

WEST CONTRA COSTA INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (WCCIWMA) BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES – JULY 13, 2023

Meeting Date | Time 7/13/2023 6:15 PM | Meeting Location Hercules City Council Chambers, 111 Civic Drive, Hercules, CA 94547

Meeting called by Board of Directors

Type of meeting Regular

Authority Staff Present Peter Holtzclaw, Reka Abraham, Lisa Borreani, Rachel Dice, Webster Nguyen, Donald Sturman

Legal Counsel John Bakker

Board Members Present:

Directors: T. Rudnick, El Cerrito (Chair); D. Romero, Hercules; A. Tave, Pinole (Vice Chair); G. McLaughlin and C. Zepeda, Richmond; and R. Xavier, San Pablo

Absent: D. Robinson, Richmond and F. Glover (Ex-Officio) Contra Costa County

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chair Rudnick called the meeting to order at 6:15 P.M.

The Roll Call established the existence of a quorum (McLaughlin, Romero, Rudnick, Tave, Xavier, and Zepeda*).

*Director Zepeda arrived at approximately 6:55 P.M.

CLOSED SESSION

There was no Closed Session.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Rudnick led the Pledge of Allegiance.

EX-PARTE COMMUNICATIONS & DISCLOSURES

There were no ex-parte communications or disclosures.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No written comments were submitted, or oral comments made, by any member of the public.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. June 8, 2023 Authority Board Meeting Minutes
2. FY 2023-24 Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)

Chair Rudnick removed Item 2 from the agenda for discussion and asked that the positions covered by the COLA be listed.

Executive Director Peter Holtzclaw advised that five positions were affected by the COLA and included the Recycling and Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Program Manager, the Recycling & HHW Coordinator, the Finance and Administration Manager, the Outreach Program Manager, and the Outreach Coordinator.

Director Xavier referred to Item 1, the minutes of the June 8, 2023 meeting, and requested an amendment to the sixth paragraph on Page 3 and, to the third paragraph on Page 8, she requested the following amendment: *Director Xavier stated that the City of San Pablo's Fourth of July celebrations would not use fireworks this year and would have music and an aerial drone light show instead. Director Zepeda noted that the cities of Richmond and San Pablo had voted to pursue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a new PCA [Post-Collection Agreement] and if every member agency decided to do their own thing he asked how that would impact the different collection systems.*

MOTION by Director Romero to approve Consent Calendar Item 2, as submitted, and Item 1, as amended by Director Xavier. **SECOND** by Director Xavier.

MOTION PASSED unanimously by a Roll Call vote:

STAFF REPORT

Staff Report Item 7 - | Presenter | Peter Holtzclaw - Executive Director

Executive Director Holtzclaw had no staff report at this time.

Agenda Item 8.1 – Edible Food Recovery Presentation | Presenter | Peter Holtzclaw - Executive Director

Executive Director Holtzclaw introduced Recycling & Household Hazardous Waste Program Manager Reka Abraham, and Recycling and Household Hazardous Waste Coordinator Rachel Dice to make the presentation. He commended the work they had done and the information that had been synthesized including the conclusions from Abbe & Associates on edible food recovery, and the use of the \$100,000 that had been approved by the Board last month to be distributed in grant work.

Recycling & Household Hazardous Waste Program Manager Reka Abraham reported that according to the California Association of Food Banks, more than one in five Californian's struggled with food insecurity, a 2021 study by San Jose State University had found that since 2020 there had been a 63 percent increase in food insecurity in the Bay Area, and in the U.S. an estimated 130 billion meals were thrown away every year. While there had been no food insecurity studies specific to the West Contra Costa area, over the last three years zip codes within the member agencies had an estimated food insecurity average rate of 8.1 percent of residents using the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps), with some areas of Richmond as high as 13 percent and some areas of El Cerrito as low as 3 percent. A survey of the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) in 2021 showed that 15 percent of families with school-aged children were below the poverty line.

