

Gustavus Disposal & Recycling Center (DRC) Quarterly Staff Report
Paul Berry, DRC Manager/ Operator
Monday, May 9th, 2022

My last quarterly report was at the February 14th General Meeting. My next quarterly report is scheduled for the August 8th General Meeting.

General Operations and Management

Labor

As spring progresses into summer, the flow of the communities waste stream builds with each returning business and person. I had the opportunity to work with Ian as an operator this past Saturday, April 30th, and there was always line of cars waiting from when we opened at 11AM to 2PM, an hour before we closed. Over three thousand pounds of recyclable and non-recyclable waste was delivered and processed. Saturdays have two operators in the scale house year-round. Starting in May I try to maintain two operators in the scale house for every Tuesday and Thursday as well. Two operators means we can keep the customers flowing and properly bale or store all the waste materials they bring. All labor at the DRC is primarily performed by the (temporary labor) Pool which currently has three members. One of our three members is seeking full-time employment outside of the DRC this spring and another member has full-time work starting in August so I will be advertising for a new Pool member early this month.

Next month I will put forward a draft of the new DRC Operator position for Council consideration. That step, along with funding for the position through the FY23 operating budget, will finally create the new, regular position. Having the DRC Operator as a regular position rather than as a temporary position means that the individual in that position will not have to go through the annual re-hiring process that is a part of the Pool. This position will also have the benefits associated with the City's regular positions: access to group health insurance, sick leave, paid time off, and retirement savings contributions – all important things for employee retention. Another important part of the regular DRC Operator position is more training opportunities than what are offered to the Pool members. The City is better served if the DRC Operator has training in landfill operations, composting operations, hazardous materials and specialty training such as diesel mechanics.

The Mound

For anyone who reviewed our Landfill Development Plan that I mentioned in my last report, you might remember that our annual waste generation rate, this our waste that goes into the mound, was estimated to be 250 cubic yards annually. I recently measured the balefill from where we were in May of last year to late April of this year and I came up with 255 yards of material. This measurement does not include the Construction/ Demolition waste area or the one and half feet of coversoil that is added between each layer of the bales in the mound but this was a good check on the growth rate for our waste mound which seems to still be in line with the use projected in our planning document.

Recycling highlights

The value of recyclable materials like cardboard and aluminum cans has been slowly recovering over the past year, but other materials such as PETE (think of those Kirkland water bottles) still have little or no return value but are at least accepted by our recycling brokers.

Since China closed its borders to mixed recyclables in 2018 the only way Gustavus can continue to recycle mixed paper is to work with the City and Borough of Juneau's RecycleWorks program (CBJ). CBJ has a recycling contract with Waste Management (WM) to

provide CBJ with recycling services (which does not include recyclables like automobiles and scrap metal). WM is a very large corporation which also owns and operates Juneau's Capital Disposal landfill. Fortunately CBJ's contract with WM allows communities outside Juneau to ship their recyclable materials to Juneau, where they are commingled with materials from Juneau. The advantage of this to Gustavus is that we can recycling mixed paper through CBJ and take advantage of CBJ's low freight rates with Alaska Marine Lines. We just did a shipment of mixed paper to CBJ last month and shipped about two and a half years worth of mixed paper, 21 bales or 25,097 pounds/ 12.5 tons. I would like to thank Stuart Ashton, the RecycleWorks Operations Manager for his assistance and support for Gustavus in our recycling efforts.

Compost sale

In late March I sent a small sample (collected from five random locations in the pile) of our compost to Soiltest Farm Consultants, a USCC certified lab in eastern Washington, for an analysis of nutrients, respiration and stability, cucumber bioanalysis, pathogens and EPA 503 Metals analysis.

https://cms.gustavus-ak.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/disposal_recycling_center/page/20691/c22-451_city_of_gustavus_c2.pdf

The results were good and our compost went on sale on April 27th and just about sold out on that day. I'd like to thank our operator, Ian, for moving all of the full cans of compost from the loader bucket into people's vehicles and to Ida for running the point-of-sale system.

Equipment status

As stated in the last report the Bobcat A770 loader had a serious breakdown in late November when one of the oil seals in the motor carrier unit (which takes the turning force of the hydraulic drive unit and drives the chain drive which drives one side of the loader). Ian had finished his work on the loader by early March but waiting on the hydraulic test gauge assembly, finally provided by Marine Hydraulics of Juneau, took an additional eight weeks. The A770 was finally back in service on April 9th. Now the older 763 loader is experiencing a failure in its fuel line inside the tank and will need shop time to remove the fuel tank which also requires the removal of the engine and hydraulic pump. We are fortunate that Ian likes to work with diesel equipment and has proven himself quite capable of maintaining both Bobcat loaders. The DRC is reliant on diesel powered equipment and at this point in time there is not a commercial diesel mechanic in Gustavus.

Second biennial Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collection event

Our last, and only so far, collection event was in May of 2018. We had a goal of providing these events every other year but the pandemic caused the scheduled 2020 HHW event to be canceled.

The event dates are scheduled to be Sunday May 15th for households and Monday May 16th for businesses. The event is free for households and businesses will have to pay on a per pound schedule for the service (same setup as 2018). There will be a summary from this event in my next quarterly report.

Zender Group's Integrated Solid Waste Management in the Field training

This training start on May 9th and will go through Thursday the 12th. I will provide a summary of this training in my next report.

