



Agenda Item 5.2

Minutes of December 18, 2013 Special Meeting

The Sonoma County Waste Management Agency met on December 18, 2013 at the City of Cotati "Cotati Room", 216 East School Street, Cotati, California

Present:

City of Cloverdale	Bob Cox
City of Cotati	Susan Harvey, Chair
City of Healdsburg	Jim Wood
City of Petaluma	Dan St. John
City of Rohnert Park	John McArthur
City of Santa Rosa	Jennifer Phillips
City of Sebastopol	Sue Kelly
City of Sonoma	Steve Barbose
County of Sonoma	Shirlee Zane
Town of Windsor	Debora Fudge

Staff Present:

Counsel	Janet Coleson
Staff	Patrick Carter
	Karina Chilcott
	Lisa Steinman
	Henry Mikus
Clerk	Rebecca Lankford

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:40 a.m. Board Members, Agency staff, and the audience introduced themselves.

Jim Wood, City of Healdsburg, arrived at 8:45 a.m.

2. Opening Remarks: Sherry Lund, Meeting Facilitator

3. Public Comments (items not on the agenda)

None

4. Ground Rules, Lund

Ms. Lund distributed and discussed the ground rules to be followed during this meeting.

5. Session Objectives

Ms. Lund discussed the objectives of the meeting. These were outlined as: laying out the critical path for the strategic plan, developing a vision for the future of services, and beginning to consider membership and funding options for continuing the Agency.

6. Themes from advance interviews and consultant observations

Ms. Lund noted that she had spoken with Agency Board members and Staff prior to the meeting. From these interviews Ms. Lund established that a common theme amongst the group is that everything seems to be related to everything and there are an abundance of distractions in achieving goals. Ms. Lund summarized her that in the interviews there are varying levels of frustration in making decisions as Agency board members, both elected and staff, are only a

fraction of the decision makers within their respective jurisdictions. Positively, Ms. Lund reported that the majority of board members do seem pleased with what the Agency has accomplished and understand the on-going need for the services which are rendered. Ms. Lund summarized the board members' interviews as saying most believe the Agency is a well functioning, well kept secret that neither the community nor other public officials are aware of.

Ms. Lund stated that she believe the sooner the options for continuing or not continuing the Agency are established and presented to the individual jurisdictions the better the opportunities and choices will be than if the issues are not addressed until closer to the JPA expiration date.

Ms. Lund expressed her belief that the structure of the Agency is unique, as most JPA's do not have a unanimous vote requirement. She noted that the structure of an organization may not necessarily make the organization work but it can impact its effectiveness.

7. Overview of the strategic planning process- the critical path

Ms. Lund explained how she foresees the strategic planning process occurring. She noted that the first session would include capturing what the values of the Agency are. The second meeting would consist of conversations regarding participation in the Agency, Agency funding, as well as examining decision making models of other JPA's. The third meeting would presumably take place after the viability of the Agency is clear. If the Agency is determined to be viable, jurisdictions continuing their participation in the JPA would meet to develop strategies and goals as well as to refine the language of the mission and mission values. If the Agency is determined to not be viable, the third meeting would be used to begin developing a three-year transition plan to closure.

Dan St. John, City of Petaluma, expressed concern regarding the number of sessions recommended. He noted he is unprepared at this time to commit to the amount of time suggested.

Ms. Lund stated she believed three sessions to be the minimum needed to successfully address and form a strategic plan for the Agency.

Susan Harvey, City of Cotati, Shirlee Zane, County of Sonoma, Steve Barbose, City of Sonoma, Sue Kelly, City of Sebastopol, Mr. St. John and Ms. Lund discussed the similarity and differences between the Solid Waste Advisory Group, which was made up solely of elected officials and the JPA Board, which consists of staff and elected officials. It was noted that information between SWAG members and JPA members regarding pertinent topics or issues may not have been exchanged or aligned.

8. Why the JPA formed in the first place

Ms. Lund noted from her review of the JPA Agreement that there appear to have been three key reasons for the development of the Agency: to respond to legislative mandates, to bring efficiency to the process, and regional consistency.

