

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

**May 21, 2026 at 5:00 PM
Meeting End Time: 7:00 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.

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> excused </u>
Nancy Lam	<u> x (remotely) </u>
Tim Weidemann	<u> x </u>
Kevin Treutler	<u> x </u>

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

After rollcall, the Chair led the body to recite the Pledge of Allegiance

PUBLIC COMMENT

Members of the public that were present at the ZWC were: Michael Berardi, Manna Jo Greene, Claudia Joseph, Penny Coleman.

Manna Jo Greene, stated she hopes that we can actually do a zero waste implementation plan (including costs, timeline etc) that coordinates with the work that the Agency is doing, including the guidance document which she understands is due out soon.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Erica Brown made approve the Agenda. It was Seconded by Chris Hurlbert.

Marc Rider, Executive Director proposed to move, under NEW BUSINESS the "Preliminary Zero Waste Plan Discussion" before the "Community Member Application Discussion".

Erica Brown moved to amend the Agenda as discussed, and Chris Hurlbert seconded the motion.
3 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent. (Egan remote)

A vote was taken to approve the Agenda as amended. The Agenda as amended was approved: 3 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent. (Egan remote)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Minutes of March 26, 2026 Zero Waste Committee Meeting

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

COMMUNICATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next ZWC Meeting will be held on **July 9, 2026 at 5pm**

PRESENTATION:

- None.

UPDATES

- **Year To Date (YTD) Materials recovery update:** Marc Rider, Executive Director provided YTD Materials recovery update. Marc asked the Director of Operations, Charlie Whittaker to prepare some information regarding the materials recovery update—based on the information provided, he noted that overall volumes and diversion are down compared to the prior year due to reduced waste intake.
 - Key trends include:
 - Deer mortality compost up by nearly one ton, reflecting increased roadkill composting.
 - E-waste diversion from tipping floors- up by four tons (~25% increase), primarily from commercial cleanouts and roll-off activities.
 - Organic and woody materials (brush, clean wood, chips) remain major contributors to landfill diversion, sent directly to compost facilities rather than from tipping floor.
 - Construction and demolition debris (e.g., concrete, rubble) continues as a stable diversion stream.
 - Metal recovery varies: aluminum and copper are stable, but scrap metal has declined due to reduced construction activity.
 - Specialty recycling programs (tires, fluorescent lamps, batteries, propane tanks) show consistent compliance.
 - Mattress was not listed last year- this year, through our program, we've diverted 1,905 units, but is currently paused due to critical operational issues.
 - Vendor switched from box trucks to trailers, which now sit for 6–7 days before pickup.
 - 99% of recent loads had to be landfilled due to mold growth, despite being mold-free at loading.
 - Photos confirm mold presence, attributed to moisture buildup in sealed trailers with poor airflow; mold can develop in 36–48 hours, especially in warm or humid conditions.
 - Next steps include a scheduled meeting with the vendor on June 3rd to demand faster pickup (within 24–48 hours) and explore the need for a drying area or improved staging.
 - Financial concerns persist:
 - Cost: \$20 per mattress (~\$800–\$900 per ton), versus \$105 per ton to landfill.
 - Revenue comes from tipping fees (\$10 per mattress plus \$20 minimum), but current fees may not cover costs.
 - A fee increase to \$20 per mattress is under consideration.
 - Tire Recycling
 - Tires are legally prohibited from landfilling and must be recycled. Residents may bring tires incidentally with loads, which are sent to a vendor that recycles it (Casings).
 - Committee Member raised some Concerns with regard to Tire recycling:

- No dedicated tire drop-off container, leading staff to manually pull tires from waste—creating inefficiency and safety risks.
 - High volume of tires in the waste stream with limited infrastructure.
- Questions that came up regarding tire recycling:
 - What is our recycling cost for recycling tires?
 - Do we pay per unit or per weight/ton for recycling?
 - Uncertainty about whether vendor burns tires, raising regulatory and environmental concerns.
 - A recommendation to ask UCRRA staff to research if Casings does burn tires—and if so, if there are other options—cost benefit analysis for alternatives.
- While some tire recycling produces chip rubber for playgrounds or athletic turf, these alternatives may not be environmentally superior.
- **Zero Waste Projects/Programs Updates:** Marc Rider provided the following programs/projects updates:

RePOWER Project Site Selection:

- The RePOWER Project seeks a site for a combined retail, repair, and processing facility focused on reuse and waste diversion.:
 - Saugerties (former Big Lots/McGrath): Offers 28,000 sq ft, mostly retail-suited, with limited space for processing and furniture repair. Its remote location reduces accessibility- Not a good option
- Split-function model: Retail in one location, warehousing/processing in another— limited by logistical complexity-- this would defeat the whole purpose of a hub and spoke model.
- Collaborating with another county- also not a workable model- the logistics would cause the program to be a different program/ and not fulfill the Agency's goals for the project, which is to divert waste from Ulster County.
- Discussion regarding other explored sites that were rejected:
 - Tech City West Campus: Proposed for a broader “circular economy campus” with workforce development, but delayed by ownership issues (foreclosure).
 - Party City, former Burlington Coat factory: Owners rejected proposals.
 - Ulster Lighting Building (Cornell Street): Environmental concerns (groundwater issues) and high renovation costs make it unviable.

