

SOLID WASTE/AIR QUALITY COMMITTEE
Representative Andy Jorgensen
Summary – March 3, 2011

Committee Members Present: Lloyd Zastrow (Vice-Chair), Vic Imrie Jr. (Secretary), and Carlton Zentner

Staff Present: Sharon Ehrhardt (Program Assistant) and Rob Klotz, Director of Planning & Zoning

Guests: Rep. Andy Jorgensen, Victor Karaliunas-Recycling Chairman, Ixonia; Rick Schultz, Superintendent-City of Watertown Street Dept.; Dean Fischer, Superintendent-Whitewater Public Works Dept.; Tom Kramp, Superintendent-City of Fort Atkinson Public Works Dept.; Walt Christensen, Supervisor-Jefferson County Board; John Molinaro, Chair-Jefferson County Board; and Ryan Whisner, Court Reporter-Jefferson County Daily Union

John Molinaro had to leave early.

A quorum of the Solid Waste/Air Quality Committee was in attendance, but no business was conducted.

Representative Jorgensen asked the group how the recycling grants and reduction of recycling programs would affect Jefferson County municipalities.

An open discuss ensued about recycling grants and reduction of recycling programs. Sharon handed out the grant amounts for all of Jefferson County. Most in attendance said they would have to reduce their programs or pass the cost of recycling on to the consumer or residents of Jefferson County. The consensus of the group was to keep the \$7 tipping fee for recycling and continue the recycling programs. The group also discussed how recycling started in Wisconsin and the \$7 tipping fee collected at landfills was established to offset the cost of recycling at the local communities. Recycling in Wisconsin has become a billion dollar business and reduction of the programs could be a loss to the recycling industries and workers of Wisconsin. Representative Jorgensen was very concerned about the elimination of recycling program and would take the message back to his peers at the State Legislature. The Clean Sweep grants were still in the State Budget for 2011, but it was uncertain if they would stay in the budget. Representative Jorgensen thanked the group for coming together and sharing their views and opinions about recycling and recycling programs.

Jefferson County Daily Union article attached:

March 4-6, 2011

Clean Sweep's safe, but recycling targeted

By Ryan Whisner
Union regional editor

JEFFERSON — Gov. Scott Walker's proposed biennial budget eliminates both the mandates — and money — for communities to operate recycling programs.

Jefferson County Zoning and Solid Waste officials met with state Rep. Andy Jorgensen, D-Fort Atkinson, on Thursday to

garner a better understanding of the budget bill's potential impact on the county's annual Clean Sweep program.

Per the budget proposal, state-mandated recycling by local units of government, which began in 1993, would be repealed, along with all grant programs. Funding for the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Clean Sweep programs

would remain at \$750,000 per year.

For the past 18 years, Jefferson County has participated in Clean Sweep to help residents properly dispose of hazardous household, farm and business waste. The collections are a cooperative multi-agency effort funded through all non tax-levy dollars.

Through a cooperative effort of multiple agencies, Jefferson

County residents, in December 2010, established a permanent drop-off site to get rid of unwanted or expired pharmaceutical drugs. The drop box is located at the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office jail lobby, located at the south end of the county courthouse in Jefferson. All of the drugs are sorted for proper disposal.

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Plan cuts recycling program mandates

(Continued from page 1)

In addition to the county site, there are drop-off sites in Lake Mills and Watertown that are operated through the county.

Funding for the program is generated through an agreement related to a tipping fee at Deer Creek Park in the Town of Farmington. Additional funds come through state grants and donations from area businesses and municipalities.

County Director of Planning and Zoning Rob Klotz noted that if state funding for recycling is removed, the municipalities likely will use money they were donating to the county to fill up their own financial holes and the county would lose those donations.

"Without them doing their programs, we're going to be receiving more waste, which is going to increase our cost," Klotz said. "There is an effect even without getting Clean Sweep cut."

