

## **JEFFERSON BELMONT REGIONAL SOLID WASTE AUTHORITY MINUTES FROM SPECIAL MEETING ON APRIL 26,2021**

### **ROLL CALL:**

**PRESENT:** Mike Bianconi, Jerry Echemann, Scott Fabian, Andrew Henry, George Irvin Jr., Joe Luckino, Mark McVey, Mitchell Morelli, Domenick Mucci, Rob Sproul

**ABSENT:** John Davies, Chuck Dawson, Tony Kolanski, Robert Krajnyak, James Mavromatis,

**OTHERS:** Anita Petrella, Dave Hays, Tammy Shepherd, Natalie Lysle, Louise Holliday, Alisha Teramana, Brad Polaski, Matthew Gehrig, Albin Bauer, Terry Bell, Tony Morelli, Steve Tharp, Christopher Newman

A quorum being present, Chair Scott Fabian called to order the special meeting of the Jefferson Belmont Regional Solid Waste Authority Board at the JB Green Team Building, 228 Technology Way, Steubenville Ohio and via Zoom at 5:30PM on, Monday, April 26, 2021.

### **GUEST SPEAKERS: Steve Tharp – Stark Tuscarawas Wayne (STW) Recycling District**

Mr. Tharp began by explaining the breakdown of the operational side of recycling and their partnership with different departments throughout each county. One of the key developments in all three counties (Stark, Tuscarawas, Wayne) was being able to work together and develop relationships with anyone involved in voting on their solid waste plan. They strive to get out there, meet with commissioners and municipalities, and address their needs. Their budget is approximately \$6 million a year. Three active landfills are their primary source of income. The income from the landfills is also the funding source for their resource officers. Mr. Tharp shared a Sheriff's Grant Agreement from 2021 that they have with each of the three sheriff's departments. They fund each sheriff deputy (1 in each county) in the amount of \$95,000 annually. The grant is broken down into \$91,000 and 4 - \$1,000 payments quarterly. They determine the grant amount based off a reporting requirement that they have with a system called Re-Trac. The Re-Trac Connect system reports everything the Litter Enforcement Officer (LEO) did in the past quarter. Anything from a response to an illegal dumping to some tire issues are tracked through this program.

Mr. Tharp also included a copy of the activity report off Re-Trac from Wayne County from the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2021. It shows how many litter reports, dumping reports, all investigations and which ones resulted in tickets, fines, etc. It is not incredibly detailed. They do not operate that way because one of the things they really like about their relationship with the sheriff's department is that they are very flexible and empower them to do their job. His boss takes the approach that they are all in the same boat and strive to maintain good relationships with everyone. The grant is for the officer's wages, benefits, and it allows them to buy what they need to be successful in their day-to-day duties. If there is something not covered, the solid waste district reevaluates the budget on a regular basis. The \$95,000 is all encompassing to cover his or the other two deputies' expenses to do their job. The officer works with county and city health departments, the solid waste district, local police departments and is an invaluable resource to each.

Each county is set up completely different – so a one size fits all approach does not work. There is a vastly different climate in Stark County, very urban, with a population 330,000. Wayne county is much more rural with 115,000. In Tuscarawas, it is even more rural with a population of just under 100,000. The flexibility of both the sheriffs' department and the solid waste district is integral in maintaining a smooth flow of operations. In one day, the officer may be responding to

any number of things but may also be required by the sheriff's department to do something for them as well. The solid waste department does not worry about having enough resources to cover whatever activity is happening at that moment because they have cross-trained many individuals they work with to be able to complete a vast array of tasks. Their solid waste district has the infrastructure to handle a lot of materials and situations.

One program they developed in 2019, with the assistance of the EPA, was for illegal tire dumping. Illegal tires dumped locally and that are picked up by their townships or villages are collected at a specific location. The EPA then comes in and pays for the pickup, transport, and disposal of the tires which was a cost they originally incurred on their own. This greatly assisted rural locations, where many tires are taken to landfills where they are turned away.