Ms. Abraham explained that SB 1383 required California to increase excess edible food recovery by 20 percent by 2025 and local jurisdictions were required to identify and report on edible food generators and food recovery organizations (FROs) and services, ensure the generators had donation contracts with the FROs and create capacity within the food recovery network to recover all the potentially donatable food available. She stated that RecycleMore had an opportunity to support food recovery within the jurisdiction with a grant to ensure edible food capacity within the FROs to receive and distribute all available edible food waste from Tier 1 and Tier 2 generators, strengthen the edible food recovery network, decrease food insecurity for residents and establish relationships with FROs to facilitate partnerships between organizations.

Ms. Abraham reported that within the RecycleMore service area there were 70 Tier 1 generators, 21 Tier 2 generators, and 49 FROs. In 2021, an estimated 700,000 pounds had been donated from the West Contra Costa area to the 49 FROs. The majority of the FROs were community centers or churches that hosted food pantries with items received from the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano to distribute to residents. The Food Bank was the largest food recovery organization supporting Contra Costa County and the majority of Tier 1 generators had contracts with the Food Bank, although its distribution center was located in Concord. She explained that there were four commercial kitchens within the RecycleMore service area, two of which were small church programs and two were large non-profits that cooked and provided food to the unhoused and the food insecure. She identified the number of Tier 1 generators, Tier 2 generators and FROs located within each member agency.

Ms. Abraham also presented the results of the interviews conducted by RecycleMore's contractor Abbe & Associates, which had determined that the greatest challenges of the food recovery organizations in West Contra Costa were transportation, lack of a local food hub/distribution center, storage restrictions with lack of space and a lack of refrigeration, not enough funding for staff support and low volunteer availability, SB 1383's requirement for written contracts that restricted donation possibilities, and connecting the generators with food to donate with recovery organizations with the capacity to accept the food.

Recycling and Household Hazardous Waste Coordinator Rachel Dice stated that in researching other California jurisdictions that offered grants to FROs and edible food generators to assist with food recovery, a number of common characteristics had been observed, the most prevalent being smaller grant allocations in the range of \$20,000 to \$25,000 per organization, grants open to both non-profit and for-profit entities, flexibility in the use of funds, and grants where applicants were allowed to request a specific amount of funding.

Ms. Dice stated that after evaluating many grant programs throughout the state two programs stood out as examples of the most applicable types of grant programs RecycleMore could consider for the first round of grant applications. She referred to StopWaste in Alameda County, which was a Food Waste Prevention and Recovery Grant of \$20,000 and a Surplus Food Donation Equipment Grant of \$10,000 that was more specific in nature. She also referred to an Operations Grant of \$60,000 and an Equipment Grant of \$80,000 through the City of Carlsbad as another example of a grant of interest to RecycleMore.

Based on the grant examples and the challenges involved, Ms. Abraham recommended several grant options. Grant Option 1 Part 1 was intended to immediately alleviate restrictions imposed upon food recovery efforts due to operational restrictions. An Operations Grant of \$50,000 was proposed with funding amounts up to \$20,000 per organization, with funding to be used to increase edible food recovery by supporting operational expenses such as utility bills, rent or fuel costs, and be made available to edible food recovery organizations located within the RecycleMore service area.

Grant Option 1 Part 2 was intended to immediately alleviate restrictions imposed upon food recovery efforts due to equipment difficulties. An Equipment Grant of \$50,000 maximum was proposed with funding amounts up to \$40,000 per organization, with funding to be used to increase edible food recovery by purchasing new equipment or fixing existing equipment that directly supported storage or transportation with examples including freezers, stoves, storage sheds, or a transportation vehicle, available to edible food recovery organizations located within the RecycleMore service area.

Grant Option 2 was intended to alleviate restrictions due to staffing and supply shortages and assist Tier 2 generators with prepared food donations. An Operations Grant with a \$40,000 total and with funding amounts up to \$20,000 for individual organizations, funding would have to be used to increase edible food recovery by supporting operational expenses and could also be used for staff wages.

Another \$40,000 could be available for an Equipment and Supplies Grant with funding up to \$20,000 per organization, to be used to increase edible food recovery by purchasing new equipment, fixing existing equipment, purchasing storage, or purchasing supplies. A \$20,000 Tier 2 Generator Assistance Grant with funding up to \$5,000 per organization would have to be used to purchase weighing scales, prepared food packaging, cold storage and the like.

