



CITY OF CONCORD

General Services Department

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Angelina Zulkic, *Communications Coordinator*
Concord General Services
311 North State Street, Concord, NH 03301
azulkic@concordnh.gov
603-230-3907

Concord's Proposed New Solid Waste Contracts Receive Support from Solid Waste Advisory Committee

CONCORD, NH — After meeting last week, the City of Concord's Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) held another meeting Tuesday night at Council Chambers to further discuss the City's proposed new solid waste contracts that will begin on July 1, 2024.

General Services Director, Chip Chesley, presented SWAC with a calculation that the community has saved approximately \$4.5 million over the term of its current 10-year contract compared to today's increased market rates for solid waste disposal and recycling. Cost adjustments are anticipated for the new solid waste contracts that include shifting from \$0/ton for recycling to paying for recycling based on variable market index pricing which has averaged \$100/ton over the past few years, \$70/ton to about \$100/ton for disposal, and increased collection rates due to fuel and labor costs. Chesley also stated that the structure of having two new separate contracts, one for disposal services and another for collection services, instead of one inclusive contract, is projected to save the City \$1 million more.

City staff has conditionally awarded Solid Waste Collection and Recycling Services to Casella Waste Management for disposal of its solid waste at the Wheelabrator Concord Company (WIN Waste Innovations) facility located in Concord.

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Casella Waste Management was determined to be the lowest cost collections provider for the City. In addition, they were the only vendor to submit a complete proposal for all requested collection services.

WIN Waste Innovations was determined to be the lowest cost disposal provider for the City and the waste-to-energy facility aligns with the State of New Hampshire's preference for solid waste management instead of a landfill because they can recover energy, reduce trash volume, and reduce greenhouse gases produced from landfill decomposition.

The SWAC meeting focused on a discussion of what the committee recommends to City Council for their approval of the new contracts. SWAC endorsed the recommendations proposed by City staff: to amend the solid waste ordinance effective for the new contracts to remove flow control for reduced capacity (which requires all solid waste collected in the city to be delivered to a designated disposal facility, including waste collected by private contractors); to approve the solid waste disposal resolution conditionally awarding WIN Waste Innovations; and for the City Manager to execute the 10-year contract term with Casella to include procurement, deployment, and maintenance of toters for an orderly transition to automated trash collection by July 1, 2028 and a 2-year pilot by July 1, 2026.

All proposed options included: an immediate transition to automated collection on July 1, 2024 with a 5-year contract; a sudden transition to automated collection on July 1, 2029 at the end of a five-year manual collection; an orderly transition by July 1, 2027 after a 2-year pilot that starts by July 1, 2025 with a 7-year term; or the recommended option for an orderly transition by July 1, 2028 after a 2-year pilot that starts by July 1, 2026 with a 10-year term.

"I'd like to look at the [option] that's going to give us the most time to do it right. I'm not so much in favor of the first two [options], because of the sudden and immediate [transition]," stated Council Representative Karen McNamara, "there's a lot more that needs to be discussed and needs to be fine-tuned and figured out, so I'm in favor of the last two [options] because it gives us time to hear from the community, educate, and really try to find resources that are going to get it right."

A longer-term contract costs more for additional years of services, but it would provide security.

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"Our experience tells us the trash collection and disposal markets, and certainly the recyclable markets, are volatile and they're increasing," stated SWAC Chair and Council Representative Keith Nyhan, "It almost sounds as though we're pre-paying for predictability in some ways."

"Given that costs are going to be rapidly increasing into the future, I think it makes sense that we have the opportunity now to buy 10 years' worth of disposal and recycling. I think it makes sense to do that, and we were well-served 8 years ago when we made that 10-year decision," said Chesley, "there's no guarantee in 10 years hence we can look back and say we're going to save 3.5 million and one million again, but I think when we get to that point, we will be able to look back and say that we have saved money by going to a long-term contract."

Council Representatives Zandra Rice-Hawkins and Brent Todd also agreed with the recommendations since Casella was the only one that offered all of the services the City is looking for and that the 10-year contract provides the most certainty and longest possible transition time to automated collection.

Although residential curbside collection currently utilizes manual collection with trash workers physically grabbing materials at the curb, automated collection is already seen in Concord for multi-family units, schools, and commercial properties with dumpsters. Automated collection for residents would require standardized totes at the curb for trash haulers to be able to use a mechanical arm to lift and empty materials into trucks.

"The industry is basically changing and we aren't going to be seeing manual collectors anymore," stated Todd. "So, we need to be prepared for that and this [proposal] gives us the best option to prepare for that."

SWAC also discussed options for the community to reduce waste to reduce costs with consideration to diversion for food and textiles.

"The waste industry has changed a lot. The longer-term contract that the City has, the easier it is to mitigate those storms and allows you to plan more for the future. So, whether it's organics management or textiles management, all these things take time," said Representative Eric

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Steinhauser. "Our work is not done when this contract is signed. Our work continues because there needs to be stuff done looking out into the future."

The full meeting can be watched on the City's YouTube channel at

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T80X_yDJQmU.

City Council will provide a public hearing and decide upon these recommendations at their next City Council Meeting on April 10, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at Council Chambers.

Public feedback is welcome by contacting your City Councilor or sending an email to Concord General Services at generalservices@concordnh.gov.

Find more information and Solid Waste FAQs at www.concordnh.gov/solidwaste.

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Concord General Services is the public works department for the City of Concord, New Hampshire that delivers services to enhance the quality of life of the community. Services include street maintenance, solid waste management, water and sewer utilities, drinking water and wastewater treatment, public property maintenance, City fleet and equipment services, and management of the Douglas N. Everett Arena. For more information, please visit www.concordnh.gov/generalservices.