

Recycling & Corporate Affairs Committee Meeting Report November 4, 2024

A meeting of the Recycling & Corporate Affairs Committee was held on Monday, November 4, 2024, at 3:00 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 W. Norfleet Jones, and Committee Members Amos C. Berry, Sr. and Wayne Fox. Board Chairman Robert J. Kemp, Board Member Pam J. Creech, Executive Director Danny Knight, Assistant Executive Director Ed Marr, Division Directors Esther Murphy and Stephanie Todd, UCS Manager Jamie Suggs, UCS Supervisor Cole Cox, Human Resource Manager Katherine Bell and Recycling Coordinator Kendra Dickerson were in attendance. There were no members of the public or media in attendance.

Mr. Jones called the meeting to order and asked Mr. Berry to render the invocation. Mr. Fox led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Jones asked for any revisions to the Agenda as contained in the Agenda Packet; however, there were none.

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

Recycling Grant Requests Recommendation

Mrs. Murphy reminded the Committee that the FY2025 Budget included \$50,000 in SWA Recycling Grant funding. She indicated information pertaining to the grant funding was advertised in local newspapers and forwarded to municipalities, schools and former grant applicants in August. She stated the following six (6) grant requests were received from the following applicants:

Burgess Elementary School – Mrs. Murphy advised the Committee that Burgess Elementary School submitted a Recycling Grant application in the amount of \$9525.00 for the purpose of purchasing a Book Vending Machine and books pertaining to recycling/environmental sustainability. She said the intent of the grant was to utilize the vending machine as a way to reward children with books about recycling, environmental awareness and sustainability, instead of using the standard rewards: trinkets, desks pets erasers, etc. which typically end up as waste in the landfill. Mrs. Murphy commented that Burgess Elementary School anticipates diverting 700 pounds of waste annually from landfill disposal through this grant.

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 for several years. Mrs. Murphy said through the grant the City would purchase approximately 200 additional 65-gallon roll-carts that would be used as a part of the residential recycling program. She remarked that the City anticipates a 2-5% increase in recycling annually through the addition of these carts.

Coastal Carolina University – Mrs. Murphy commented that Coastal Carolina University (CCU) submitted a Recycling Grant application requesting \$9,986.21 in funding to purchase a 6'x12' dump trailer with a mesh tarp to be able to increase their hauling capacity in daily operations. She stated the trailer would be used to haul food waste and cardboard from large events. Mrs. Murphy advised the group that CCU intends to utilize the trailer to support the Zero Waste Football initiative which had a 80% diversion rate this year and is anticipated to grow to a 90% diversion rate next year.

Conway Architectural Salvage & Heritage Project – Mrs. Murphy informed the Committee that Conway Architectural Salvage & Heritage Project (CASHP) was a 501(c)(3) organization located at the McIver-Shaw Lumber Company in Conway. She stated CASHP diverted used building materials away from landfills and thereby diverting this material from landfill disposal. Mrs. Murphy said over the years, CASHP had diverted hundreds of tons of material from the landfill. She indicated CASHP was requesting \$10,000 in grant funding to assist with structural repairs to the McIver-Shaw Lumber facility in order to process, store and resell reclaimed materials. Mrs. Murphy commented that through this grant CASHP was estimating to potentially recover, recycle and/or reuse approximately 100-200 tons of material monthly, when the facility was fully operational.

Spokes of Hope – Mrs. Murphy reminded the Committee that Spokes of Hope (SOH) was a local non-profit organization located in Longs that that offered assistance to those in need. She stated that SOH was requesting \$10,000 in grant funding to purchase shrink-wrap equipment and a portable fryer to enhance the Horry Eats program. She explained that the Horry Eats program captures and diverts food that was destined for landfill disposal to the 12% food insecure population of Horry County. Mrs. Murphy informed the group that the shrink-wrap equipment would be used to lessen the amount of time it takes SOH staff to prepare meals for distribution and thereby increase the amount of food being processed and diverted from disposal. She stated the portable fryer would increase the effectiveness of the mobile kitchen, again allowing SOH to utilize donated food and feed more of the Horry County food insecure. She informed the committee that between January 2024 through September 2024, SOP distributed an average of 2,250 pounds of food per week

Town of Surfside Beach – Mrs. Murphy stated the Town of Surfside Beach submitted a Recycling Grant application requesting \$10,000 in funding to purchase four (4) public dual recycling bin stations. She stated the dual bins would be used to supplement the Town of Surfside Beach's current public recycling program and would increase the current number of public dual recycling stations currently in operation at parks and on beaches. She said currently 10-20 tons of recyclables are being collected annually through the public dual bins and the Town anticipates an increase with the purchase of additional dual public recycling stations.

