

**Facilities and Infrastructure Committee  
December 11, 2007  
Scott Heyman Conference Room**

Present: D. Kiefer, D. Randall, P. Mackesey, G. Stevenson,  
Excused: K. Luz Herrera  
Staff: A. LeMaro, Facilities Director; M. Lynch, Public Information Officer; W. Sczesny,  
Highway Division; E. Marx, Commissioner of Planning and Public Works; J. Wood,  
County Attorney; K. Fuller, Deputy Clerk of the Legislature; C. Nelson, Public Works  
Administrator; B. Eckstrom, T. Richardson, Solid Waste Division  
Guests: Barbara Blanchard, MEGA; Carol Chock; Diane Cohen, Significant Elements

**Call to Order**

Ms. Kiefer, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. She noted that Ms. Herrera was unable to attend the last meeting of the year, however, Ms. Herrera provided the following note to Committee members and staff:

“I am sorry that I can’t attend the meeting today.

“To both staff and committee members, I’d like to express my appreciation for your patience and support, as well as my confidence in your expertise, and in the work of the committee. We made substantial progress on a number of our goals, and are well on our way toward achieving others. I appreciated the opportunity to serve as chair of the committee, and want to express my thanks to committee members for your service this year.”

**Additions to and Deletions from the Agenda**

There were no additions to or deletions from the agenda, however, Ms. Kiefer said if time allowed she would like to discuss information regarding Governor Spitzer’s broadband initiative for the State and how it fits well with previous discussions of this Committee.

**Chair’s Report**

Ms. Kiefer did not have a report.

**Report from the Commissioner of Planning and Public Works**

**55 Brown Road Update**

Mr. Marx said that at this time work is ongoing to address various options and concerns regarding 55 Brown Road, including meetings with the consultant and other staff. The plan is to make clear the County’s options to meet the needs of the Health Department both now and in the future. Subsequent to meetings with the Health Department and other staff, the Health Department Building Construction Committee will review the information, and perhaps ask this Committee to meet briefly.

**Highway Division Shared-Equipment Agreements**

Mr. Marx reported that in 1999 the Legislature, by resolution, authorized the Highway Division to enter into shared-services agreements with other municipalities with whom we share equipment. Although it is something the Highway Division has consistently done, other municipalities did not desire to make the agreements formal through a written agreement. Now, the municipalities are ready and will be signing shared municipal service agreements with the County. The County Attorney is working on the document and expects it to be signed shortly. Ms. Kiefer inquired whether the agreement has been

amended from the original draft; Mr. Marx said he does not believe the language has changed significantly. *Ms. Kiefer requested that a copy of the draft agreement be made available at the Legislature office.*

### **Municipal Electric and Gas Alliance Report**

Ms. Blanchard, Executive Director, said that shortly after the first of the year she will be attending a Legislature meeting to present Tompkins County with a check in the amount of \$2,000, representing the third-year subsidy for purchase of wind energy.

Ms. Blanchard said she requested to be on the agenda to answer questions that had arisen during the November 7<sup>th</sup> Legislature meeting relating to the resolution authorizing MEGA to go out to bid for electric and natural gas suppliers on behalf of the County. She spoke about the Renewable Energy Credits program offered by MEGA that represent a financial commitment by energy consumers to purchase all or a portion of their requirements from wind, solar, biomass, or hydropower. She asked what the Committee's concerns are.

Ms. Kiefer said that she had been under the mistaken impression that MEGA had not yet gone out to bid at the time the resolution came forward asking Tompkins County to authorize MEGA going out to bid and therefore felt some thoughts and ideas could be included. She was unsettled to find out it was not the case and that the bid request had already been sent out. Ms. Kiefer stressed that when most people now recognize that climate change is a serious concern to consider. Although she recognizes that MEGA's primary goal is to purchase energy at a lower cost, she believes MEGA should not be in a position of purchasing "dirty" energy. She had hoped that language having a renewable energy option also be included as part of the bid process.

