

## **Recycling & Corporate Affairs Committee Meeting Report December 2, 2025**

A meeting of the Recycling & Corporate Affairs Committee was held on Tuesday, December 2, 2025, at 1:00 P.M. at the Solid Waste Authority's Administrative Office in Conway, South Carolina. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, notices setting forth the date, time, and place of the meeting were mailed to the news media.

Present were Committee Chairman Pam J. Creech, and Committee Members Wayne Fox and Bo Ives. Board Chairman Robert J. Kemp, Board Member Dr. Albert G. Hayward, Board Member W. Norfleet Jones, Board Member Amos C. Berry, Executive Director Danny Knight, Assistant Executive Director Ed Marr, Division Directors Esther Murphy, Jan Bitting, Stephanie Todd and Richie Stetter, Trina Cooke and Monica Collier were in attendance. Amelia Wood represented the public in attendance. There were no members of the media in attendance.

Ms. Creech called the meeting to order and asked Mr. Ives to render the invocation. Mr. Fox led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Creech asked for any revisions to the Agenda as contained in the Agenda Packet; however, there were none.

**Mr. Ives moved to approve the Agenda as presented. There was a second by Mr. Fox and the Motion was carried.**

### **SWA Grants Update**

Mrs. Murphy reminded the Committee that the FY2026 Budget included \$50,000 in SWA Recycling Grant funding. She informed the group that the Grant Review Committee (Bitting, Knight, Marr, Murphy, Stetter and Todd) reviewed the eight (8) grants requests received from the following applicants:

**City of Conway** – Mrs. Murphy indicated that the City of Conway submitted a Recycling Grant application requesting \$10,000 in funding to purchase recycling roll-carts to supplement their existing curbside collection program. She stated the City had been replacing existing 18-gallon recycling bins with 65-gallon roll-carts that would be used as a part of the residential recycling program. She remarked that the City anticipates a 1-3% increase in recycling annually through the addition of these carts. Mrs. Murphy stated the Grant Review Committee recommended approval of this grant funding as requested.

**Coastal Carolina University** – Mrs. Murphy commented that Coastal Carolina University (CCU) submitted a Recycling Grant application requesting \$7,200 in funding to purchase compost bins and personal compost bins to enhance their food waste diversion program. She stated the bins would be placed in various facilities across campus and the personal bins would be distributed to faculty, staff and students to assist them in composting food scraps. Mrs. Murphy advised that since last year CCU had diverted over 600 pounds of food waste from the landfill. She stated the Grant Review Committee recommended approval of this grant funding as requested.

**Conway Architectural Salvage & Heritage Project** – Mrs. Murphy reminded the Committee that Conway Architectural Salvage & Heritage Project (CASHP) diverted used building materials away from landfills and thereby diverting this material from landfill disposal. She indicated CASHP was requesting \$9,850 in grant funding to assist with plumbing repairs and a survey in order to obtain a certificate of occupancy. Mrs. Murphy commented that after much consideration the Grant Review Committee determined that the project for which grant funding was being requested did not meet grant criteria to develop, enhance or expand recycling. She said over the years CASHP had diverted hundreds of tons of material from the landfill; however, the awarding of funding for this project would not affect or enhance CASHP’s ability to continue to recover and divert materials from landfill disposal.

**Conway Hospital** – Mrs. Murphy advised the Committee that Conway Hospital submitted a Recycling Grant application seeking \$7,860 in funding to implement a comprehensive commingle recycling program at it’s Residency Clinic in Conway and it’s Socastee facility. She said the funding requested would cover costs associated with site preparation, educational materials and the costs associated with obtaining an 8-yard recycling container and monthly service through the SWA recycling program. Mrs. Murphy informed the Committee that the grant application states costs associated with recurring expenses are not allowed under the grant; therefore, the funding request associated with covering the monthly container rental and service were not allowed. She indicated the Grant Review Committee deducted that portion of funding from the overall grant request and indicated the Committee recommended approval of \$5,000 in grant funding for site preparation and educational/marketing material contingent upon Conway Hospital securing containers and service in a recycling collection program.