Mrs. Murphy remarked that each grant application met the designated criteria to receive a grant. She stated that inasmuch as the FY2025 Budget contained \$50,000 in grant funding, it was staff's recommendation that the funding be equally divided between the six applicants and recommended that Burgess Elementary School, City of Conway, Coastal Carolina University, Conway Architectural Salvage & Heritage Project, Spokes of Hope and the Town of Surfside Beach each be awarded \$8,333 to be used for the development and/or expansion of their respective programs.

Mr. Berry moved to recommend to the full Board of Directors approval of the grant applications submitted by Burgess Elementary School, the City of Conway, Coastal Carolina University, Conway Architectural Salvage & Heritage Project, Spokes of Hope and the Town of Surfside Beach in the amount of \$8,333 each to be used for the development and/or expansion of their respective programs. There was a second by Mr. Fox and the Motion was carried.

Pilot Food Waste Recycling Program Update

Mrs. Murphy stated since the inception of the Pilot Food Waste Recycling Program in December 2022, the program had seen steady growth. She reminded the group that the program began with one recycling center (Landfill) and expanded to four over the past two years. Mrs. Murphy informed the group that when comparing the tonnage collected in January-September 2023 (3.56 tons total) to January-September 2024 (8.65 tons total), there was a 143% increase in the amount of food waste that was recycled in 2024.

Mrs. Murphy commented that during that time period, the Landfill Center collected twice the amount of food waste than that of the other centers, which staff believed was primarily due to the length of time the Landfill Center has offered the program, almost two years. She indicated it was staff's belief that longevity in the program affords the opportunity for residents to learn about and utilize the program.

Mrs. Murphy indicated that the Pilot Food Waste Recycling Program had been promoted in several manners, to include print media advertising, social media advertising/reminders, food waste workshop, news stories, etc. She informed the Committee that during the months of September and October 2024, Ms. Dickerson and Mrs. Johnson visited each pilot food waste program recycling center multiple times (speaking to more than 500 individuals) to promote the program and distributed 134 kitchen counter food waste bins that were recently purchased with a SCDES Grant. She said in addition, grant funding was also procured to develop new promotional ads encouraging residents to "Don't Waste Food SC". She indicated the ads are in the process of being completed and was hopeful that they may begin airing before the end of the month. Mrs. Murphy stated during the month of November staff routinely promotes food waste diversion and composting. Mrs. Murphy commented that it was staff's opinion that additional growth of the program was possible through more time and promotion of the program.

Mrs. Murphy commented that staff had discussed the matter with Horry County Government staff members and said they agreed that there was potential for continued growth of the program with additional time. In addition, staff met with Smart Recycling to discuss the continuation of the program at the same pricing that was developed in 2023, \$100 per month, per center for service and disposal of the food waste material at the SWA Food Waste Composting site. She commented that Smart Recycling agreed to maintain the pricing throughout calendar year 2025 and also agreed to incorporate a fifth recycling center into the program. Mrs. Murphy indicated she, Mr. Suggs and Mr. Knight all agreed that the Jackson Bluff Recycling Center would be the best addition to the program based on it being located in a populated area of the County and it's proximity to Coastal Carolina University, which also offers excellent recycling programs, to include food waste recycling.

Mrs. Murphy stated it was staff's belief that increasing the public education and awareness of food waste recycling, adding another food waste pilot location and continuing the pilot program for an additional year would allow for potential growth of the program and the diversion of more waste from landfill disposal.

Mr. Fox moved to recommend to the full Board of Directors that the Pilot Food Waste Recycling program continue through December 31, 2025, at the Landfill, Carolina Forest, Loris and McDowell Shortcut Recycling Centers and that the fifth center – Jackson Bluff Recycling Center, be added to the pilot program. There was a second by Mr. Berry and the Motion was carried.

Mr. Knight offered comments on each of the SWA Recycling Grant applicants and stated all were doing great work in diverting waste and/or increasing recycling. He also indicated that the addition of another pilot food waste location would be beneficial to diverting more food waste from landfill disposal.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 3:20 P.M.