Ms. Blanchard said the reason the basic bid does not include some energy products that do not reflect the cleaner process is due to the basic mission, which is to get competitive pricing for members. MEGA is interested in supporting and encouraging green energy products. Instead of offering one product as done several years ago, last summer a bid was done for a bundle of renewable energy products. NYSEG Solutions, Starfire, and Sterling Planet all bid on this bundle and offered a cafeteria plan that included a national plan, state plan, biomass, and low-impact hydropower so that those desiring this were allowed to pick and choose which products they preferred. Ms. Blanchard noted some municipalities due to potential local problems with wind energy production may choose only biomass or hydropower. Ms. Blanchard called attention to the worksheet included within the agenda that indicated potential purchase and subsidy for various renewable energy products. She indicated if the County desired to utilize the green energy products a variety could be chosen. Of the products, New York Wind is the most expensive, with hydropower the lowest cost. Ms. Blanchard said the information was provided to the chief elected officials in all municipal members, with Mr. Joseph receiving it for Tompkins County.

Ms. Kiefer inquired where the various renewable energy products were generated. *Ms. Blanchard briefly reviewed the information and will provide a hard copy to members.* NY Biomass is a plant in Dunkirk, New York that utilizes willow and coal; in Dresden, New York, a wood furniture factory uses wood residue; some in Pennsylvania and some in West Virginia. Ms. Blanchard spoke of her association with Ms. Rutzke at Cornell University who is a member of the Sunpath Institute working on a biomass project. The low-impact hydropower has projects on the New York Barge Canal, Whitehall, New York; Brookfield West Branch, St. Regis River; Salmon River Hydro Project; Raquette River Project; one on the Hoosic River and one on the Beaver River. New York Wind is from Maple Ridge in Lewis County, with 120 turbines producing approximately 231 million watts of electricity; the Fenner Project has 20 turbines; the Madison Wind Farm has 7 turbines; and there is a proposed 10 megawatt project for Lackawanna; and others in the Madison County area.

The questions Ms. Blanchard thought might be forthcoming is how does one know for certain that the energy is green. She said the Center for Resources provides certification of the firms, and also specifies when a provider is decertified.

It was noted that individuals may sign up for MEGA; the application form is available online.

Ms. Kiefer requested backup information on the various renewable energy sources available. She then asked if the addition of other renewable energy would be worthwhile for the County. Mr. LeMaro said that at the present time the County obtains 5 percent from renewable sources. Ms. Kiefer spoke of the Planning Department's work on calculating whether the County will meet its goal of greenhouse gas emission reduction, noting that a recalculation has indicated the County is further away from its goal than anticipated. In order to meet target the County will need to be creative and define ways to increase the emission figures. Mr. Marx said once the final results are in with regard to the building improvement projects and how short the County is to meeting its goal, the information and options to meet the goal will come forward.

Ms. Blanchard said that the County could opt into any of the renewable energy products anytime throughout the year. She noted that at the time wind energy was first made available, Community Energy was the only party who participated in the bid.

#### LED Lighting Project

Ms. Blanchard spoke of the recent article in the *Ithaca Journal* that highlighted the LED Holiday Light pilot project that was a joint effort of NYSERDA, Cooperative Extension, and MEGA. Eight communities (Ithaca Commons, Cooperstown, Oneonta, Binghamton, Broome County, Tioga County, Batavia, Elmira) were recipients that provided funds to purchase warm-white holiday lighting. Ms. Blanchard said the new lighting would cut utility bills by a factor of ten.

#### Solid Waste

#### **RESOLUTION NO. – ESTABLISHING A UNIT CHARGE FOR THE 2008 SOLID WASTE ANNUAL FEE**

Ms. Eckstrom reported the fee has increased from \$52 to \$54 and was approved by the Expanded Budget and Capital Committee and subsequently the full Legislature by approval of the 2008 budget. She noted the majority of the fee collected is used for facility maintenance and the additional services provided over the years designed to increase use of the facility. She provided written information regarding the history of the annual fee indicating there is every effort to hold the fee as low as possible.