**Eco-Activators Inc. dba Waste Lens** – Mrs. Murphy advised the Committee that Eco-Activators was a new business that had partnered with the City of Myrtle Beach’s Department of Public Works and the Innovation to develop a food waste hub-and-spoke pilot program to divert food waste from landfills. Mrs. Murphy explained the pilot uses digital/electronic bins to collect food waste from participants who can access the bins by means of specific codes. She indicated this system lessens the amount of contamination in the bin. Mrs. Murphy said the initial phase of the pilot program would begin on December 4, 2025, and would focus on businesses in the downtown Myrtle Beach area. She commented that the grant funding request in the amount of \$10,000 was being requested for a Phase 2 expansion in the Market Common residential area or other densely populated area of the City of Myrtle Beach. She stated funding would be used to purchase smart bins, countertop compost bins and to cover the monthly hauler costs to transport material to the SWA compost facility. As previously stated, Mrs. Murphy said costs associated with recurring expenses were not allowed; therefore, the funding request associated with covering the monthly container service was reduced from the overall grant funding request.

Mr. Ives was impressed with the concept and asked how often would the containers be serviced. Mrs. Murphy indicated she was unsure but said typically number of times a container was service was based on the level of usage of the container. Chairman Creech asked who would be picking up the material. Mrs. Murphy remarked that Smart Recycling, now known as Denali was the service provider listed in the grant application. She advised the Committee that the Grant Review Committee recommends approval of \$8,470 in grant funding for the purchase of the smart bins, countertop bins, liners and public outreach.

**Pee Dee Elementary School** – Mrs. Murphy reported that Pee Dee Elementary School submitted a Recycling Grant application in the amount of \$9,031.50 for the development of their project “Waste Not, Read More: A Digital Literacy & Sustainability Project”. Mrs. Murphy said Pee Dee Elementary as requesting grant funding to purchase laptop computers and associated licenses, digital hanging scales and platform scales. She explained the premise of the project would be to have 4<sup>th</sup> grade teachers utilize literacy-based lessons to teach children about sustainability, while students would use digital scales to track the weight of classroom trash and recyclables. Mrs. Murphy said the project aims to increase environmental responsibility through real-world projects. She indicated the grant application contained recurring costs associated with the licensing for the software, therefore, the funding request associated with the software licensing was deducted from the overall grant funding request. Mrs. Murphy indicated the Grant Review Committee recommends approval of \$8,737.50 in grant funding for the purchase of the laptops, adapters and scales.

Chairman Creech commented that she believed this was a great program for the students to learn and teach. She asked if the SWA would have access to the information generated through the project. Mrs. Murphy indicated the SWA would. Ms. Creech commented it would be very interesting to see the results.

Mr. Knight commented at how impressed he was with the overall application submitted by Pee Dee Elementary.

**Riverside Elementary School** – Mrs. Murphy commented that Riverside Elementary School was requesting funding to develop and implement the “Rewarding Recycling at Riverside” program. She stated through this program students would produce a video about what can and cannot be recycled and would share the video with all classes, grade levels kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Murphy said that subsequent to the video being shared, students would conduct random waste audits and educate their peers on items that were improperly disposed of. She said classrooms with the least amount of contamination in their recycling would be rewarded with recycled content prizes and refreshments and said one classroom per grade level per month would be recognized with the “golden recycling bin” for their efforts. Mrs. Murphy advised the Committee that funding in the amount \$741.14 was being requested to purchase grabbers, gloves, recycling bin, prizes and refreshments and indicated the Grant Review Committee recommended approval of this grant funding as requested.

**Town of Surfside Beach** – Mrs. Murphy stated the Town of Surfside Beach submitted a Recycling Grant application requesting \$10,000 in funding to purchase sixty (60) dual recycling bin stations. She stated the dual bins would be used to supplement the Town of Surfside Beach’s current beach recycling program. Mrs. Murphy said the Town of Surfside Beach would also update and purchase signage for the containers and would also include information about the program in their newsletter. She stated the Grant Review Committee recommended approval of this grant funding as requested.