Preliminary analysis of the state budget document suggests that disposal bans for materials currently banned such as electronics, oil, oil filters and other items remain.

As proposed, the recycling landfill tipping fee would stay at \$7 per ton, with \$4 per ton being deposited in a newly created Economic Development fund and a per ton deposited into the Environmental Fund. The recycling surcharge is being renamed the economic development surcharge.

Jorgensen noted that the Legislative Fiscal Bureau has to go through the budget before it is

clear how the funding process is intended to work.

"This really is a shortsighted savings or cutting of an initiative that is going to cost us more in the long run," he said.

City of Watertown Streets Superintendent Rick Schultz noted that without a place for recycling, many people simply are going to drop refuse into a ditch.

"We've got people trained and we've spent a lot of taxpayers money and now the governor decides that he's going to take this money to promote business on the backs of taxpayers and municipalities," he said.

Schultz said Watertown would lose approximately \$150,000, equivalent to two-and-a-half employee positions.

"Where are we supposed to get the money from?" he asked.

In recent years, the City of Watertown has contributed \$20,000 per year to Clean Sweep. Despite the hardship anticipated through the budget, he said he anticipates that donation, as well as the city's recycling program, to remain.

"We partnered with Jefferson County for a reason, because we know funds are getting slim, so why not try and use the dollar in the best way?" Schultz said.

"If we're going to continue to run efficiently and then they take money away from us, you're telling us two different stories and the taxpayers are suffering for this."

Town of Ixonia recycling Chairperson Vic Karaliunas said the loss of state recycling funds likely will lead to closure of the

town's recycling site.

Most municipalities do not collect any electronics, directing residents to the collection points established by the county. None likely are to start any new programs, either.

"This is more than a county program," Jefferson County Solid Waste/Air Quality program assistant Sharon Ehrhardt said. "It is the municipalities and towns trying to get their people to come and cut down cost."

Also, she pointed out that there are numerous businesses that need the recycled commodities to continue with their business.

"If you look at the number of jobs created by recycling in Wisconsin, I think you would be amazed," she said.

For 2011, there are four scheduled Clean Sweeps:

Saturday, April 9, at Jefferson County Fair Park; Saturday May 21, at the City of Watertown Street Department; Saturday, Sept. 17, at the City of Fort Atkinson Public Works Department, and Friday, Oct. 7, at the City of Whitewater Street Department garage.

Meanwhile, Klotz cited the recently approved Jefferson County Strategic Plan in which citizen surveys rated county services.

The top three were roads, police and Clean Sweep.

"I don't think this is as partisan thing," Klotz said. "When you talk to the people of Wisconsin, they see the value of recycling, getting these pharmaceuticals out of the water supply, the sewer system, but also out of their

children's and grandchildren's hands. They see the value of the recycling the electronics."

He wondered whether, having grown accustomed to separating garbage and recycling and then all of a sudden to not have to do that anymore, people still would remember to separate out hazardous chemicals?

"It has that indirect effect," Klotz said, noting that clean-up costs — if such materials started becoming more prevalent in water and sewer systems — would be in the millions of dollars.

"Now we're going to be filling up those landfills faster and we'll have to site new landfills, and that's real popular," he said.

Jefferson County had sent a letter to members of the Joint Finance Committee, as well as all Jefferson County-area representatives, including Jorgensen, state Sen. Scott Fitzgerald, Rep. Steve Nass and Rep. Joel Kleefisch. It was that notice that prompted Jorgensen to contact the Zoning Department and set up a meeting.

Ehrhardt said that no other legislator responded.

Having set up a return receipt request, she was able to tell that Sen. Alberta Darling, R-River Hills, and another member a member of the Joint Finance Committee had deleted the e-mail twice.

For more information on the Jefferson County Clean Sweep program, contact Sharon Ehrhardt, program assistant, Solid Waste/Air Quality and Zoning at (920) 674-7430.