A discussion took place between Henry Mikus, Executive Director, and the Board members regarding the formation of the Agency. It was reiterated that the primary reason for the formation of the Agency was to facilitate the requirements of AB939 which set diversion rates and standards for local government. The Agency was formed to: respond to legislation, provide efficiency in achieving goals, provide regional consistency and provide primary services: composting, household hazardous waste collection, education, and regional reporting.

9. Level of satisfaction with Agency services/ service delivery to date

Ms. Lund posed the question to Board members "How do you feel the Agency has done so far?" and "What do you think the needs are for your community going forward?"

Ms. Harvey noted that she is impressed with the Agency's resonance with SWAG. She also noted her belief that when everything is working well nobody hears about it, but when things are not working well the issues seem magnified. Ms. Harvey also stated her support for the unanimous vote because it forces members work together towards solutions that work for everybody. Ms. Harvey sees the Agency going forward as it is an important resource for the entire County in regards to trash, diversion rates and providing a regional waste and diversion approach.

Ms. Kelly stated that she and the City of Sebastopol have been very satisfied with the services provided by the Agency. She believes that moving forward the Agency or something similar will be essential as small cities cannot provide adequate services or activities on their own. As unfunded legislation continues to be passed smaller cities are increasingly more dependent on the assistance provided by the Agency

Jim Wood, City of Healdsburg, stated that he believes the Agency provides a very good service and it cost effective. Mr. Wood is interested in knowing whether the Agency will remain compliance focused or if it will take on an advocacy role.

Mr. Barbose discussed his frustration with the seemingly last minute differences with the bag ban; however, he did acknowledge the need for the services that the Agency provides. Mr. Barbose noted that the Agency has dedicated staff, with years of experience and sub-specialties which would not be easily duplicated at the local level. Mr. Barbose expressed his desire for the Agency to more actively fulfill its role of regional planning in the future.

Ms. Zane noted her belief that the Agency and its programs have succeeded and provided services for its members. She noted that she is not satisfied with the understanding the public or the Board has of the Agency. Ms. Zane would like the Executive Director of the Agency to take on a visionary role in the years to come as well as an advocate of the Agency. She would also like for the Agency to learn and establish guidelines for making policy.

Jennifer Phillips, City of Santa Rosa, believes that the level of service provided by the Agency has met her community's expectations. She would like for the Agency to address the public perception that service delivery is easy. Going into the future Ms. Phillips wants the Agency to provide environmental leadership and have stature within the County and statewide; her current belief is that the perception is that we're following the tide, we are not frontrunners.

John McArthur, City of Rohnert Park, noted his belief that being environmental stewards and having a regional approach serves the best interests of the community. He does not think that the majority of community members know the Agency exists let alone clearly understands what the Agency does. In the future he would like to see a performance measure – some type of a report to the community. Mr. McArthur noted that it's hard to show value for what people take for granted.

Debora Fudge, Town of Windsor, stated that the Agency has met the needs of her community, based on a "no news is good news" understanding. Ms. Fudge noted she would like to see the Agency continue into the future. She believes that performance measures would allow board members to show their communities the worth of the Agency. In addition to performance measures Ms. Fudge would also like the Agency to become more simplified, including reports, documents, agreements, etc.

Bob Cox, City of Cloverdale, stated that the need for the Agency is paramount; noting that the Agency has allowed for the allocation of staff and funds to other city endeavors. For the future of the Agency, Mr. Cox stressed that members must continue to look to the future, the Agency should not become static; he also agreed with Ms. Fudge's desire to have Agency documents and reports simplified.

Mr. St. John expressed his belief that the Agency absolutely meets the needs to the community from an operational standpoint; however, not necessarily from a change management and planning standpoint. Mr. St. John noted his support for the concept of shared services but is curious to know if a JPA is the best means available when services could be contracted from the private sector. His focus for the future is to ensure consistency in the service levels via the JPA or an alternative means.

10. Vision of services desired for the future

Ms. Lund asked Mr. Mikus to present his vision and ideas for the Agency's future.

Mr. Mikus noted that the Agency is an operating entity, which directly affects the diversion goals which have been established. In order to meet increased diversion goals, Mr. Mikus stated, that operational services (Compost and HHW) must expand to meet the increased needs.

