

**City of Dubuque  
COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

**GOVERNMENTAL BODY:** Resilient Community Advisory Commission (RCAC)

**DATE:** March 3, 2022

**TIME:** 5:00 pm

**LOCATION:** Jule Operations and Training Center (JOTC) Circle Conference Room, 949 Kerper Blvd.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Dean Boles, Josh Chamberland, Katharine Connolly, Robin Kennicker, Jake Kohlhaas, Craig Reber, Whitney Sanger

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Adam Hoffman, Lalith Jayawickrama

**STAFF PRESENT:** Gina Bell

Chair Kohlhaas called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

**TEST AGENDA**

**MINUTES APPROVAL:** Commissioner Boles motions to approve minutes from February 3, 2022. Commissioner Reber seconds. Motion carries.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Jake Jansen introduced himself. He is the new Public Works Resource Management Supervisor. He shared his priorities for his new position: reduce waste, support sanitation crews and work with the community.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

a) Budget Recommendations & discussion – Commissioners received a list of improvement packages, with highlighted items that meet Climate Action Plan (CAP) goals and resiliency goals. Chair Kohlhaas asked which, if any the commission would like to support. Discussion occurred related to which items were recommended and which were not. Complete Streets budget request did not receive the City Manager's recommendation despite being listed in both the CAP and the Imagine Dubuque Plan. For clarification, Public Works (PW) Director, John Klostermann, offered that the current complete streets policy is used only for new construction projects and the policy is not considered for what PW is responsible because they are tasked with maintaining what is already in place. Complete Streets mostly falls to the Engineering department. Timeline for budget input happens throughout March with the final budget hearing on March 29, 2022.

Commissioner Kennicker motioned to write a letter advising City Council to support the CAP Coordinator position, the winter farmers market and Teen Resiliency Corps. Reber seconds. Motion carried.

Chair Kohlhaas reminded the Commission of last month's commitment to also write a letter of support of the PW Waste consultant item in the budget.

Commissioner Chamberland will draft the letter and send to the Chair for submission to City Council.

b) Sustainable Dubuque Sub-Committee – Staff member Bell explained for newest commissioners the process for Sustainable Dubuque grants and asked for sub-committee members to review grant scores ahead of next meeting. Commissioners Sanger, Reber and Kennicker will serve on the subcommittee. Additional discussion included a request that more grantees come to a commission meeting to discuss their projects and/or a request to revisit the "buddy" system for grantees or a quad chart with numbers and pictures as a final report. Commissioner Chamberland motioned to keep grant as is for this cycle and revisit the discussion at a future meeting. Commissioner Kennicker seconded. Motion carried.

**OLD BUSINESS**

a) Paul Schultz – Automated Trash Collection and Mandatory Carts presentation. Mr. Schultz shared written remarks to the commission (attached) which he also read and then took questions. Questions were varied and not all directly addressed Mr. Schultz's statements but were recycling questions in general. Overall, the commission agrees

they want to see recycling numbers and education efforts increase. Mr. Schultz offered that \$3/household should be dedicated to waste minimization education efforts.

Commissioner Chamberland asked for the exact ask from Mr. Schultz. The response was "to delay the mandatory carts and ASL (auto side loader) collection until the new Resource Management Supervisor can gather data and work on other solutions".

Ongoing discussion included the mandatory carts and how an exemption policy would work.

b) Public Works Department – Budget Request follow up, PW Director John Klostermann offered that now is the time to invest in automated collection. The trend has moved toward ASL collection and Dubuque is behind the curve. The proposal is to provide everyone a uniform, wheeled, trash can, offered in different sizes. They have a lid and replace residents using their own trash cans/setting bags out. Why is this important? To improve efficiency, safety, atheistic; plan for future collection growth without adding staff. This is fully funded through ARPA and comes with no base fee increase. The discount for service for low-to-moderate households remain. Mr. Klostermann additionally offered an example of PW's reinvestment in their snow removal equipment which has lowered salt usage while adding lane miles. He also cautioned that mandatory carts/automated service are distinct from recycling. Cart size doesn't impact recycling. The City just offers the convenience of curb side recycling pick up. All of this convenience is a part of the base rate. None of these are stand alone.

Questions from the commission followed.

Commissioner Chamberland asked for clarification on how ASL collection accommodates terrain/or other exceptions? PW: Wants everyone to try out the roller carts and if an exception is needed, it will be addressed. Following up, Commissioner Chamberland asked if the exemption policy has been drafted and if not, would PW be willing to draft before the Commission makes their decision? PW: No, everyone needs to try it first and if it doesn't work, exemptions will be addressed. Commissioner Chamberland also asked what will happen to current trash cans people use? PW: People can keep for other use, or it will go to the landfill or be recycled if possible.

