



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Richfield, Minnesota

Special Council Meeting Virtual Meeting held via WebEx

November 23, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Maria Regan Gonzalez at 10:00 a.m. via WebEx.

Council Members Present: Maria Regan Gonzalez, Mayor; Ben Whalen; Mary Supple; Edwina Garcia; and Simon Trautmann

Council Members Absent: Mary Supple; and Edwina Garcia

Staff Present: Katie Rodriguez, City Manager; Mary Tietjen, City Attorney; Amy Markle, Recreation Service Director; Rachel Lindholm, Sustainability Specialist; Blanca Martinez Gavina, Executive Analyst; and Kelly Wynn, Senior Office Assistant

Others Present: Sean Hayford Oleary, Council Member Elect; Bev Mathiasen, Republic Services; Drew Boyer, Republic Services; Matt Herman, Randy's Sanitation; Rocci Berni, Curbside Waste, Inc.; Julie Ketchum, Waste Management; Kane Manke, Waste Management; Micah Hamstra, Waste Management; Jason Hartman, Waste Management; Derek Holmen, Aspen Waste Systems; Thor Nelson, Aspen Waste Systems

Item #1	MINNESOTA STATE STATUTE 115.94 SETS OUT A PROCESS FOR CITIES TO CONSIDER AND IMPLEMENT ORGANIZED COLLECTION. THE FIRST STEP IN THE PROCESS IS TO MEET WITH THE CITY'S RESIDENTIAL HAULERS. CITY COUNCIL AND STAFF WILL PROVIDE THEIR GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN ORGANIZING COLLECTION AND RESIDENTIAL HAULERS CAN PROVIDE THEIR FEEDBACK IN PREPARATION FOR FUTURE CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS.
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Mayor Regan Gonzalez gave an overview of the history behind the decision to organize waste collection including developing a Sustainability Commission and adopting a Climate Action Plan among other things. The city has a strong interest in reducing the city's carbon footprint and becoming more green.

City Manager Rodriguez explained the intent of the meeting, a staff presentation, Council remarks followed by group discussion. She then asked Council Members, staff and haulers to introduce themselves.

Director Markle shared a presentation that reviewed guiding principles and plans; economic reasons; environmental reasons; and social and education impacts.

Sustainability Specialist Lindholm spoke about the 'must achieve' priorities for Richfield for switching to organized hauling. She then stated the 'would like to achieve' priorities for the city followed by a brief overview of next steps.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez thanked staff for the presentation and stated Council Members will be giving their perspectives and what they have heard from residents regarding organized hauling.

Council Member Whalen spoke of when he initially ran for Council, organized collection was a priority of residents for a desire of reduction in the number of trucks for safety and noise. He spoke of the uncertainty in pricing and how his current hauler recently called him and wanted to increase his bill roughly \$40. He believes this will give new residents peace of mind in setting up hauling instead of forcing them to shop around along with finding organics drop off. He spoke of how price is a priority for residents. He also stated the billing process and having it included on a utility bill or working directly with provided hauler. The transition period is also important regarding bin replacement. He also prioritized customer service options without having to threaten a company to terminate service in order to get things done or price reduction. He spoke of how he is also not interested in a one size fits all but giving residents the options of cart size and pick up options along with the possibility of bulky item pick up.

Council Member Trautmann echoed most comments from Council Member Whalen. He stated this is a direction the community is dedicated to moving forward with organized hauling. He stated concerns are limited communication, loss of services or choices and loss of engagement.

Council Member Elect Hayford Oleary stated residents are becoming much more aware of the number of trucks running during waste pick up with more people working from home and the inconveniences they pose. He stated how residents will be relying on the city to go to bat for residents but having a point of contact to discuss issues. He has heard a desire for large item pick up one or twice a year and incorporating a cost over the 12 months or a one-time purchase; organics pick up; variety of cart size with appropriate pricing; yard waste option but not necessarily essential and affordability. He also stated he would like to see a path for organics and recycling for multi-family.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez wanted to focus that at the end of the day; the city will be producing less waste and reducing its carbon foot print. She believes the city has a strong community base that is very consciences of sustainability. She expressed to the haulers in attendance that Richfield is a small city that is nimble and adaptable to do what works best for everybody. She would like to find a way to provide quality services without jeopardizing customer service or price.

City Manager Rodriguez stated the city has somewhat of a road map with state statute and viewing other cities during this same process but some have been quite bumpy and Richfield is looking for a more smooth method.

Sustainability Specialist Lindholm spoke of how the city will be involving the community and how residents will be supplying feedback. Staff will be doing 'listening and learning sessions' with the community as these engagements will need to be virtual due to the pandemic circumstances. The city would like to be as transparent as possible with residents during the entirety of the process. She stated there has been great communication so far with licensed haulers within Richfield and it has been greatly appreciated and hopes it will continue.