Ms. Eckstrom reported that it appears the recycling income may exceed the budgeted amount during 2007. It was thought there would be \$250,000 of income, however, it could be up to \$300,000. These funds will be placed in the capital reserve fund for future equipment purchase or work associated with single-stream processing.

With regard to the fee structure for colleges and the university, she reported they are based upon the negotiated fees for old landfill closure and post-closure maintenance, capital investment in the recycling center, recycling operational costs, with a half-charge for administration. These fees were based upon tonnage reported for the previous year. She indicated that in the next several years there could be some recommended changes in the fee structure. She noted there is less than one percent change, with the cost of landfill closure reducing, recycling increasing, and disposal varying.

It was MOVED by Ms. Mackesey, seconded by Ms. Kiefer, to recommend approval of the following resolution to the full Legislature. Mr. Randall said he cannot support the resolution as he believes that taxpayers are hit hard and do not need further increases. A voice vote on the motion resulted as follows: Ayes – 3 (Kiefer, Mackesey, Stevenson); Noes – 1 (Randall); Excused – 1 (Herrera).  
**RESOLUTION ADOPTED.**

WHEREAS, the unit charge for the 2008 Solid Waste Annual Fee has been recommended by the Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, That the Unit Charge for the 2008 Solid Waste Annual Fee be established at \$54.00 per billing unit, which is a \$2 per unit increase from the 2007 Solid Waste Annual Fee.

**ATTACHMENT A: SCHEDULE OF RATES**

<b>CODE</b>	<b>PROPERTY CLASS</b>	<b>'USED AS'</b>
(A)		
Single family residences	210,240,241,242,250,280	
Mobile Homes	270,271,416	
Churches		Z32
Unit Charge: One billing unit per Church or living unit		
(B)		
Two-family residences and other residences with two living units	All 220's	
Unit Charges: Two billing units, except if verified as owner occupied and used as a single unit, the charge is one billing unit.		
(C)		
Multi-unit residences		
3 or more units	230's	
Apartments		A01 - A07
Rooming houses:	418	
	2.5 beds = 1 billing unit	
Unit Charges: One billing unit per living unit		
(D)		
Colleges:	All tax exempt parcels owned by the colleges	
Unit Charges:	Tompkins Cortland Community College	\$5,412.41
	Cornell University	\$180,250.20
	Ithaca College	\$33,536.10
	BOCES	<u>\$33,438.74</u>
	<b>Total Colleges:</b>	<b>\$252,637.00</b>

(E) Recreation and Warehouse (except row storage)	All K's, Z01-Z11, Z19-Z26, F01- F04, F06, F07,F08 F10, F11
Unit Charges: \$0.0191/sq.ft.	

(F) Wholly Exempt Homes for the Aged	633
Wholly Exempt Other HealthCare Facilities	642
Unit Charges: \$0.0212/sq.ft.	

(G) All other	All property classes and 'used as' codes not listed elsewhere in a specific category
Unit Charges: \$0.0386/sq.ft.	

(H) Seasonal Residences	260
Property must be classified as a seasonal residence by the Tompkins County Assessment Dept.	
Unit Charge:	One-half (1/2) billing units per living unit.

(I) No fee assessed:	
Row storage	F05
Non-contributive area	Z98
Local government - all tax exempt parcels owned by the city, towns, villages, and county within Tompkins County.	

**SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-15**

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Reuse Center

Ms. Eckstrom reviewed the written information provided with regard to the Finger Lakes Reuse, Inc., initiative. She said the Reuse Center would not be a County-owned business, and would be funded by a variety of sources. It was reported that it is thought that after one year there will be approximately 1,500 to 2,000 tons of reusable materials that can be sold at the Center, which will look very much like a department store. A potential site for the center has been identified as the former Datatab building on Cecil A. Malone Drive, which would be leased by the reuse center. Ms. Eckstrom also reported that a \$148,000 grant has been received for deconstruction and that Diane Cohen of Significant Elements and Tania Schusler of Cooperative Extension are working on developing and submitting another grant proposal for deconstruction services.

