetings will always be posted and available to the public. Nothing is ever being voted upon at the ZWC- (other than the 3 Committee members approving Minutes and Agenda); there will likely be a consensus between the 3 committee members on what types of discussions and recommendations should be made and brought to the Regular Board's attention. The Regular Board would still need to agree to add or address ZWC recommendation items to the Regular Board meeting agendas.

Meeting Frequency and Scheduling

Finally, the ZWC had a discussion regarding meeting frequency:

- Currently the ZWC Chair intends to meet quarterly, but is open to increasing frequency if agreed upon by the other members, such as every six weeks or every two months, cancelable if no urgent topics; or use of ad hoc meetings if needed; etc.
- Committee last year met monthly, but ended up meeting about 7–8 times for the year due to cancelation as needed.
- The committee agreed to establish predictable agreed upon meeting at next meeting- maybe set a yearly calendar.

ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn March 19, 2026, Zero Waste Committee Meeting at 7:14 PM was made by Erica Brown and seconded by Chris Hurlbert. 3 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent. (Egan remote)

May 21, 2026

Motion to approve the above transcribed Minutes of March 19, 2026 Zero Waste Committee Meeting was made by _____, seconded by _____. in favor, _____ opposed, _____ absent.

The Minutes were approved by the Board.

Transcribed by: Nancy Lam, Agency Counsel

Signatures:

Chris Hurlbert, Chair

DRAFT