

MEETING MINUTES

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY SOLID WASTE ADVISORY GROUP (SWAG)

July 10, 2025

ATTENDANCE

SWAG Members:

Present: Joel Becker, Mark Bonner, Robert Boyt, James Gestrich, Tom Smith, Jane Wyman

Absent: Sidney "ST" Billingsley, Harry Glasgow, Lynn Meadows, Arshdeep Pannu, Amritpal Singh, Keisha Strand

Solid Waste Division Staff: Monica Gorman, Renad Uri

Guests: None

OPENING

Ms. Gorman called the Solid Waste Advisory Group (SWAG) meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. via Microsoft Teams.

AGENDA TOPICS

INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Gorman welcomed everyone to the meeting and shared the agenda on screen. She and Renad Uri introduced themselves as solid waste staff. The other SWAG members also introduced themselves, described where they live, and described their short work history.

APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Gorman shared a slide with the names, districts, and appointment time frames for each member. She noted that Mr. Robert Boyt is a new member and represents the Coles District. Mr. Boyt shared that he lives near the landfill property and has been a resident of the County since 1979. He currently works for the Solid Waste Management program in Fairfax County.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The draft minutes of the April 10, 2025, SWAG meeting were approved.

OPERATIONAL UPDATES

Landfill Operations

By way of an update on PWC Landfill Operations, Ms. Gorman shared several slides and photos. In FY 25, the landfill staff processed over 582,000 customer transactions. There are some issues with getting people through the traffic control line in a timely fashion on Saturdays when there are between 1800 and 2000 customers. The landfill is open nine (9) hours on Saturday, and in January, the landfill and compost facility will open on Sunday, which should help. She also shared that more than 344,000 tons of material were accepted. Over 316,000 tons of the accepted tonnage were landfilled in FY25, and the remaining was reused or diverted. Ms. Gorman noted that tonnage has been lessening over the past few years, but she anticipates the trend will reverse because the County population continues to increase.

She highlighted that \$11 million in tipping fees were collected in FY25, compared to about \$2 million from commercial customer fees.

The leachate lagoon, which captures rainwater that passes through the trash, was relined, and leaks were repaired by the contractor already on site, building a new cell (3B). The lagoon repair passed a May Virginia DEQ inspection. The water in the lagoon is sent to the sanitary sewer system.

Cell 3B construction project has been inspected and approved by DEQ. This is the next place for trash to be landfilled.

Additionally, Phase II capping took place in FY25 and is ongoing. The area being capped has been filled, and now the contractor is installing permanent cover, which includes a geotextile. The contractor is also doing some compaction, grading, and covering with lining and soils suitable for grass to grow and stabilize the slope.

Compost Facility Operations

Convertus operates the compost facility and processes yard waste. County staff also operate the residential convenience center for trash and recycling drop-off and the scale house, where fees are collected.

Staff processed more than 26,000 transactions in FY25, and Convertus accepted almost 61,000 tons of material, which resulted in \$1.7 million in tipping fees. This facility also hosts an annual Compost Awareness Day outreach event in April/May. In 2025, there were 50

participants and two tours. Staff also conducted seven school and youth group tours, totaling 141 participants, at the facility.

Recycling/Diversion Outreach Programs

Recycling Manager Renad Uri reviewed FY25 recycling, education, and outreach activities. In November 2024, staff hosted America Recycles Day at the libraries and promoted the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) 's "I Recycle" pledge contest. They answered recycling and disposal questions, provided educational games for families, and shared information on solid waste services.

Staff also attended local farmers' markets and school events to promote the contest, share recycling information, and provide diversion services. Notably, someone from the Prince William area won one of two \$300 REI gift cards. This is Prince William's 11th win in the past 12 years. Between farmers' markets and schools, there were 30 outreach events, and 1,505 interactions with people of all ages.

The division hosted four Household Hazard Waste "pop-up" events on the county's western end. A total of 103 people were served, but the cost is considerable.

The division hosted Compost Awareness Day with Convertus in early May 2025. Other community partners also participated, and the event focused on yard waste and food waste diversion and composting.

Waste and Recycling Workers Week was celebrated the week of June 17, 2025, with a proclamation from the Board and beverage and snack distribution by staff at the landfill and compost facility. This was an opportunity to show appreciation to our commercial haulers and division staff. More than 200 drivers were served.