Spring ground water analysis

The City's solid waste permit with the state (ADEC) requires us to sample the water beneath the DRC on a three year rotational basis. There are a total of four wells, two upstream from the DRC and two downstream. More about this requirement can be found at:

https://cms.gustavus-ak.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/disposal/_recycling_center/page/20091/2015_gw_monitoring_sample_plan.pdf

Unfortunately during last month's testing event our second downstream well, MW6, did not have enough water in it to collect a sample. Long time readers will recall that our other downstream well MW1 is also dry during times of low precipitation and low-tide. I attribute the wells going dry to isostatic rebound.

Installing new monitor wells is in the City's Capital Project plan but the project needs to be moved from mid-range to immediate in next year's planning document.

While I haven't submitted my report to ADEC yet, my preliminary review of the analysis shows no red-flags for the metals that we tested for. Full details will be linked in my next report.

Landfill fee increase this summer

I have proposed a modest 5% fee increase for the DRC's fees. The DRC's fees have not been increased since 2017 while the expenses of our operation have substantially increased. The costs associated with some of our supplies have increased 100% in that time. This increase is modest and will be reflected as an increase of 1¢ per pound for recyclable and non-recyclable (trash) waste. There will be larger increases for mixed waste, the waste that has recyclables such as food waste and cans mixed in with trash, and there will be an increase in what our compost is sold for. I have not proposed an increase for the \$3.50 minimum. This fee increase will be in the form of a resolution that the Council will consider. I hope to have a draft of this resolution to the Council next month.

Community Chest

It was a quiet winter for the Chest with service being reduced to just Saturdays and periodic requests to stop donations while the volunteers worked through what people had previously donated. More volunteers are returning this spring and Wednesday sales and bi-weekly donation days will return.

Since January or sales desk volunteers have been: Connie Darnell, Vanessa, Karen Sargent, Annie Mackovjak and Becky King.

Sorting, purging, stocking and other site work has been performed by Judy Brakel, Annie, Karen, Connie, Vicki Bender, Mary Healy, Ellie Sharman, Kin Ney, Maureen Moore, Sandy Best and Kate. A sincere thanks to all of these fine individuals for keeping the Chest alive.

Capital Project Summaries

New Composting Facility/ Quonset replacement

Project description:

As described in previous reports, the objective of this project is to replace the failing Quonset structure with a more robust composting facility capable of processing greater amounts of material in a more temperature controlled manner, and providing for an easier setup for periodically turning the compost as it goes through its thermophilic phases. These important qualities are ones that the current facility has never able to do. Another goal of this project is to pave more of the composting yard with concrete and install concrete push walls behind the piles of stored wood chips, sawdust, overs and curing compost.

Project status:

As stated in too many of my previous reports this project is several years behind schedule. I have shared some ideas with Matt Holm of PND Engineers of a basic, five bay facility constructed of large, movable, concrete Eco-blocks. Unfortunately Eco-blocks don't pass muster for stability when used as a foundation for walls so we are looking at concrete tilt-up panels. Further complications for this project are that cost increases for concrete,

construction materials and labor have pushed this projects budget beyond the \$106,000 currently available for the project and the City will need to seek additional funding if we are to have a composting facility that will serve the community well for the next 15 years. So this project is still in its design phase. As a stop-gap measure we are adding dirt to the outside of the wall that is currently leaning out in the hopes that we can make it stop caving out without caving it in.

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facility

Project description:

This project has involved the specification and purchase of a 20' long x 8' wide & 8' high welded steel container designed for storing equipment fuel, used lead-acid and dry-cell batteries and other miscellaneous hazardous materials. The unit includes spill containment, fire suppression, ventilation, lighting, shelving, and signage.

Project Status:

This project is basically complete. The unit has electrical power for lighting and Southeast Extinguisher will be completing the connections of the fire suppression system when they come to Gustavus in mid-May.

New main building

Project description:

As mentioned in previous reports the new building will be designed to initially work beside and then eventually replace the current landfill building. The current landfill building has two critical shortcomings:

- 1 It is too small to be able to properly accommodate the amount of waste throughput on a daily or weekly basis. It is too small to house the proper equipment needed to process effectively the community's waste stream.
- 2 It was not constructed to allow the full use of powered equipment, such as a small loader or forklift, within the building. Evidence for this is a lack of concrete push walls or metal clad barrier posts beside drive through openings.

Project Status:

To recap, the design process for the new building started with the adoption of the Capital Improvement Plan COG_CIP 2021-2025 document in the spring of 2021, and the adoption of the new buildings scoping document in February of 2020. This past October the Council awarded funding for the design phase of the project.

During November I drafted a Request For Proposal (RFP) document for the design, engineering and estimation of construction costs for the new building project. This document was sent to four different engineering firms. Two of the four firms expressed interest in the project but ultimately no proposals were received for the project by the close of the application period on December 16th. I negotiated with these two firms last winter and during the April General Meeting the Council accepted the scope of work put forward by PND engineering to provide the City with the following services:

1. Develop two preliminary concepts for the site layout to position the new building and support facilities, including one site visit to assess existing conditions at the site. Concept drawing will include site layout and preliminary building plan views and elevations.
2. Provide narrative of building programming, building code and local zoning requirements.
3. Public teleconference to present initial concepts to the City of Gustavus employees.
4. Develop a Rough-Order-Magnitude (ROM) cost estimate for the two concepts.

5. Research permitting requirements to support building and site operations, include ADEC, EPA, USDA, State Fire Marshal and USACE.
6. Provide recommendations for future pre-design studies including survey, geotechnical or environmental, as needed

I will start working with PND Engineering on the new building design package shortly after the household hazardous waste collection event later this month.

The end, thank you.

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