



**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
INDIAN RIVER COUNTY FLORIDA**

**SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL
DISTRICT MEETING MINUTES**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2024 - 1:00 PM

**Commission Chambers
Indian River County Administration Complex
1801 27th Street, Building A
Vero Beach, Florida, 32960-3388
www.indianriver.gov**

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Susan Adams, District 1, Chairman
Joseph Flescher, District 2, Vice Chairman
Joseph H. Earman, District 3
Deryl Loar, District 4
Laura Moss, District 5

John A. Titkanich, Jr., County Administrator
William K. DeBaal, County Attorney
Ryan L. Butler, Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller

**SPECIAL CALL MEETING
SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL DISTRICT**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the District Board of Commissioners for the Solid Waste Disposal District (SWDD) was called to order at 1:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

All members of the Board were present

2.A. A MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION FOR FIRST RESPONDERS AND MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES

2.B. INVOCATION

Commissioner Susan Adams, Chairman

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

John A. Titkanich, County Administrator

4. RULES OF CONDUCT

County Attorney Bill DeBaal stated today's workshop was an informal meeting and provided the rules on speaking, noting everyone will be given the opportunity to be heard.

5. STAFF / CONSULTANT PRESENTATION

The Chairman turned the meeting over to Himanshu Mehta, Managing Director of the SWDD. In his PowerPoint Presentation called Solid Waste & Recyclables Collection Services Franchise (RFP#2024020), a copy of which is on file in the Office of the Clerk to the Board, Mr. Mehta stated the purpose of the workshop was to present the options being considered for garbage, recycling, yard waste and bulk collection in the unincorporated area of the County, and to obtain public input. He indicated 87,000 postcards were sent out to the residents in the unincorporated area of the County that list the residential service options. He stated no Board decisions would be made at this workshop and that there would be no impact on Customer Convenience Centers, noting it was a separate contract. He informed the Board that the services would be effective as of October 1, 2025.

Mr. Mehta continued with his PowerPoint Presentation and explained the difference between "subscription service" (the current service) and "universal service", noting all residents in the unincorporated area of Indian River County would be opted-in and the SWDD would collect the costs for these services through a non-ad valorem assessment. He mentioned there was an option for carted yard waste where residents would receive a 96-gallon cart to place their yard waste with both "subscription" and "universal" services and an option to downsize to a smaller cart. For those with excessive bulk/yard waste, they could either purchase up to four additional carts per residence or utilize the on-call bulk pick-up. He pointed out the benefit of carted yard waste to the customer was a lower price as the haulers no longer would need additional workers on the back of the truck therefore reducing their costs, liability, and increasing efficiency.

Mr. Mehta reviewed the RFP objectives and detailed a timeline of the process, noting a second public meeting would be held sometime in April and a third public meeting in either May or June to award the contract. He stated the County took all feedback to heart in regard to the current hauler from the last 10 years and looked at what could be improved upon when developing the RFP; this included benefits to the community, and supplemental services such as cart cleaning, additional carts, and excessive bulk/yard waste pickup.

Bethany Jewell Gray, Consultant with Kessler Consulting, Inc., who assisted in the procurement process for collection services, discussed the industry impacts on the RFP such as the trend to automated collection (current system), labor shifts/shortages, manufacturing delays for equipment and replacement parts, and technology advancements. She mentioned some of the factors for the increase in the cost of services were labor wages and benefits, truck and equipment costs, fuel costs, and inflation. She displayed a comparison of rates among other communities and expressed caution when comparing the current County's very low and competitive rates to another community's rates due to the differences in the level of services provided and contract terms. She reiterated the Franchise Agreement for the unincorporated area of Indian River County was nearing the end of its 10-year contract and advised there would be an increase in the cost for services.

Ms. Gray went over the RFP Options and pointed out the reasoning for considering “universal services” was the possibility that it may help minimize cost increases. She mentioned with either “subscription service” or “universal service”, there was an option for non-carted yard waste (current system) or carted yard waste. She emphasized the selection committee was trying to keep the cost increases to a minimum, improve collection system efficiency, and consider community aesthetics with carted yard waste collection.

Ms. Jennifer Hyde, Purchasing Manager, reviewed evaluation criteria in the RFP and then displayed a chart of the preliminary ranking of proposals by the selection committee, and explained the cost difference of the various options. She pointed out the range of proposals included all five of the responsive proposals received and reminded that the costs were in the preliminary stage of evaluations and subject to change during negotiations.

6. SWDD BOARD COMMENTS / QUESTIONS

Chairman Adams asked if the Board had any questions, comments, and concerns for staff. In response to a question by Commissioner Loar, Mr. Mehta stated the surrounding counties and municipalities had gone to “universal service” while the unincorporated area of Indian River County and the City of Fellsmere currently had “subscription service”. He believed that “universal service” would reduce illegal dumping and there would be a savings to the taxpayer.

Vice Chairman Flescher inquired on the percentage of individuals within the unincorporated area of Indian River County utilizing the current “subscription service”. Mr. Mehta replied that based on reports, over 70% of the residents in the unincorporated area of the County subscribe for garbage service. Mr. Mehta, in response to questions raised by Vice Chairman Flescher, brought up whether the Selection Committee’s recommendation included at the next meeting would be based on the current pricing received to date. Mr. Mehta stated it was the Selection Committee’s plan to come back to the Board with a recommendation for service within the next three to four weeks. After the Board made a decision on the option of service, the Selection Committee would then recommend that the Board allow them to negotiate with the top two or three firms for the contract with the goal of getting a reduced price.

