

Public Works Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

Tuesday, October 17, 2006

Public Works Department

CAC Representatives Present

Ms. Sharyn Fox, Chairperson

Mr. Phil Bomersheim

Ms. Lois Custer

Ms. Sandra Davis

Mr. Thomas Herbert

Ms. Sharron Kitchen Miller

Ms. Artistine Reid

CAC Representatives Absent

Dr. Arnold Abrams

Dr. Harold Cones

Ms. Elsy Henriquez

Ms. Crystal Hill

Public Works Representatives

Mr. Roy Chesson, CAC Coordinator

Mr. Ralph Caldwell, Street Maintenance Administrator

Mr. H. Reed Fowler, Jr., Director of Public Works

Mr. Michael Mee, Solid Waste Division Administrator

Mr. Tim Shockley, Solid Waste Division Assistant Administrator

Call to Order

Chairperson Fox called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Following a motion by Mr. Herbert and a second by Ms. Custer, the minutes for the June 20, 2006 meeting were unanimously approved as submitted.

Reappointment of Committee Members and Change in Bylaws

The terms for Dr. Cones, Ms. Reid, Ms. Custer and Ms. Miller expire this year. All four have expressed their willingness to serve another term.

The Committee bylaws allow members to serve two consecutive terms. Terms are normally two years each. However, when the Committee was formed three years ago, the initial members were appointed for a one-year, a two-year or a three-year term. This was done in order to stagger the terms between members. Since Dr. Cones and Ms. Reid are each completing their initial three-year term, their reappointment does not conflict with the bylaws. Ms. Custer and

Ms. Miller, however, are completing their second term where the first term was a one-year term.

The Committee felt it was in the best interest to keep Committee membership stable while the Bulk Waste issue is being worked. This issue has been an ongoing topic for some time and a final recommendation that will be presented to the City Manager is expected soon. While keeping Committee members who have been deeply involved with this issue seems prudent, reappointing Ms. Custer and Ms. Miller will require a change to the bylaws.

Mr. Herbert suggested that initial one-year terms served by Ms. Custer and Ms. Miller were not truly full terms. Since the bylaws made no distinction between a one-year and a two-year term, the best course of action would be to amend Article II, Section 2 of the bylaws to specify that appointments could be made to two consecutive full two-year terms. This would allow reappointment of Ms. Custer and Ms. Miller since each had served only one full term. It was further suggested that wording that established the initial staggered terms should be removed from this section of the bylaws.

Following discussion, Mr. Herbert moved, and Ms. Custer seconded, to change Article II, Section 2 of the bylaws to read:

Section 2. Terms. The Manager shall appoint members for the Committee for two (2) year terms except appointments to fill vacancies, which shall be for the length of the unexpired terms. Appointed members of the Committee shall be eligible to serve for two (2) consecutive full two (2) year terms. Youth representatives shall serve for one-year terms.

The motion was approved unanimously.

Because Article V of the bylaws requires that proposed changes to the bylaws be presented in writing at least 15 days in advance of voting, the Committee liaison was tasked to send the recommended change to all Committee members. The proposed changes would be voted on during the next Committee meeting.

There was also some discussion concerning youth members, particularly whether they had to be high school students or whether they could be college students. Mr. Fowler expressed a desire to have college students participate but also said that the former City Manager wanted the Department to work with the Office on Youth Development to find youth representatives. Possible options included having one high school student and one college student as youth representatives or increasing the total membership of CAC so that one or more college students could be added. Concerning finding high school students who will volunteer, Ms. Davis suggested that letters be sent to school guidance counselors describing the duties of CAC youth representatives and asking for assistance in recruiting students. It was decided that the issue of youth representatives should be tabled until the February meeting. This would be about the time that the terms for the current youth representatives would expire.

Bulk Waste Collection Discussion

Mr. Chesson gave a report on Bulk Waste Collection that focused on the potential cost savings of adopting a call-in system for collecting bulk waste. (Note: In this report and during all

discussions during this meeting, the term “bulk waste” includes all materials being disposed that are not placed in the automated containers. This includes yard debris as well as bulky items.)

The report compared the resources expended by the cities of Virginia Beach and Chesapeake to collect bulk waste, as these cities’ programs are similar to what Newport News would have should we go to a call-in system. The report noted significant possible cost reductions. The report concluded with four specific recommendations. Members were tasked with reviewing the written report. A vote to endorse some or all of the recommendations would be made at the next meeting. Mr. Fowler stated that the Department would forward to the City Manager/City Council the Committee’s recommendation. Since the goal is to institute changes at the start of the 2008 fiscal year (July 1, 2007), a final decision would need to be made prior to submitting next year’s budget on January 12.