Mrs. Murphy remarked to the Committee that grantees are required to complete and submit bi-monthly reports detailing the progress made on the project. In addition, she reminded the group that all grants are reimbursable with grant funds being reimbursed once receipts and documentation are received by the SWA to verify actual project costs and said only approved, allowable project expenses would be reimbursed. Mrs. Murphy also stated that equipment purchased through the

grant becomes the property of the organization; however, in the event the business ceases operations within one year of receipt of the grant, all equipment purchased through the grant will be returned to the SWA.

Mrs. Murphy remarked that with the exception of the submittal from Conway Architectural Salvage & Heritage Project, the Grant Review Committee found all other applications met the criteria set forth in the grant proposal. She commented that the total amount of grant funding being requested equals \$50,148.64 and the FY2026 Budget contains \$50,000 in grant funding. Mrs. Murphy stated the Grant Review Committee recommends approving the total of \$50,148.64 in grant funding as detailed above. She indicated that Mrs. Bitting indicated the overage of \$148.64 could be covered through the operating budget.

Chairman Creech commented that each application was interesting. Ms. Creech asked for clarification with regard to the City of Conway's replacement of the 18-gallon bin with 65-gallon bins. Mrs. Murphy stated the 18-gallon bin was being replaced with a 65-gallon roll-cart/pelican. Mr. Knight stated it has been proven that the roll-cart generates more recycling.

Chairman Creech expressed her pleasure at the number of grant applications received. Mr. Ives also commented on how pleased he was with the number and caliber of grant applications received. He commented on the great work that Conway Architectural Salvage & Heritage Project (CASHP) does and asked if they could possibly be recognized with funding based on their work. Mr. Ives stated he realized that their grant application did not meet criteria but was asking if there was any other funding that they could receive for their work in diverting recyclables from the landfill. He asked Mrs. Bitting if there were any budget categories that may work in this situation. Mrs. Bitting commented that there were not. Mrs. Murphy stated that CASHP could potentially be recognized as through the SWA's Spotlight on Environmental Awareness program. She stated this would not be a monetary recognition, but would publicly recognize them for their recycling and waste diversion efforts. Mr. Ives indicated that would be good and said he wanted to continue to encourage them and recognize them for their efforts. General discussion ensued.

**Mr. Ives moved that the Recycling & Corporate Affairs Committee recommend to the full Board of Directors approval of the grant applications submitted by the City of Conway - \$10,000; Coastal Carolina University - \$7,200; Conway Hospital - \$5,000; Eco-Activators - \$8,470; Pee Dee Elementary School - 8,737.50; Riverside Elementary School - \$741.14 and the Town of Surfside Beach - \$10,000; in the grand total amount of \$50,148.64, with the \$148.64 overage being covered through the operating budget.**

Mr. Knight discussed the possibility of a group having a great grant idea subsequent to the grant application process being completed. He asked if there could there be a way to bring the application to the Board to review it with a recommendation, as opposed to advising them the grant timeline had ended and they would have to apply the following year. He said that it would not be his preference to have someone wait another year, especially when it deals with food waste. He commented he has been advised there was a group looking into it and laying groundwork. Mr. Knight stated he would love to be a part of assisting such a group provide a food waste program that was beneficial. Ms. Creech stated that would be a great help.

### **Food Waste Recycling Program Update**

Mrs. Murphy stated since the inception of the Pilot Food Waste Recycling Program in December 2022, almost 30 tons of food waste material had been recycled. She reminded the group that the program began with one recycling center (Landfill) and has expanded to five centers, with Jackson Bluff being the last center added to the program. She stated when comparing the tonnage collected in January-October 2024 to January-October 2025 there was a 6% increase in the amount of food waste that was recycled in 2025.