For the record, Mr. Mehta stated that the Franchise Agreement was only for the collection of solid waste, bulk collection, and yard waste, and noted there was a separate Franchise Agreement for the Customer Convenience Centers.

Commissioner Earman received confirmation from Mr. Mehta that the County had “universal recycling service” throughout the unincorporated area of the County and the costs were included in the annual landfill assessment on the property tax bill. He brought up the challenges with recycling in terms of contamination. He reported that staff does audits in various communities looking for contaminants in the recycling carts and has issued warnings and at times pulled an individual’s cart. Commissioner Earman referred to the carted yard waste and asked if there would be a charge for additional yard waste. Mr. Mehta stated in the Franchise Agreement, one 96-gallon cart would be provided and homeowners would be able to purchase additional carts for a one-time cost and could purchase up to four carts per household; however, for excessive yard waste there was an optional service for the yard waste to be picked up in bulk at a cost borne by the resident.

Based on the comments and emails Commissioner Moss had received, she turned to Mr. Mehta and asked whether seasonal residents would be able to opt out seasonally with “universal service”. Mr. Mehta replied unfortunately no because the costs were implemented through the property tax bill.

County Attorney William DeBraal sought and received confirmation that the preliminary costs in the RFP bids were per month and wondered what percentage of recycling carts per week were contaminated. Sue Flak, SWDD Recycling Education Coordinator, responded over 55% and told the Board the recycling was taken to a facility in St. Lucie County where the recycling materials were sorted, baled, and sold. She stated out of five other counties, Indian River County had one of the lowest contamination rate of materials.

Chairman Adams, in response to the emails sent to the Board, received confirmation from Mr. Mehta that a person could purchase additional 96-gallon carts for yard waste for a total of four carts max per residence; however, if the Board did not go with carted yard waste there would still be a weekly yard waste limit of four cubic yards. She mentioned there were comments and emails stating residents wanted the County “to leave the current service the way it is”, with Mr. Mehta stating there was an Ordinance in place that stated Franchise agreements were limited to ten years max and emphasized the pricing provided by the haulers would start on October 1, 2025. She raised the issue relating to how those communities further out on dirt roads would be served. Mr. Mehta stated for the sub-standard roads that were designated by the Public Works Director, the County has required the haulers to provide smaller vehicles to handle those service areas.

7. PUBLIC INPUT

The Chairman opened the meeting for Public comment. The following individuals came forward to make comments or expressed their concerns.

Bob Auwaeter suggested the Board add an inflation adjustment clause to the hauler’s contract.

Tim Franklin inquired on post hurricane yard waste pickup and was in support of universal service.

Mary Pitman informed the Board of areas where the yard waste was piling up and was in support of universal service.

Nick Bianco brought up the issue of HOA’s that do not allow the bins to be stored outside of the property and there was barely enough room to fit two bins in the garage, let alone an additional bin for yard waste. He wanted to see a mechanism in the hauler’s contract for recourse if they destroy private property.

Lawrence Stygar stated the City of Sebastian went to “universal service”, a service he does not utilize and it was an added expense for those on fixed incomes.

Virginia Shelhamer was not in favor of carted yard waste and she felt the limits would create an additional burden on the convenience centers which on a regular basis stopped the intake of trash and yard waste due to the bins being full. She opined individuals from other counties were

utilizing the convenience centers and suggested implementing yearly passes in the amount of \$5.00.

Dennis Haddix stated he lives in Sebastian and was very pleased with the mandatory garbage pickup and spoke on how Waste Management collaborated with his current employer on trash and recycling pickup.

William Giffin expressed his displeasure with the County mandating someone to accept a service that they do not need.

Dave Jones wanted to keep the current “subscription service”. He inquired on the new contract terms, and discussed the difference in the rates between the “subscription service” and “universal service”.

Barbara Buhr lives at Blue Cypress Lake Fish camp and indicated there was not enough room on the roads to bring a small truck for door to door service. She also referred to a comment earlier in regard to individuals from other counties utilizing the convenience centers and she would much rather see them dispose of their garbage in one of those large containers than to dump it on the side of the road.

Moses Villalpado asked that the hauler granted the contract be easier to contact and would send out reminders of service changes due to holidays.

Judy Youngerman sought clarification on the proposed rates for “subscription service” and “universal service” and was not in favor of carted yard waste.

Marie Terranova lives in the City of Sebastian and gave her perspective on mandated garbage pickup.

Katherine Wegel came forward and told of her concern on the weight of the carted yard waste bin and the limited amount of yard waste it would hold.

Ron Ricci opined carted yard waste was not practicable with the palm leaves sticking up over the bins and would easily turn over on a windy day.

Margo Sudnykovich was not in favor of “universal service” and expressed her concern on mandating garbage pickup, especially for the farmers and seasonal residents.

John Schenck was pleased with the current “subscription service” and felt the carted yard waste could be a problem for those with large yards.

Jeff Bauer stated that he cleaned bins for a living and asked for the Board’s consideration when negotiating the new contract to address the age of the trucks and standardized routes.

Marjorie Royal expressed her concern on the size of the carted yard waste bins.

Steven Hughes received confirmation that the transfer stations would remain open.

Debbie Perez addressed the comments made by Mr. Bauer in regard to the standardized routes. She explained that WM could not run the garbage and recycling simultaneously because not everyone subscribes to trash pickup, while recycling is “universal”.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Mehta reviewed the next step moving forward and sought a date to hold the second public meeting for some time in April 2024. He stated that at the next public meeting, staff would be going over multi-family, commercial services, and other provisions of the contract. He announced the back door service for the disabled would still be available in the new franchise agreement.

There being no further business, the Chairman of the Solid Waste Disposal District Board adjourned the meeting at 3:10 p.m.