#### **Christopher Newman – Stark County Sheriff's Department**

The district has invested in both him and his career over the past 20 years. They have made trainings and education possible to help him further his capabilities as well as him teaching others. He has gone to school to for litter enforcement and can now teach his brethren the same. They operate on a team platform with three deputies; one in each county, and they work together to help each other. They have intel meetings once a month to compare notes. He used an example of a demolished trailer that they were investigating in his county. The EPA stepped in and told the owner they needed to remove it. The owner hired someone to do so and the company who took care of it moved the trailer to a waterway 3 miles down the road. Deputy Newman was able to work with area landowners and with cameras to capture the suspect on film. He was then able to work with prosecutors to get a warrant for him. It ended up being a three-county consortium, as the suspect lived, worked, and hung out in three different counties.

There are four main areas he deals with in his partnership with the solid waste district. Commercial enforcement, which is used in any county that has a landfill to identify trash trucks that are notoriously heavy. Deputy Newman attended classes to receive his three levels of commercial enforcement license and is now a scale master. There are two deputies on the team, himself, and another officer. The engineer's office pays for one officer and the district pays for the other officer. They have portable scales in the back of their vehicles that were paid for by the district and operated by the engineer's office. He also has a contact at ODOT that he can work with to borrow a scale for one calendar year since he has his license. This program is available to any department that is willing to send an officer to attend the classes.

He also works closely with the health department and accompanies them to inspect the trash trucks and safety equipment as well as check seals. Because of his training and credentials, he can aid them in inspections. If there is an issue, he can place the truck out of service require it be fixed before it can go back out on the road. There are also hazmat issues in his county that requires partnerships with different departments, so it is important to maintain relationships with them. He has regular meetings with the hazmat crew. They have three sites for yard waste and make sure they use clear and concise signage that let everyone know what is accepted. Visibility is key in keeping control of illegal dumping. He makes sure to visit each of the 38 sites once a week. He regularly participates in speaking engagements to educate others and hand out his card. He has seen great success with people contacting his number directly to report environmental crimes. He can assist them much quicker this way and finds it a great way to build

trust within the community. Mr. Tharp added some information about prescription drug pick-ups. While each county operates differently, they have locations at local police stations where pills can safely be disposed of and Deputy Newman is responsible for the collection of them. They have 18 pill boxes, resembling a mailbox, that serves as a safe deposit for prescription drugs.

They opened the floor for questions. Mr. Bell asked if on their overweight's, the officer can document their logbooks. Deputy Newman stated that unless you are a certified officer, you are not allowed to look at the logbook. The rules surrounding logbooks have changed since January and drivers are no longer required to carry them. Everything is done electronically now. Mr. Bianconi inquired as to who bears the responsibility of stopping overweight trucks from being on the roads and dumping in the landfills. Deputy Newman explained that there is little to no human interaction between drivers of these trucks and weigh stations because everything is done by swiping a card now. Mrs. Petrella asked who does the weights in our county. Deputy Polaski stated that it was the engineer's department.

Mr. Morelli asked if Deputy Newman was assigned to a specific duty on a specific day through the sheriff's department, does he have to remain on that task all day? Deputy Newman explained that he assigned to the district and will remain on task all day with that unless there is a situation that is more pressing, i.e. robbery, but not called away for regular service calls through the sheriffs department. He further inquired as to if the district would want compensated for the time he was taken away to perform other police duties. Mr. Tharp and Deputy Newman explained that they all work together as a team and because of their strong relationships they do not try to micromanage one another. They suggest building a plan to determine what is most important to all involved and work together. They also stressed the importance of the relationship between the sheriff and the district. They currently have a sheriff willing to work together with them but historically that has not always been the case. It is an informal understanding tailored to the needs of both through the grant agreement they have every year.