Mrs. Murphy commented further comparison of the tonnage at each recycling center over the same period of time determined that the increase was due to the addition of the Jackson Bluff Recycling Center to the program. She stated the tonnage at each of the other centers as down in 2025, as compared to 2024 and said without the addition of the Jackson Bluff Recycling Center, overall tonnage would have been down 18.7%. Mrs. Murphy stated the success of the program at the Jackson Bluff Center is attributed to it being located in the midst of Coastal Carolina University, which has a very successful food waste composting program.

Mrs. Murphy advised the group that the Pilot Food Waste Recycling Program had been promoted in several manners, to include print advertising, social media advertising/reminders, food waste workshop, news stories, SWA newsletter, etc. She said in the fall of 2024, Recycling Coordinators Kendra Dickerson and Victoria Johnson visited each pilot food waste program recycling center multiple times, speaking to more than 500 individuals to promote the program and distributed approximately 135 kitchen counter food waste bins. She commented when the Jackson Bluff Center was added to the program, staff once again visited each of the food waste recycling centers on multiple occasions to promote the food waste recycling program, reaching more than 250 residents.

Mrs. Murphy commented that Denali (formerly Smart Recycling), had been the hauler for the program, since the beginning of the pilot. She advised that Denali had offered free and reduced hauling costs during the pilot and generally reviewed the cost of the program over the past four years. She stated that since 2022, the total cost expended on the food waste pilot program was approximately \$4,500, with 29.74 tons of food waste being collected.

Mrs. Murphy indicated she had discussed the possible continuance of the program with Horry County Government staff, in that this cost was one that they incur. She advised them that Denali had agreed to continue the program for another year at the cost of \$650 per month, to service the containers at five locations once per week and dispose of the food waste material at the SWA Food Waste Composting site. She advised that based on an estimation of 12 tons being collected in 2026, the projected net cost would be just over \$7,200, which equates to \$604.00 per ton.

Mrs. Murphy stated based on the increased cost and what seems to be a lack of interest from the residents to participate in the program, the County did not support continuing the program past December 31, 2025. She indicated had there been growth in the program the County may have been willing to continue another year. However, based on the increased costs and lack of growth their decision was to end the Pilot Food Waste Recycling Program, effective December 31, 2025.

Mr. Ives asked about the success of the food waste program in Horry County Schools. Mrs. Murphy responded that the amount of food waste being recycled through Horry County Schools had also decreased in recent years. She indicated there had been a small increase recently, due to

schools realizing the affects food waste diversion had on their ability to win the Talkin' Trash contest. General discussion ensue regarding possible ways to encourage more food waste recycling in schools. Mr. Ives suggested a potential concept "why not drop off something more than your children when you come to school – compost".

Mr. Knight commented he was surprised at the County's decision. He stated he could not recommend stopping the pilot program. Mr. Knight stated the SWA accepts oyster shells and Household Hazardous Waste at \$70,000 each year. Mr. Ives suggested dropping the pilot program at the centers and offering a location at the landfill for the public to bring food waste for composting. Mr. Knight indicated he would hope that Denali would have come in at a lesser fee or the same fee. He commented that staff could have additional conversations with Denali regarding the costs. Mr. Knight again stated he did not recommend stopping the program, whatsoever and at least continuing the program for an additional year. Ms. Creech asked Mrs. Murphy what she thought the County would say. Mrs. Murphy indicated she believed the County's decision was final. Mr. Knight stated he was recommending continuing the program with the SWA covering the cost for the next year. General discussion ensued regarding contacting Denali to further discuss the cost and potentially reaching out to the Horry County School District regarding food waste composting.

**Mr. Ives moved to recommend to the full Board of Directors that the Pilot Food Waste Recycling program continue through December 31, 2026, at the Landfill, Carolina Forest, Loris, McDowell Shortcut Recycling Centers and the Jackson Bluff Recycling Center, with the SWA covering all costs associated with the program. There was a second by Mr. Fox and the Motion was carried.**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:50 P.M.