Rocci Berrni asked what kind of plans the city has associated with multi-family dwellings.

Sustainability Specialist Lindholm explained incorporating multi-family housing is a future goal that will have a tiered approach starting with recycling. The city is not currently looking at organized collection with multi-family housing, only residential.

Bev Mathiasen expressed her excitement to take part in this process and hears that customer services and accessibility are important. She then asked what languages education and communication materials need to be translated.

Sustainability Specialist Lindholm explained she would need to look more in depth of the demographics to provide specifics.

City Manager Rodriguez stated there is a strong demand for Spanish and there is also a growing need for Somali.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez commented on the 2010 Census that listed Richfield having 17% Latino but the current school district is 40% Spanish speaking students. Richfield is also the second largest Tibetan refugee community.

Micah Hamstra asked about single entity structures some other cities have inquired about in the past.

City Attorney Tietjen explained it will be a city preference and will be in discussion with negotiations going forward.

City Manager Rodriguez stated staff has been speaking with other cities to gain their perspectives but Richfield is open to ideas and would like to find a creative approach.

Julie Ketchum stated her involvement in other organized collection processes and how having fewer haulers generally works very well. She recommended Richfield have discussions with other cities who do not have consortium to see what their experience has been.

Council Member Trautmann asked if any haulers had examples of cities that had cohesive collaboration when moving to collective hauling.

Julie Ketchum stated St. Anthony was a very easily negotiated process.

Micha Hamstra spoke of how he has heard from haulers associated with Bloomington that there are complaints about the spring clean-up.

Council Member Whalen would like to hear from haulers if large item pick up is a logistical nightmare because Richfield residents have shown interest in wanting that service.

Bev Mathiasen explained how curbside clean-up is much more complicated for haulers and there is also an issue with illegal dumping. She stated drop off event works better and is more cost effective and efficient.

Sustainability Specialist Lindholm added the Climate Action Plan noted the idea of a drop off style event as a future goal.

Thor Nelson asked if the city will be engaging with a third party consultant.

City Manager Rodriguez stated the city is hopeful to engage in discussion and negotiations without a third party consultant.

Sustainability Specialist Lindholm added how staff has done a tremendous amount of research to see how other cities have navigated the process in hopes to avoid bringing in a third party consultant. The city is hoping to find the best possible route for the city and its residents.

Micah Hamstra asked about residents sharing carts and how logistically that would impact hauler market share.

Sustainability Specialist Lindholm explained that is something that will need to be discussed during negotiations as city code does currently allow cart sharing.

Rocci Berni asked about single stream recycling and if the city would like every week or every other week.

Sustainability Specialist Lindholm stated pricing would determine how that decision is made. There has been some resident interest of collection every week but pricing is a priority. She also asked haulers to reach out to herself or staff if there are any documents or information that would be helpful to them to have from the city to assist in the negotiation process.

Julie Ketchum asked if there had been any recent discussion with Hennepin County regarding organics availability and limits in facilities.

Sustainability Specialist Lindholm spoke of no recent conversations but will reach out to see if anything new is happening with the facilities. However, the county is aware of a number of cities coming online to include or increase organics collection.

Julie Ketchum explained how they currently do a direct haul to SAT and are doing everything possible to reduce contamination. She then asked if Richfield is looking at an opt-in versus mandatory option to help reduce the amount.

Sustainability Specialist Lindholm spoke of how a more mandatory program, makes it more financially viable for residents to participate. Richfield has had a very high participation and incredibly low contamination with the current drop off option. She stated how education for the organics drop off has been going very well in the city.

Micah Hamstra stated how St. Paul bought new carts and imposed an administrative fee on utility bill and Bloomington supplies their own carts. He asked if the city has thought about buying carts.

Director Markle indicated the city is not currently looking at buying carts and would look to the haulers to supply carts for residents.

Julie Ketchum asked if the hauler would need to buy new carts then or if they could distribute what they currently have in inventory.

Sustainability Specialist Lindholm stated the city would not require a hauler to purchase new carts.

City Manager Rodriguez asked haulers to send any questions or concerns to Rachel so the city can address them all during negotiations.

Mayor Regan Gonzalez thanked everyone for their time today. She reminded everyone to reach out to staff if there are any more questions or concerns.

Item #2	ADJOURNMENT
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The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 11:14 a.m.

Date Approved: December 8, 2020



Maria Regan Gonzalez
Mayor



Kelly Wynn
Senior Office Assistant



Katie Rodriguez
City Manager