Additional discussion revisited the mandatory nature of the request and how it relates to diversion. There is no data to support connection to diversion or otherwise. PW has just hired the resource management supervisor who will focus some time on this and work with the consultant engineer to work on diversion.

Chair Kohlhaas asked related to data on increasing efficiency/idling and route times with automated service. PW believed it would create efficiencies but offered no data. He also inquired if PW had been able to review and respond to Mr. Schultz's comments. PW: They, too, just received his comments tonight at the meeting. But they are familiar with the FOTH study and know our recycling rates are going in the wrong direction. They continue to explore potential federal funding to help improve these rates.

Commissioner Kennicker asked who will pay for maintenance and future carts? PW: This is what the base rate covers.

Commissioner Kohlhaas: Is it accurate that PW generates \$1M for general fund? PW: There are recharges from CMO to support services (such as our billing dept.) which is how all city utilities work (water, wastewater, etc.) Addressing concerns about the funding source, PW offered if they are not used now, they likely will get reallocated.

Commissioner Kohlhaas asked commission to make a decision regarding PW budget support request and reminding commissioners that they have already approved writing a letter of support for the consultant.

Each commissioner shared their thoughts:

Kennicker: wants to wait to try to increase recycling; right size prices and try to minimize waste. The consultant should come first, and she doesn't like mandatory carts. Two people have complained about having to get the cart. Concerns with poverty issues related to rate. (Rates will not increase in FY23)

Boles: supportive, likes efficiency, thinking about resiliency – need to separate trash issue and recycling issue. Proposes that citizens that reject the mandatory nature can speak directly to CC.

Chamberland: concerns about navigating carts for stairs and hills; wants the exemption policy laid out beforehand.  
Reber: Wait another year. Needs more public information. Worried about mandatory. Not in favor of this.

Sanger: Sees opportunity to educate, to reach families and encourage recycling with this free, positive interaction with PW. As rental unit owner - people don't want to buy their own carts - so this is helpful! Family sizes make different amounts of trash / need different bins. But more education is needed overall.

Connolly: agrees with increasing education. Need more recycling education. Understands both sides.

Kohlhaas: undecided, doesn't feel strongly enough in favor to write a letter of recommendation. Would like to wait, wants to move to ASL collection; wanted to hear more about fuel efficiency; wants public communication and process evaluation which still have not been addressed. Supportive of waiting.

Kohlhaas suggested a letter stating we are in favor of auto-collection and updates to the system but don't recommend this line item because path to zero waste (PTZW) issues and lacks public input.

Boles asks for clarification on the connection between auto-collection and path to zero waste.

Kohlhaas clarifies that there is no data on if bin size matters. We have seen price structures that can be altered that would help PTZW. Sanger reminds commission that we are not looking at fee structure, just the carts and that everyone will be issued the smallest (35 gallon) cart unless requested otherwise.

Sanger motions recommending carts. Boles seconds. Discussion: Concern that this is using maintenance funds for a new initiative. Motion fails, 2:5.

Kohlhaas motions to send City Council an advisory letter clarifying the RCAC is in full support of auto collection but concerned with public input and education and a review of existing systems and asks that an analysis of systems and improvements be made. Kennicker seconds. Discussion: Can we hold ARPA funds? (no, specifics but there is a timeline on how quickly they need to be spent.) Chamberland amends motion to include recommendation that ARPA funds be reserved for use after more information can be obtained.

Reber seconds amended motion. Motion carried 5:2.

#### **HOW DID I SHOW UP? COMMISSIONER REPORTS:**

Sanger: Project Rooted - needs volunteers 3rd Wednesday each month at Steeple Square from 10 am - 4 pm  
Boles: CDAC - did not meet last month

Kennicker: Leisure Services - reviewing CIPs; pesticide free parks discussions, dog waste discussions.

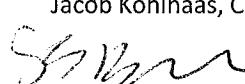
Chamberland: Dubuque colleges sustainability coalition - met several times; talking about CAPs for schools; creating a hub for resources and sustainability best practices case studies

**NEXT MEETING:** The next commission meeting will occur on Thursday, April 7, 2022, at 5 pm at the Jule Operations and Training Center (JOTC) in the Circle Conference Room, 949 Kerper Blvd.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The Commission adjourned at 7:07 pm.

