



Operations Committee - Board of Representatives

Virgil de la Cruz, Chair

Carmine Tomas, Vice Chair

Committee Report

Date: Monday, May 15, 2023
Time: 6:30pm
Place: This meeting was held remotely

The Operations Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair de la Cruz, Vice Chair Tomas, and Committee Member Reps. Boeger, Coleman, Ley, Sherwood, Stella, and Dakary Watkins. Rep. David Watkins was excused. Also present were Reps. Adams, Goldberg, and Summerville; Dan Colleluori, Solid Waste & Recycling; Tom Cassone, Legal Dept.; Bill Brink and Rhudean Bull, WPCA; and members of the public.

Chair de la Cruz called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
11. O31.017	REVIEW; Stamford Transfer Station Operations and Possibility of Increasing Fees for Non-Residential and Commercial Businesses using the Transfer Station. 07/06/22 – Submitted by Reps. Stella and Curtis 07/18/22 – Report Made & Held by Committee 7-0-0 08/15/22 – Report Made & Held by Committee 7-0-0 09/12/22 – Moved to Pending 10/17/22 –Held by Committee 8-0-0 12/29/22 –Held by Committee 9-0-0 01/23/23 – Held by Committee 03/02/23 – Recommitted to Steering by Committee 6-0-0 03/13/23 – Moved to Pending	Recommit to Steering 7-0-0

Rep. Stella explained he put this item on the Agenda because of the long lines that form on the street for the transfer station.

Mr. Colleluori discussed how the transfer station runs and there was discussion.

During the discussion Vice Chair Tomas took over chairing the meeting.

- The very long lines are mostly on Mondays, when the recycling center is closed, and on Saturdays. Right now it is also busy due to people spring cleaning. There are not long lines in December through March.

¹ Video Time Stamp: 00:00:15

- Only waste from Stamford is supposed to be brought there, but it is difficult to prove that. Having a system to prove that could end up making the lines longer.
- There is nowhere else in Stamford to bring waste other than the Katrina Mygatt recycling center which does not allow commercial and combination plate vehicles. People are not going to City Carting/Win since it changed ownership and the business model.
- Greenwich charges less than Stamford but does not take some trailers. Norwalk is about the same cost.
- Businesses such as Junk Luggers have become a problem. They pick up items from surrounding areas, bring them to their warehouse to sort, then bring the junk they do not keep to the transfer station. Technically it is coming from Stamford although that is not necessarily where it is originating.
- Lee Berta was working on an analysis of what it cost the sanitation department to process the garbage and determine if Stamford is subsidizing the commercial operators. Since she has left her employment here, Mr. Colleluori will find out if anyone is currently work on that analysis.
- There are 72,000 to 76,000 tons of waste per year that goes through the transfer station. Residents are allowed 200 pounds free daily.
- Approximately \$950K per year is spent on recycling and waste salaries, with \$500K-600K solely on the scale house and transfer station. 20,000 tons brings \$500K additional revenue, which basically pays for the salaries.
- The City is making \$80.00 per ton on brush, which brings \$100K per year in additional revenue.
- The employees try to expedite trucks and other vehicles while haulaway is being done at the same time. The transfer station opens up very early to get the haul-away trucks in/out so as to not impact traffic.
- Safety is very important. If there is a safety issue, the building is closed until the issue is resolved and that backs up the line.
- The total budget, minus haul-away costs, is a little over \$2M for everything – salaries, capital, expenditures, etc. This year \$3.2M was made, including the cost of haul-away.
- There is only one inbound scale, so there is one line in and one line out. It would not be possible to have two separate lines for commercial and non-commercial.
- If hours were extended this would need to be budgeted for additional staffing.

Mr. Colleluori will get back to the Committee with an estimate of how much it would cost to extend the public hours of the transfer station.

A motion to recommit Item #1 to the Steering Committee was made, seconded, and approved by a voice vote of 7-0-0 (Reps. Tomas, Boeger, Coleman, Ley, Sherwood, Stella, and Dakary Watkins in favor).

- ²2. [O31.026](#) REVIEW; Possibility of Requiring WPCA to Obtain BOR Approval Prior to Implementing Late Fees. **Recommit to Steering 8-0-0**
05/03/23 – Submitted by Rep. Adams

Rep. Adams explained that he put this item on the Agenda because the State statutes allows for a bill that is not paid within 30 days of the date of mailing to be considered delinquent. He would like to get clarification if this is correct.

Mr. Brink and Ms. Bull explained the WPCA billing process and there was discussion.

- If the bill is paid by the end of the second month, there is no interest. But if there is no payment beyond the end of the second month, the interest is calculated from 30 days from the due date. So there is an almost 30 day grace period.
- A bill does not go to collections until it is over \$500.00 due and there has been no contact from the customer despite several attempts by the WPCA, including calls, letters, and intent to lien notices. The WPCA will accept the smallest of payment plans, even \$5.00 per month, before sending it to collections. After the initial attorney letter is sent, the customer does not receive a second letter for six months. The bill does not get to the level of collections until the WPCA has exhausted all efforts to reach out and contact the customer.
- Once the collection attorneys receive the information the collection fees start. Interest keeps accruing at 1.5% per State statute.
- WPCA cannot process overdue bills like other utilities. Other utility companies can turn off the customer's services if they are not paid, and the customer has to pay the bill to get the utilities turned back on. The wastewater system has to keep running 24/7, and does not have the shut-off option to deal with unpaid bills.
- The collection policy was reviewed and approved by the State Department of Public Utility Control. Ms. Bull stated she would send the WPCA payment policy to the Committee ([attached](#)).

Mr. Cassone discussed the legal authority of the BOR regarding WPCA billing. The WPCA was created to remove as many user fees as possible from the political process. BOR cannot have oversight beyond the approval of the WPCA budget as far as setting specific user charges. WPCA is different from other utilities because if you cut off service to a residence, you impact the environment in Connecticut and New York. He would have to look into this further as to what type of oversight the BOR wants to have, against the backdrop of the State creating the WPCA.

A motion to recommit Item #2 to the Steering Committee was made, seconded, and approved by a voice vote of 8-0-0 (Reps. Tomas, de la Cruz, Boeger, Coleman, Ley, Sherwood, Stella, and Dakary Watkins in favor).

² Video Time Stamp: 00:40:40

Vice Chair Tomas adjourned the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Carminc Tomas, Vice Chair

This meeting is on [video](#).