The full Bulk Waste Report is included at the end of these minutes.

Pilot Street Sweeping Program

In this program, the street sweeping procedures in a selected neighborhood were changed such that residents would know a day in advance when sweeping would be done so that they could ensure that cars were not parked on the street on the day of sweeping.

A full discussion of this program was not conducted due to time considerations. Mr. Caldwell did state that the program was not very successful and that the number of cars on the street on the day of sweeping was just as high as with the normal procedures.

Mr. Bomersheim mentioned that in the East end where parking prohibitions on sweeping days are enforced with ticketing, residents who park after the street has been swept but before 3:00 pm were still being ticketed. Mr. Fowler stated that this would have to be addressed with the Police Department.

Future Topics

Leaf collection was briefly discussed. Mr. Fowler stated that he was again going to recommend to the City Manager that leaf collection be reduced by one cycle each year. A complete discussion of the leaf collection program will be scheduled for the next meeting. This will roughly correspond to the start of this year’s leaf collection.

Committee members were tasked with considering what subjects they would like to look into during this CAC term. Storm water, street flooding and street resurfacing issues were mentioned as possibilities.

On a semi-related topic, Mr. Fowler stated that he would like to have a CAC member participate when the Department conducts its annual Strategic Planning development in January.

Adjournment

Chairperson Fox adjourned the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

Cost Estimates for Proposed Bulk Waste Collection Procedures

**Presentation to Newport News Public Works
Citizens Advisory Committee
October 17, 2006**

General Discussion

Bulk waste collection costs have risen sharply over the last few years, having increased from an actual cost of \$1.5 million in FY2004 to a budgeted cost of \$2.1 million for FY2007. Although the fuel cost has risen by over 60% during this period, this only accounts for 10% of the total cost increase for bulk waste collection.

During meetings with the Public Works Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), this issue has been discussed extensively, including looking at factors that contribute to the high cost of bulk waste collection. General findings include:

1. Newport News has the most liberal bulk waste collection program of any local city or county. Newport News collects bulk waste weekly with no call-in required for pickup, allows the largest amount per collection, and places the fewest restrictions on what is allowed to be collected. Offering this level of service, however, is straining the resources of the Department.
2. The current method of bulk waste collection overtaxes the workers resulting in extensive overtime required in order to complete weekly collections. In FY2006, \$115K was originally budgeted for bulk waste overtime but the actual cost was \$161K. While a reasonable reduction in overtime would reduce overall costs by only a few pennies per household per week, it could result in major improvements in worker morale and efficiency.
3. Because citizens do not call in to schedule bulk waste collections, the current method requires every street in every neighborhood to be driven twice per week (one time for yard waste, another for other bulk waste). This significantly increases 1) the time required to run routes (contributing to the overtime costs), 2) fuel costs, and 3) vehicle maintenance costs.
4. There are far too many small loads of yard waste that could be put in the green containers. This is a result of former City policy being ingrained in people's minds and from a desire to aid in the City's recycling efforts. However, picking up small loads with a knuckleboom truck is very inefficient. Disposing of small yard waste amounts in automated containers would save considerable time for bulk waste drivers without adding any workload on automated drivers.

Currently, bulk waste collection follows scheduled routes that are run each week with drivers picking up bulk waste wherever it has been properly set out. This type system works well for trash collection since nearly every household puts out trash each week. But with only about 20% of households disposing of bulk waste each week, this method is inefficient. The inefficiency is most apparent in the fact that bulk waste collection cannot currently be accomplished during the normal scheduled times.

After discussing various options, the Department of Public Works and the Citizens Advisory Committee decided to investigate the savings that could be achieved from establishing a call-in program for the collection of bulk waste, including yard debris, and by setting a volume limit on the amount of bulk waste that would be collected each week.

Findings and Recommendations

Information was gathered from the cities of Chesapeake and Virginia Beach, both of which require call-in for bulk waste and yard waste collection and which have set volume limits on the amount that they will collect. Because these cities do not track bulk waste collection cost separate from other solid waste collection costs, it was not possible to compare bulk waste collection budgets. However, knowing the number of households served in each city and determining the number of collection vehicles and personnel required to collect bulk waste, we can make a reasonable estimate of expected costs in Newport News.

The attached spreadsheet shows the shows the FY2007 bulk waste collection budget for Newport News with current procedures still in place. The next two columns show the estimated budgets if the recommended changes in procedures were to be made. The first of the two columns is based on the amount of resources that Chesapeake uses per household served; the next column is based on the resources that Virginia Beach uses per household served.

In both cases, the savings is significant. The Chesapeake-based estimate shows a savings of \$638,725 for the year, or about \$.28 per household per week. The Virginia Beach-based estimate shows a savings of \$730,673 for the year, or about \$.32 per household per week.