Minutes approved by: 

Jacob Kohlhaas, Commission Chair

Prepared by: 

Gina Bell, Sustainable Community Coordinator

**Public Works – Resource Management FY23 Draft Budget Proposal:  
Paul Schultz discussion with RCAC 3-3-23**

**Key Issues: Why FY23 is not the right year to approve this Big Change from our PAYT system**

**PAYT 1990**’s Iowa law (7,000 programs nationally)

Initially required DBQ re poor recycling. Must be Fair. Econ Sound, Environ Sustainable

**FOTH 2019** reported (but unshared) Survey data:

“Does a 35g trash bag or can meet your needs? Yes 78%”

“Paths Toward Zero Waste Ratepayer Interest: VIP 40%; IMP 29%; Somewhat IMP 21%”

“Most important COD PTZW Goals: Increase recycling tonnage and participation. 64%”

Reduce Landfill tonnage. 60%”

Increase PTZW promo and education. 31%”

Increase Food Waste recycling users and tons. 22%”

“How willing are you to separate food scraps and set out separated from Trash?

Very Likely 36%

Likely 26%

“Which activities do you already do or would be willing to do?

Recycle more products from my home 83%

Add food scraps to your yard debris container or yard waste bag 47%

Use a backyard compost bin 37%

“Foth Recommendations:

Appoint a PTZW Implementation Team working with RCAC in FY22

Use GHG metrics to create a baseline in FY21

Implement glass recycling drop-off program in April 2020 **DONE**

Develop, Implement, and continually Update community engagement/education

“Foth Conclusion: The primary cornerstone of any ZW plan is a PAYT fee structure. It creates an incentive to save money by diverting materials from landfilling. Foth believes that this is a strong reason behind the City being significantly below the national average in pounds of solid waste landfilled per household.”

**Eroding PAYT incentivizing Rate Structure**

In FY12: 35g base fee (90 % HH) @\$10.72; 64g cart @\$21.00, 96g cart @\$30.00

For FY23 34g (77% HH)@\$15.38; 48gcart@17.22; 64g@20.65; 96g@\$29.00

A major reason for the base rate increases is the phased in \$1M/year transfer from these fee revenues to The General Fund with the stated goal to reduce property taxes. This \$1M if applied to the projected smallest container customers in the proposed fee structure **equals \$6.67 per month** with no cost burden to larger cart users in current or prior years.

## **Consequences on our stated City goals PTZW, PAYT, and CAP:**

**PTZW:** PW has not promoted or proposed implementing initiatives and recommendations based on actionable data delivered in the Foth Report.

**PAYT:** Destroyed: The Fee structure is no longer incentivizing diversion from landfilling. Recycling dropped from 24% of total collected tonnage to 17% down 41% in 8 years. In the earlier 2000's, COD collection had reached a 39% diversion from landfilling.

The Proposed FY23 Rate structure is neither Fair nor Equitable.

It burdens smaller vol generators, renters, elderly with disproportional higher fees

**CAP:** Waste Minimization is one of the best ways to engage residents in Climate Action

## **Plan First**

I learned from both my Mother and Father "Measure Twice, Cut Once!"

To Develop a City Solid Waste Mgmt Plan was approved by City Council. Never started.

Committing to Mandatory Carts before Ratepayer input has been gathered is failure.

There is no fiscal reason why Mandatory Carts must be committed to for FY23.

ARPA funds can be allocated by DBQ until 2026 in my understanding. Table for a year.

A Resource Mgmt Coordinator has been hired with experience in Waste Minimization.

Give him a chance to first review operations, the Foth Report and hire a consultant.

A DNR DMASWA Landfill Waste Sort is scheduled this summer. It can assess contents from 5 City trash trucks, one from each day of the week, and identify the % of and types of recyclables trashed in each of the 5 loads including ASL loads. This is actionable data. Dubuque captured this specific data 10 years ago.

## **MANDATORY Trash Carts for 30% of HH not scheduled for ASL????**

I cannot understand why ratepayers that are in overly challenging areas for ASL should be required to get carts.

What is more "antiquated" is the inadequate provision of recycling tipper carts. A small FY23 Improvement Increment to spend \$11K to recycling tipper carts is not currently recommended by the City Manager.

## **ARPA Funds**

ARPA Funds are not only included for use in the ASL / Mandatory Carts Improvement Increment. A \$652K item is also largely hidden in the proposed Operating Budget under Replacement Equipment for an unspecified number of Trash Tipper Carts. There are no "Replacement Carts". These are reducing the \$ "ask" in the improvement increment to look like less. However, Operating Budgets are denied doing this because it takes away the policy decision making responsibility from the designated policy makers: City Council and surrenders it to City Mgmt. Delay ARPA fund considerations until FY24.

## **Work Comp Injuries**

The lost work hours in the previous PW PPT shown amount to 6.5 hours per year per San Driver. The hours or cost are not significant in a \$4M Budget.