Significantly, the annual refuse and recycling report process was revised. This report is sent annually to DEQ to determine the county's yearly recycling rate. It takes two to three months to collect and calculate the data on all commercial entities in the county to decide how much they've diverted away from the landfill. This includes C&D, tires, textiles, food waste, cardboard, single-stream recycling, etc. The submitted rate for CY 2024 was 43.7%, compared to the CY 2023 state-verified rate of 42.1%. The state minimum requirement for Prince William County is 25%.

PROJECT UPDATES

Solid Waste Division FY25 Year in Review

Administration

Accounts Payable: Staff issued more than 75 purchase orders and processed more than 900 invoices. The advent of a new system for all payments and an all-electronic/no-paper process, primarily done by two people, has resulted in vendor payments being completed in significantly less time and with increased accuracy.

Accounts Receivable: The Division collected about \$12 million, most of which was via charge accounts. The charge account application is now in an online database with a customer interface for two-way communication and record retention. There is also an annual bond requirement.

On the staffing side, two positions were reclassified, and a Scale House Supervisor position was established and has been filled. Currently, there are four vacancies. Three of them are open for recruitment: Assistant Superintendent, Scalehouse Operator, and Maintenance Worker.

Environmental Excellence

Ms. Gorman proudly announced that the Solid Waste Division maintained its E4 level certification under the DEQ Environmental Excellence Program. She noted the division first achieved E4 status under the leadership of Tom Smith. The E4 level is challenging to achieve, and Prince William is probably still the only landfill in this state with the E4 level. The Public Works Department is also an American Public Works Association (APWA) member. Like the Virginia Environmental Excellence Program, the APWA also has a rigorous certification program, and Public Works successfully recertified with that program in FY25.

For FY25, the Board of County Supervisors authorized a third litter crew. Three litter crews have been working for several months, significantly decreasing route rotation times. With two crews, it took 90 days to run through all the routes; now, it is 30 days. Significantly, litter complaints and board requests have tapered off substantially.

There have been no "Notice of Violation" for DEQ quarterly inspections this past year.

Diversion of scrap metal, electronics, household hazardous waste, tires, yard waste, and other materials continues. Additionally, staff are tracking mattresses. Thousands of mattresses are received monthly and are tough to dispose of in landfills. They don't compact well and take up a lot of space. In FY 2027, one of the recycling initiative proposals will be the diversion of mattresses. Unfortunately, it's expensive. Based on initial research with the vendor, it ranges between \$15 - \$25 per mattress. That means a couple \$100,000 per year. SWAG members will be presented with more details about this initiative in the future.

Recycling Programs

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Community Services

The Dumpster Day schedule for FY25 was shown. The slide included the district, the date, and the tons collected. Dumpster Days are for residents to manage waste in their community and encourage participation in community litter collection. The tons collected at these events from September 2024 to June 2025 totaled 31.35. Tom Smith inquired about a collection of 11.36 tons at the Potomac September event. It was significant compared to the other events. Ms. Uri explained that only residential household waste is collected, but was

unsure about the big difference in tonnage for that event. She also noted that the division likes to see one ton or greater collected at each Dumpster Day.

The Division also hosted two four-hour community shred events. In November 2024, 236 customers were served, and in May 2025, 382 were served. Mark Bonner attended the shred event in May and commented on the great traffic management and how well it was run.

The litter crew now consists of three teams of four or 12 staff who collect litter throughout the week. In FY25, their activity equated to 1,435 lane miles walked, 83.5 tons of litter, and 916 illegal signs collected. Ms. Gorman remarked that the staff were working in rain or shine conditions in extreme temperatures. She encouraged the SWAG members to recognize and appreciate them when possible.

Training

Some additional training opportunities have been brought to Solid Waste Division employees based on the division's specific needs. Professional companies that specialize in training operational staff were contracted. In January, there was a Supervisors Bootcamp, in March, there was Conflict Management, in April, there was an EEOC Refresher, and in May, there was Emotional Intelligence.

There are several upcoming training courses: July Toolbox Talks; August Sexual Harassment Prevention; Fall 2025 New Supervisor Development; September DPOR Solid Waste Facility Regulations (Class I & II Certification Prep); TBD Manager of Landfilling Operations (MOLO). Training focuses on conflict management, working with customers and other staff, emotional intelligence, EEO, sexual harassment, treating everyone with respect, understanding others, and communicating effectively. In addition, there will be supervisory training and technical training to support employee development.