Mr. Mucci inquired where his work assignments come from. Deputy Newman explained that he works for the Sheriff and takes direction from him. If there is something the district needs him to do specifically, they work with the sheriff to coordinate. Mr. Luckino asked how often he reports to the solid waste district. He said he reports back to the district and communicates with them daily. Mr. Mucci also asked about cameras at community sites and his concern regarding working with prosecutors and court systems to be on board with handling the cases that result from illegal dumping. He is worried that without an agreement in place that we will not be able to enforce our rules and have the back up we need through the courts. Deputy Newman stressed the importance of publicizing that the sites with cameras are under surveillance. He said it boils down to working on building and maintaining relationships with prosecutors because without their buy-in, the case will never go through. Mr. Tharp added that the cameras are newer for them as well and they are still working out different issues that come up. One important thing he wanted to stress is that jurisdiction matters and that they refer to local jurisdiction to handle each of their cases. He emphasized that the installation of the cameras in his own counties has been game changing for them. They are working to make a system that is accessible for all parties that need it and is easy to navigate. He also suggested making the signs at the community sites clear and concise, stating what can and cannot be accepted, Ohio Revised Codes, and that they will be subject to prosecution if the laws are broken. Mrs. Petrella asked if their sites have fences around

them and they do not. Deputy Newman added that simplifying the language used to communicate with residents about what can and cannot be accepted has really helped them with contamination. Mr. Tharp said they started the year with a 65% contamination rate and after the implementation of the new signage and cameras they are down to 10%.

Mr. Morelli asked about junk cars and dilapidated buildings and who should bear the responsibility in handling these issues. Deputy Newman stated that he did handle junk cars but that dilapidated structures were not handled by their department. The subject was then deferred to Mr. Bauer who stated that the provision in the Code .57 G7 talks about the enforcement of the anti-littering laws and that it is a stretch to cover junk cars and dilapidated buildings. If there is a junk car that is being improperly stored then it does become a gray area as to who is responsible for making sure the car is properly disposed of. It has not been handled by the Solid Waste department historically and they typically go through junkyards or scrap metal recycling facilities. Deputy Newman said that all calls on dilapidated buildings to go the health department in Stark County. Mr. Tharp suggested to stick with the law but also try to work to come up with a compromise to work together to assist other departments as much as possible.

Mr. Mucci redirected to the litter enforcement aspect and stressed the importance of having a buy-in from all parties involved. Mr. Morelli stated that he believed that everyone is committed to working together to clean up our areas. He wanted to stress the fact that he thinks JB Green is doing a fantastic job and his hope is that they can work together to provide a new vehicle for the Jefferson County LEO. The commissioners seek to have the truck funded by the Authority. Deputy Polaski asked Deputy Newman if the Solid Waste District would have a problem with the LEO being taken for use at a crime outside of litter enforcement. Mr. Bell interjected that no one would have a problem with that if there was a major event that the LEO needed to assist. Mr. Polaski countered that in the past he was told something to the affect of "we aren't paying you to respond to domestic calls". Mr. Luckino asked how much of his time is dedicated to the solid waste district to which Deputy Newman replied 99% of his time. Deputy Newman explained that he flexes his time so that he can pay back any time to the district that he has taken to do other duties. He is paid a straight 40-hour work week and he is responsible for maintaining his hours without overtime. Overtime is only available to him if he is working on a specific case and can provide documentation. Mr. Luckino asked if it would be beneficial for our LEO to be trained in handling junk cars. Deputy Newman said absolutely. Mr. Bauer also asked who pays for the removal and processing of the junk vehicles? Deputy Newman stated that under most circumstances, the sheriff's department handles these problems. Mr. Polaski added that the responsibility falls under the township when it is on a private property. Mr. Tharp concluded that they do not have conversations that debate who is going to do what and suggested that we take the time to get to learn more about each other's jobs and what they encounter daily. Mr. Polaski stated that he felt he had a great relationship with the prosecutors in Jefferson County and they listen to his suggestions.

**ADJOURNMENT:** With no additional questions, the meeting was adjourned at 6:44pm.

**ATTEST:**

  
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Mark McVey, Vice Chair

  
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Mike Bianconi, Secretary