Global NRG Project:

- The Global NRG Project's anaerobic digestion component faces significant hurdles:
 - Adds ~\$50 million to project costs.
 - Raises feedstock costs to ~\$145/ton.
- Good news: preliminary tests from Spain facility show low heavy metal content; PFAS testing results pending (1–2 weeks).
- If the organic fraction (from thermal hydrolysis of mixed waste) tests clean, two main options exist:
 - Option 1: Build a mixed waste processing facility (~\$95/ton) without on-site anaerobic digestion. The organic fraction (20% recyclables, 50% organic waste) could be:
 - Sent to existing anaerobic digesters elsewhere in NY (limited availability).
 - Sent to wastewater treatment plants (less desirable).
 - Option 2: Build a 50,000-ton composting facility—significantly cheaper than anaerobic digestion.

- A member from the public will share a contact from the Atlanta airport project who shared successful models of digestate land application with strict safety controls. Emphasis is placed on proper curing, testing, and avoiding mixing with existing compost streams
- Discussion with the Public regarding Soil Amendment with regard to Option 2 composting facility:
 - The material produced from organic processing is a soil amendment, not a soil replacement, designed to improve soil texture and condition. It is emphasized that the term soil amendment must be used—this is not compost or topsoil. It could be used for municipal rebuilding projects, especially in response to climate change impacts.
- A question was raised regarding quality of the thermal hydrolysis by-product than the compost/by-product from, for example Delaware County's MSW composting program. Marc Rider stated that the proposed process in Ulster County includes thermal hydrolysis, which enhances pathogen destruction and material consistency, which aims to yield a slightly higher quality or cleaner soil amendment; but he also stated that he imagines Delaware County also uses a process that scientifically yields compost, so as not to disparage Delaware County's program – he cannot say one way or the other.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Preliminary Zero Waste Implementation Plan Discussion:**

The committee began developing a preliminary zero waste implementation plan for Ulster County, intended as a practical advisory framework to inform the next Local Solid Waste Management Plan. Goals align with state targets:

- 30% diversion by 2030
- 60% by 2040
- 90% by 2050

The effort will involve the ZWC, up to three or four new public committee members, a county legislative representative (Chris Hewitt), and potential input from the Town Supervisors Committee. Public engagement and transparency are emphasized.

The Chair proposed framework includes nine key sections to focus on:

1. **Current System Diagnosis** – Assessment of existing waste systems.
2. **Zero Waste Vision** – Definition and localized targets.
3. **Initiatives** – Ongoing programs and new recommendations.
4. **Phased Implementation** – Short- and long-term rollout aligned with capital planning.
5. **Funding and Finance Roadmap** – Collaborative models across towns, county, and agency.
6. **Governance and Decision-Making** – Joint structures across jurisdictions.
7. **Metrics, Dashboards, and Reporting** – Tracking progress toward goals.
8. **Integration with Local Solid Waste Management Plan** – Mapping recommendations into future planning.
9. **Resolutions and Next Steps** – Immediate county actions and tactics.

A draft is targeted for the November meeting, though flexibility exists due to limited remaining meetings. Concerns were raised about the aggressive timeline and feasibility of a volunteer committee producing a technically robust plan. Marc Rider reminded the Committee that because the Committee is not the full board,

emails can be exchanged more informally and do not have to abide by the strict Open Meetings Law with regard to certain governance rules. Furthermore, additional meetings can be added/ sub-committees can be created to tackle certain issues. A question came up regarding the Legislature's guidance document being developed by MSW Consultants, specifically the concern if there will be a divergence in ZWC's document. Chair noted that this document is an interim document- a bridge to the Local Solid Waste Management Plan.

- **Committee Membership Discussion:**

Chris Hurlbert explained that the Committee is looking for community member candidates who can add value and bring practical experience to the Committee regarding zero waste initiatives. He further stated that he wanted to be absolutely transparent with regard to how the committee will choose the community member(s)—however, the Committee will likely go into executive session to discuss background and experiences of the candidates—and then come out of executive session to announce the Committee's proposed community member(s); the proposed community members will then be recommended to the full board at the regular board meeting, and the full board will then have to vote on whether to appoint the community members through a resolution.

Chris Hurlbert motioned for the Committee to enter executive session to discuss the qualifications of several candidates for the position of community member to the ZWC. It was seconded by Erica Brown. The Committee entered executive session at 6:22PM.

Erica Brown motioned to exit executive session and Chris Hurlbert Seconded. The Committee exited executive session at around 6:58PM. No executive decisions were made during the executive session, furthermore, the ZWC is advisory in nature.

Chris Hurlbert stated that after a fruitful discussion regarding the various candidates' backgrounds, the Committee is going to recommend to the full board to bring on 4 community members on the ZWC for the rest of the year:

- 1) Claudia Joseph
- 2) Manna Jo Greene
- 3) Rebecca Martin
- 4) Shabazz Jackson

Chris Hurlbert will reach out to the individuals to let them know.

ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn May 21, 2026, Zero Waste Committee Meeting at 7:00 PM was made by Chris Hurlbert and seconded by Erica Brown. 3 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent. (Egan remote)

July 9, 2026

Motion to approve the above transcribed Minutes of May 21, 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