Ms. Gorman also shared that some customers are aggressive towards staff, including racial slurs, threats with a weapon, and fist fights. On the higher customer volume days, a volunteer police officer is now at the landfill. This will take place through August, and then the police presence will be reassessed.

Ms. Gorman commented that some aggression may result from the new residency verification procedures. The decal was eliminated because it never expired, and there was a lot of suspected fraud. The new process uses a scan of the Virginia Driver's License and the PW County GIS system to verify residency. Several residents don't want to show an ID and are argumentative with staff. This results in slower lines. Ms. Gorman thinks it will take some diligence and patience on the part of staff, and as people get accustomed to the new rules, they'll have their license in hand, and we can move people through faster.

Mr. James Gestrich asked if the additional revenues coming in would positively offset the budget for residents. Ms. Gorman explained that one of the reasons the tipping fee was instituted was to ensure funding for upcoming CIP projects. The tipping fee has created a positive balance in the solid waste fund. This fall, an analysis will be conducted to determine if it will be enough to fund future capital projects.

Board members offered positive comments on the presentation and the division's accomplishments. The SWAG members and Ms. Gorman also acknowledged the amount of work and the difficulty of the certification processes.

The upcoming addition of Sunday hours in January was discussed regarding staff retention. To help improve retention, staff are aware that their schedules will change, and they will be given draft schedules to provide feedback. Some financial incentives are also being worked on for weekend and holiday work and a four-day work week schedule. Still, the schedule changes won't work for everyone.

The six-month transition time that the board allowed gives the opportunity to explore these possibilities, gives employees time to make choices, and gives the Division time to fill vacancies before January 2026.

FY26 Recycling Program Plan

Ms. Uri gave an overview of the recycling program operational plans for FY26.

High-priority operational improvements include improved signage and traffic flow at the convenience centers of both facilities. The signs are 6 feet by 12 feet and are made of steel. They will have text and images to indicate what material should be disposed of in each dumpster. This is in addition to striped parking spaces that were added last year, which help traffic and cut down friction between residents. The road to the traffic control booth and the convenience center is now one-way at the landfill.

Another operational improvement is mattress recycling. Planning for implementing the FY27 mattress recycling program is underway and will be introduced as a budget initiative.

The expansion of community engagement and education in the community and the classroom is an ongoing priority. The goal during the year is to be in the classrooms at least three days a week, with an added focus on litter, and attend community events to promote proper waste disposal and recycling practices. Ms. Uri highlighted using "Trashy," the raccoon, Prince William's litter awareness mascot, as a fun introduction to proper waste management and an anti-litter campaign via social media.

Supporting staff in handling customer interactions and diffuse situations is another priority.

The remote recycling trailer program began 20 years ago. Staff will reassess the recycling and glass trailer locations. A facelift of the trailers and possible relocations are being considered to ensure equitable distribution and accessibility by residents, adequate space for the solid waste team to maneuver trailers, and site conditions and safety. Glass recycling sites should be on county-owned properties.

Solid Waste FY26 planned events include Paper Shreds in Fall 2025 and Spring 2026; Fall Dumpster Days from September through October 2025 in the magisterial districts (dates, location, etc. are available on the Spring Dumpster Days schedule on the website); America Recycles Day at local libraries; Compost Awareness Day in May 2026; and National Waste and Recycling Workers Week, the week of June 17. Other suggestions are welcome.

SWAG MEMBER GENERAL QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Tom Smith asked about the reasons for the reported increase in recycling rate submitted by the division. Ms. Uri attributed it to the new ReTrac process, a streamlined online platform. Commercial institutions and haulers could access the streamlined survey, requesting information on the recycled materials and where they are. This made their reporting easier. Additionally, there was outreach to targeted businesses to encourage submissions, resulting in 130 submissions.

Mr. Smith also commented on the expense of the mattress recycling initiative and expressed being a proponent for product stewardship and extended producer responsibility programs, like tires. Ms Uri was not familiar with any efforts by the state to enact a program for mattresses. She also noted the difficulty of tracking producers with retailers like Amazon and Temu.

Ms. Gorman wrapped up the evening with information about the October 9 meeting, which will be held in person at the landfill from 6 to 8 p.m. and will include a landfill tour, food, and fun.

ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING

The meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

The next SWAG meeting will be held in person at the landfill on October 9, 2025, from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. It will include a landfill tour, food, and networking.