Ms. Eckstrom said Mr. Wood, County Attorney has been very helpful; the Reuse Center has their own attorney, Ms. Bixler.

Ms. Cohen spoke of the center, noting that it is anticipated that twenty-five percent of sales will be from furniture. Ms. Eckstrom and Ms. Cohen shared information regarding Burlington, Vermont's reuse center and how it began with household goods and has greatly expanded. It was noted that the materials from deconstruction have historically been a high-demand item.

Ms. Eckstrom said the transition planning and work with Historic Ithaca would assist in the building being obtained by the end of June 2008 although there is the possibility it could be occupied earlier. She noted the County share is \$70,000, and is expected to decrease as sales of products increase. Ms. Eckstrom said she hopes there will also be an educational piece as well to inform the public of the services and waste reduction.

Ms. Kiefer spoke of Burlington being a larger community and how it may relate to our community. Ms. Cohen said although they are bigger, the size of the building being considered is appropriate for Tompkins County. With regard to the building it was noted that there is the potential to build on an additional 20,000 sq. ft. if required. Ms. Cohen and Ms. Eckstrom stressed that it is not the intent for the Reuse Center to compete with other businesses, but rather enhance services. In response to a question, it was noted that there most likely would be accommodation to have a drop-off for books, but what this service might be is unknown. The intent is to enhance services and keep usable goods out of the waste stream. Ms. Kiefer noted the location might not be an ideal location due to the difficulting of navigating the intersection with Route 13. One item of interest is the possibility of having a box truck with lift gate to provide a pick-up service for reusable goods.

Ms. Chock asked about the relation of this center with what other not-for-profits do.

It was noted that the reuse center is not intending to sell clothing or books, these areas are well serviced within the community. It was stressed that the intent of the center is not to compete, but to enhance. Ms. Cohen spoke of other non-profit agencies indicating their limitations to do this type of sales and look forward to the possibility of utilizing the reuse center for commission sales as well. Some vendors that repair equipment also would like the opportunity to have a place to sell the equipment.

Ms. Eckstrom said the reuse center is a continuation of goals she had set and hopes that by 2015 there will be a reduction of waste in the amount of 75 percent.

#### Fee Schedule

Ms. Eckstrom provided members with a handout indicating the 2008 Solid Waste Division Fees. Ms. Eckstrom spoke of her desire to have individuals purchase things that are recyclable and not ones that are disposed of. In response to a question by Ms. Chock, Ms. Eckstrom said it is less expensive to recycle versus paying a disposal fee. She spoke of plans to start a Solid Waste newsletter as either a hard copy or online version. In addition, she noted there is a video showing the services provided by the Solid Waste Division.

#### Miscellaneous Information

Ms. Kiefer spoke of a recent article appearing in a Fisher Associates newsletter highlighting "pothole killing" equipment; this is a one-man unit that allows for rapid pothole repair. She also noted that the Friends of the Earth article spoke of the hazards related to aircraft emissions as a result of the fuel/moisture mixture.

#### Broadband

Ms. Kiefer noted that Governor Spitzer's recent proposal regarding broadband services is very much in line with the ECC Technology proposal to the county. She believes it is something to consider in light of the possibility of funding being made available. Mr. Marx noted ECC Technology's proposal dealt with an inventory of service status throughout the County. Ms. Kiefer would like to have this topic on the next Committee meeting.

**Approval of Minutes**

It was MOVED by Mr. Randall, seconded by Ms. Mackesey, and unanimously approved by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of June 12, June 26, July 10, and August 14, 2007, as amended. MINUTES APPROVED.

On Motion the meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Karen Fuller, Deputy Clerk of the Legislature*