There are two other procedural differences between Chesapeake and Virginia Beach's bulk waste collection and Newport News' that contribute to their lower costs and which therefore should be considered by Newport News. The first is that neither city will collect any construction or building debris including waste generated by homeowners who are doing their own remodeling projects. For instance, Virginia Beach's list of items that will not be collected as bulk waste specifically mentions remodeling or building materials, carpet, doors, cabinets, and sinks. The second difference is that both cities require that smaller yard debris such as grass and leaves that are left for bulk waste collection must be in clear plastic bags. This makes for easier pickup by collection crews and/or knuckleboom trucks. It also eliminates the residue that remains in the street when loose piles are collected.

Because of the potentially huge cost savings, the following changes in bulk waste collection are recommended:

1. Establish a call-in program for all bulk waste collection, including yard debris. Note: If possible, citizens should be able to schedule a collection the day prior to pickup. This was a major complaint during the pilot program.
2. Set a volume limit as to how much bulk waste will be collected from a household on a collection day. The suggested limit is a pile up to 6' x 4' x 4' (approx. 3.5 cubic yards) for yard waste based on the current limitation of 6' long limbs. For other bulk waste material, a limit of 3 cubic yards is recommended. Special allowances should be made for when residents are moving in or moving out as long as they notify the dispatcher of this when calling in their collection.
3. Newport News should no longer collect any building or remodeling debris regardless of who generates it. In addition to items currently not allowed, carpet, doors, cabinets, and sinks

should also be prohibited. Broken lumber, plaster and other materials resulting from demolition in preparation for remodeling should also be prohibited unless it is disposed of properly in an automated container.

4. Residents need to be urged to dispose of grass clippings and minor amounts of yard debris in the automated containers. Larger amounts of such materials should be collected as bulk waste only if it is in clear plastic bags of no more than 25 lbs each.

Existing Budget vs. Estimated Budget With Revised Bulk Waste Procedures

	Newport News 2007 BW Budget		Estimated Budget with BW Call In Based on Chesapeake		Estimated Budget with BW Call In Based on Va Beach	
PERSONNEL						
Crew Supervisor	1	36,644	1	36,644	1	36,644
Master Equip Oper-SWaste	21	653,089	17	528,691	16	497,592
Supplemental Pay		791		647		611
Overtime		115,000		94,091		88,864
ICMA/Eligible City Match		5,280		4,320		4,080
GROUP TOTALS	22	810,804	18	664,393	17	627,790
FRINGE BENEFITS						
FICA		59,263		48,488		45,794
Retirement		93,857		76,792		72,526
Group Health Insurance		125,823		102,946		97,227
Group Dental Insurance		12,172		9,959		9,406
Group Vision Insurance		220		180		170
Group Life Insurance		5,541		4,534		4,282
Worker's Comp Premium		67,070		54,875		51,827
GROUP TOTALS		363,946		297,774		281,231
CONTRACTUAL SERVICES						
Uniform Rental		8,100		6,627		6,259
GROUP TOTALS		8,100		6,627		6,259
INTERNAL SERVICES						
Vehicle Equip Lease		251,312		119,672		107,705
Vehicle Equip Repairs		408,462		194,506		175,055
Vehicle Equip Fuel		150,658		71,742		64,568
GROUP TOTALS		810,432		385,920		347,328
MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES						
Auto Self Ins Premiums		71,386		71,386		71,386
Gen Liability Ins Premiums		7,675		7,675		7,675
Wearing Apparel		1,950		1,950		1,950
Other Supplies		3,000		3,000		3,000
GROUP TOTALS		84,011		84,011		84,011
TOTAL BW BUDGET		2,077,293		1,438,725		1,346,620
		Difference from 2007 Budget		638,568		730,673
		Reduction in User Fee (per week)		0.2791		0.3194

Bulk Solid Waste Data

46 Bulk waste routes per week

44,0000 Households in city

\$2,077,293 Budgeted for Bulk Waste in FY2007 or \$.91 per HH per week

\$115,000 Budgeted for Overtime in FY2007 or \$.05 per HH per week

\$150,658 Budgeted for Fuel FY2007 or \$.07 per HH per week

\$47.21 Bulk waste cost per HH per year

Approx. 7 hours per day driving through neighborhoods

Approx 2 min: 30 seconds per pickup

Number of pickups per truck per day:	168
Total pickups per week:	7728
Total pickups per year:	401,856
Percent of HH with bulk waste each week:	17.6%
Average bulk waste pickups per HH per year:	9.13
Bulk waste cost per pickup:	\$5.17