

APPROVED

**MINUTES OF THE ALAMEDA COUNTY WASTE
MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY MEETING
OF THE
PROGRAMS AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**

Thursday, February 11, 2021

9:00 A.M.

TELECONFERENCE MEETING

Members Present:

County of Alameda	David Haubert
City of Alameda	Trish Herrera Spencer
City of Albany	Preston Jordan
City of Berkeley	Susan Wengraf
City of Dublin	Melissa Hernandez
City of Emeryville	Dianne Martinez, Vice Chair
City of Fremont	Jenny Kassar
City of Newark	Mike Hannon
Oro Loma Sanitary District	Shelia Young
City of Piedmont	Jen Cavanaugh
City of Pleasanton	Jack Balch
City of Union City	Jaime Patiño

Staff Present:

Wendy Sommer, Executive Director
Timothy Burroughs, Deputy Director
Pat Cabrera, Administrative Services Director
Jeff Becerra, Communications Manager
Justin Lehrer, Operations Manager
Alma Freeman, Program Manager
Michelle Fay, Program Manager
Arliss Dunn, Clerk of the Board

1. Convene Meeting

Vice Chair Dianne Martinez called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. Timothy Burroughs explained the process that would be utilized during the meeting. A link to the process is available here: [Virtual-Meetings-Instructions](#).

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments on the remote call and no public comments were received via the public comments email address.

3. Approval of the Draft Minutes of January 14, 2021 (Pat Cabrera)

There were no public comments on this item. Board member Wengraf made the motion to approve the draft minutes of December 10, 2020. Board member Hernandez seconded and the motion carried 11-0-1. The Clerk called the roll:

(Ayes: Balch, Hannon, Haubert, Hernandez, Jordan, Kassar, Martinez, Patiño, Spencer, Wengraf, Young. Nays: None. Abstain: Cavanaugh. Absent: None).

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4. **Statewide Recycling Commission Report Recommendations (Alma Freeman & Michelle Fay)**

This item is for information only.

Timothy Burroughs provided background on the Recycling Commission's work and introduced Alma Freeman and Michelle Fay, StopWaste Program Managers. Ms. Freeman and Ms. Fay presented an overview of the Recycling Commission's recommendations and outlined areas where StopWaste and local jurisdictions could have influence and opportunities for leadership. A link to the staff report and the presentation is available here: [Recycling-Commission-Presentation.pdf](#).

Board member Hannon stated that he is not a supporter of single stream recycling as it contributes to contamination and inquired if staff has gleaned any best practices on a global scale to ensure that items that are recyclable are not contaminating other materials. Mr. Burroughs stated that as we dive deeper into the work that we will be doing together we will certainly include exploring best practices from other nations. Board member Hannon stated that he would like to see manufacturers clearly indicate on packaging whether or not the packaging is recyclable so that consumers are not struggling to know if a product is recyclable or not. Board member Young commented that some jurisdictions will begin negotiating their hauler contract agreements and asked that staff clarify why it is important to ask the hauler where they are taking the materials. Ms. Fay replied that historically we have relied on the information provided by the waste hauler with the assumption that the materials accepted are being properly recycled. However, to increase transparency and to ensure that the materials are being properly recycled, recommendations from the Recycling Commission include asking the hauler where materials are sent after they are sorted and baled. Board member Young commented that if we limit the types of items that can be recycled, that would lead to an increase in materials landfilled and would not align with our message for landfill obsolescence. Ms. Fay replied that it is a tough conversation but we are learning that some of the materials that we are sending out of the country are being landfilled and not recycled, so it may be better to landfill the items here where we have better environmental control. Mr. Burroughs added the long term solution would be to shift how producers are manufacturing their materials and increase public education to inform their purchasing habits. Board member Young stated pizza boxes are currently accepted in the organics and inquired if going forward they will not be considered as a compostable item. Ms. Fay stated that the Recycling Commission is reviewing pizza boxes and will provide more direction in the July Report.

Board member Jordan inquired about chemical recycling and asked if the state can mandate that low grade plastics not be imported into the state. Ms. Fay stated that chemical recycling reduces a product to its original monomer form so that it can be used as a raw material for new plastic products. Ms. Fay added, rather than take the approach of a material ban, the Recycling Commission has recommended the chasing arrows symbol be allowed only when products meet certain recyclability standards as a way to incentivize producers to opt for recyclable options. Board member Spencer inquired about any efforts to address the lack of recycling centers. Ms. Sommer stated that there is a letter currently being circulated requesting that the state provide funding to jurisdictions to assist in funding recycling centers and we are planning on signing onto the letter. Board member Wengraf inquired if the Recycling Commission has a strategy for bringing forward legislation to prohibit plastic packaging in the state and if not, is that something that the agency can explore. Mr. Becerra stated that the commission is not seeking prohibition of plastic packaging but rather laws enacted that will ensure that the packaging is truly recyclable. Mr. Becerra added legislation such as SB 54 and AB 1080, and a voter initiative that should be on the next ballot, will be focused on that issue. Board member Wengraf inquired if there is a plan for the tons of materials that are currently sitting in centers that are unable to be shipped overseas and commented that there should be increased education and outreach to inform the public that some

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of these items are not being recycled. Mr. Becerra stated that the trend is to landfill the lower quality plastics. Board member Haubert stated his support for legislation that would prohibit non-recyclable plastics from entering the state and added that there should be an increase in the redemption value for recyclable materials.

Vice Chair Martinez commented on the importance of informing the public about the recyclability of materials so that they can make informed decisions when purchasing items. She added that she is disappointed that the commission did not address the issue of refillables as the impact of single-use disposables on the waste stream is significant. There were no public comments on this item. Vice Chair Martinez thanked staff for a very informative presentation.

5. Member Comments

Ms. Sommer asked that the new board members remain on the call to participate in the agency orientation. Vice Chair Martinez informed the committee about a conference provided by UC Berkeley on the Circular Economy and inquired if the agency still offers an educational allowance for board members. Ms. Sommer stated yes.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:57 a.m.