Mr. Mikus believes the educational component of the Agency must change from a primarily passive format, in which those who are interested in accessing the information may do so, to one where the audience is more actively pursued.

Mr. Mikus noted there are additional problem materials that he would like for the Agency to pursue policies on. These materials include: old medications, fluorescent bulbs, batteries, polystyrene and carpets; as well as materials that we may not be aware of currently.

Mr. Mikus also discussed changes to the Agency's fiscal policies for the future as well as the development of a financial plan. Specifically, Mr. Mikus would like to see the restriction that keeps money generated by the compost program within that program removed.

Board members, along with Mr. Mikus and Ms. Lund participated, in an extended dialogue pertaining to the vision of the Agency going forward.

Ms. Lund posed a question to the Board regarding whether reorganizing the governance structure of the JPA would aid in alleviating some of the difficulties which have been experienced. She suggested the idea of having two subgroups; one group made of elected officials to deal strictly with policy issues and another group made of staff to handle technical issues.

Elements identified during the conversation as important to the Agency's future were: expanding the Agency's role in policy and advocacy while continuing to strengthen service delivery; taking a leadership role in increasing diversion of waste streams that are currently unaddressed; supporting an overall environmental leadership role throughout the County and State; and pursuing new methods of education for both adults and children.

Other ideas, concepts, and issues pertaining to the future of the Agency which were addressed during the conversation include: the name of the Agency poses confusion amongst the community; there is a need for increased community engagement; Board members have varying levels of authority within their jurisdictions; it is currently unclear whether the Agency Board should be staffed to address policy needs or technical/ operational needs- a study conducted by the SWAG concluded that changing behavior is most effective by instituting policy and providing education; consideration should be given to the formation of a Stakeholders Advisory Group; convenience is an important aspect of diversion and recycling that should be addressed.

The technical sub-committee formed at the October 2013 Board Meeting will meet, with the inclusion of Mr. McArthur, to determine what steps need to be taken regarding the Compost Site Selection and then report to the Board its recommendations for moving forward.

Ms. Phillips left at 12:00 p.m.

11. JPA Analysis of Effectiveness of Services

Mr. Mikus provided a report addressing questions regarding the efficiency, chiefly economic efficiency, of the Agency. The Agency performed a comparison of other California local government entities to evaluate levels of service, costs, and fees. Mr. Mikus summarized that the Agency's expenditures per capita indicate the Agency is accomplishing its goals, better than other entities, with less money. Mr. Mikus also reported that the per capita disposal rate for Sonoma County is 3.5 lbs per person per day, while the state's target goal was nearly double at 7.1 lbs per person per day. Mr. Mikus presented several charts indicating Agency Program Costs by Jurisdiction, Jurisdiction Costs on their Own and Annual Education Cost + Grant Benefit per Resident as well as a Program Cost Comparison to Similar Jurisdictions.

12. Membership/ function options

Mr. Mikus addressed two questions which were posed to him by Ms. Lund prior to the meeting: What would happen if the Agency continued but not all of its current members chose to participate? How would the work if not all of its members wanted to participate in all of its programs?

Mr. Mikus reported that from the Agency's perspective the way in which the Compost Program is set up, it would be viable with or without all 10 current Agency members participating. HHW, Education and Planning/ Reporting are structured differently than Compost as they could experience a more drastic change. HHW services could continue but probably with an increased tip fee surcharge. Education could continue without all jurisdictions participating, however, regional consistency would be impacted. The Planning/ Reporting function of the Agency would likely be impacted the most by a reduced number of members due to the requirement for the Regional Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan.

13. Next steps and evaluation

Mr. Mikus will develop a scope of work, price, and duration for a consultant to assess Agency services and generate alternate options for delivery of services currently offered.

Previously identified Future Compost Site Technical Subcommittee to meet then update the Board regarding timetable, recommendations for moving the compost issue forward, and recommendations on the potential use of and membership of a stakeholder advisory group to help with the compost issue.

Ms. Lund indicated the next Strategic Planning Session will be a daylong session discussing: funding, participation and potentially decision making models used by other JPA's.

14. Boardmember Comments

None

15. Staff Comments

None

16. Next SCWMA meeting: January 15, 2014

17. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 P.M.

Submitted by
Rebecca Lankford