

**DRAFT COPY**

**Landfill Committee Meeting  
9/8/2015, Mayor's Conference Room**

Meeting was called to order by Commissioner Dietz at 6:00 PM

**Roll call:** Commissioners Acuff, Dietz, Hill, Miller, Simerly, VonCannon and Ward were present. Commissioner Carroll sat in for Commissioner Gobble due to illness.

**Approval of minutes of previous session and agenda:**

Motion was made by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Acuff to approve the agenda, and passed by acclamation.

Motion was made to approve the minutes from July by Commissioner Simerly, seconded by Commissioner Ward, and passed by acclamation.

Motion was made to approve the minutes from August by Commissioner Simerly, seconded by Commissioner Acuff, and passed by acclamation.

**Public Comments:** Connie Holder asked to speak to the committee regarding pay scale of county landfill employees, and was asked to wait until a later agenda item for discussion. There were no other public comments.

**Old Business:** Commissioner Dietz updated the committee on plans for a group field trip to Newton NC to tour the Republic Services single stream recycling system. Commissioner Ward informed the committee that he would be unable to attend due to a work obligation.

The grant for oil recycling has been submitted to Nashville.

The recycling equipment grant is sitting in the County Mayor's Office to be signed off on. The landfill hopes to get a new bobcat and other needed equipment with these funds.

Establishing recycling sites on the school grounds is on hold pending notification of funding.

There was a question from a citizen in attendance about the possibility of recycling glass. Mr. Lyons explained that Sullivan County was able to accept glass for free from Carter County, however, there would be a cost associated with transporting the glass collected that made it unfeasible at present. There was some more discussion regarding glass pulverizers and addition of glass sand to asphalt in some places. Mr. Birchette stated that glass aggregate was not added to asphalt in Carter County.

**New Business:** Northeast Correctional Facility requests used bicycles that come through the Landfill to be donated to a program where inmates refurbish used bicycles and give them to children of inmates at Christmas time. We currently recycle the bicycles in the tub with metals at the landfill, however, Mr. Lyons stated, he was amenable to donating any bicycles to this program. Motion was made by Commissioner Ward, and seconded by Commissioner Hill to request the full commission to approve the donation of any bicycles that come through the Landfill to the Northeast Correctional Facility for refurbishing. Commissioner VonCannon amended the motion to be subject to approval from the County Attorney. Motion passed by rollcall vote unanimously.

Also under new business, employees from the landfill were asked by Commissioner Dietz to share with the committee their views on inequities in the pay scales of county employees. Commissioner Dietz stated that this presentation arose as a result of the hiring on of an unskilled worker at the county animal shelter at a rate of \$10 per hour, a move which adversely affected morale among landfill employees including an individual who has been on the job for up to 9 1/2 years who makes only \$9.05 per hour, an individual who has been on the job for four years who makes \$8.24 per hour, and an individual who has been on the job for six years who makes \$8.99 per hour. Commissioner Ward interjected that the county did not set the pay rate for the animal shelter job, and that he had inquired at the time whether the fourteen year existing employee at the shelter couldn't be offered the promotion. He also noted that the \$10 per hour employee only lasted ten days at the shelter. Commissioner Miller opined about the critical need for all county employees to get a pay raise. Mr. Lyons stated that the landfill was the lowest paid county office and always had been, that his employees work six days per week, and they perform similar tasks to other county jobs and hold similar certifications to other county employees. Commissioner Miller pointed out that it is hard to replace experienced employees who we lose to better pay scales in other counties. The committee then heard from Landfill employee Sherry Spencer regarding the expectations of the job, and the similarities to positions within other county offices. There was quite a bit of discussion about how hard it was to support a household at the current pay levels, but that they

appreciated their jobs and that Mr. Lyons was an excellent supervisor. The request was for equal pay for job categories across all the county offices. Commissioner VonCannon stated that every department except for the landfill had received some sort of raise. Commissioner Miller stated that he needed to make the pay equal for everybody. Connie Holder stated that if she had a car payment or house payment that she would not be able to make it on what she earned working for the landfill. She went on to talk about the weight of the responsibilities of their job including filing reports to the state and cash management, in comparison to the pay scale.

Ms. Holder went on to state that the responsibilities were greater than the impression the public had of their role. Commissioner Dietz stated that she wanted to work with the finance office to try to find a way to give raises to the landfill employees. Commissioner Hill pointed out that according to a document that had come across his desk comparing rates of pay across counties by job category, Carter County pay scales were 20-30% lower than almost every surrounding municipality. He went on to state that he found it appalling that Carter County Employees working full time hours of 37.5 hours weekly over fifty two weeks on average fell between \$5,000-7,000 below the federal poverty level for a primary breadwinner with a family of four. Commissioner Carroll stated that if anyone deserves a raise it is the landfill employees, and that the inequities in pay scales needs investigation. He mentioned that almost 50% of incoming revenue in the county goes to payroll. Commissioner Acuff made remarks about the growing problem of pay scale inequity causing increasing numbers of staffing losses when parties would secure similar roles elsewhere for higher rates of pay.

### **Report from Director Lyons**

Mr. Lyons reported to the committee that he had received a complaint from the mayor's office about the recycling facility being closed on an afternoon at 2 pm. He explained that the recycle center is a self-serve facility that is accessible from outside at all times, and that in circumstances such as those of this instance, when he is short staffed for some reason, that the staff from the recycle center must be pulled back to the transfer station, which can not be left unattended. He then relayed his experience taking children from the Lego "trash trek" project on a facility tour the previous Saturday.

### **Commissioner Comments**

Commissioner Ward spoke about the "Carter County/Elizabethton Recycle Center" project, commending this as an excellent city and county partnership. It was pointed out that more of these collaborative efforts in the works.

Commissioner Dietz asked about the status of the new software installation. Mr. Lyons shared that the state auditor would be sitting in during the product demo and training process in three weeks.

### **Adjournment**

Motion was made by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Ward to adjourn, and passed by acclamation. Meeting adjourned at 6:45.