Ms. Abraham hoped to continue grant funding into the future and identified two additional options for the next three to five years such as a \$250,000 Food Recovery/Hub Grant that would be allotted to a single organization to create and maintain a food recovery hub within the RecycleMore area; with the requirement that the hub would have to be made available to generators to deliver donations to, and for other FROs to pick up recovered food. A Circular Economy Grant of \$100,000 had also been recommended to provide funds for Food Prep/Culinary Education Programs and partner with organizations to support job creation and to assist expansion of current programs to include additional services for low-income residents.

Ms. Abraham responded to questions from Director Romero and clarified that the first two options were for the already Board approved \$100,000 in grants. She clarified that Grant Option 1 Part 1 would be in an amount of \$50,000 and Grant Option 1 Part 2 would also be for \$50,000. Potential Grant Option 2 would be for \$100,000, which was one of the initial two options, only one of which would be chosen. She explained that RecycleMore staff had already spoken to the Food Bank and a proposed hub would be under the umbrella of the Food Bank but would remain with a recovery organization within the West Contra Costa area. Because that would not be likely for three to five years, the burden would be on one of the large organizations to become the hub, which would identify how it would be managed.

Director Romero referred to schools and noted that under state law, elementary schools were now offering breakfast and lunch to students. He urged staff to work with the schools to redistribute unused food to senior centers, as an example. He also noted that Starbucks sold food as well as coffee and urged checking into that opportunity for redistribution.

Director Xavier referred to a situation where food had been gathered from Trader Joe's, Food Maxx, Noah's Bagels and others more than once a week and had been distributed to seniors to take home, which was no longer being done since the pandemic. She commented that other food distribution to seniors was also no longer being done since the pandemic. She asked if those situations had been included in the data.

Ms. Abraham stated that the contractors had included all the food pantries including grocery distribution but she would verify that situation.

Vice Chair Tave verified with staff the record keeping required by SB 1383 and the need for the data to be submitted to CalRecycle, and requested that data also be submitted to the RecycleMore Board to ensure that the expenditure of grant funds to meet the state's requirements was also successful from a diversion and financial point of view.

Ms. Abraham stated that success metrics would be sought to ensure that the funds expended would benefit the community and the amount of food recovered and redistributed by area would be presented to the Board.

In response to Director McLaughlin, Ms. Abraham described the differences between the identified options, particularly with respect to Tier 2 generator assistance. When asked about a preferred option, she commented that Option 1 would be simpler while Option 2 would create more work for RecycleMore staff. She also confirmed that the options could be changed year to year.

Director McLaughlin commented that 59.1 percent of the FROs were located in Richmond and she asked whether a threshold could be established to award a minimum 50 percent of the grant applications to Richmond, and Ms. Abraham commented that would likely naturally be the case, particularly since Richmond includes the two big FROs that were being targeted for grant purposes.

Director McLaughlin commented that for local grant applications in Richmond community workshops were often conducted by the city and she requested that RecycleMore hold a community workshop in Richmond for any edible food grant for better efficiencies and to better inform the public of the intent, the application, and the process, and Ms. Abraham stated that a workshop had been proposed as part of the process that could be clarified for the Board with a staff update in September 2023.

Chair Rudnick asked about the distinction between non-profits and for-profits with respect to the grants and suggested that initially it would be important for RecycleMore to initially include non-profits only. She supported an initial focus on non-profits and suggested that Option 1 appeared to be the best option at this time. She also asked whether Abbe & Associates would help RecycleMore staff develop the selection criteria and staff clarified that the contract with Abbe & Associates had essentially been completed, although expert assistance would be sought in the process given the size of the proposed grant and the desire to do it right.

Chair Rudnick also urged caution that while she understood the City of Richmond was the largest member agency, she did not support language that would stipulate that 50 percent of any grant would be committed to Richmond because she did not want to potentially deter other competitive organizations from applying given such a stipulation.

Chair Rudnick recognized that Director Zepeda was present at this time.

Director Romero expressed concern with the transportation component of Option 1, noted that many cities had used a gift card process and there was an organization to manage that process, and recommended potentially reaching out to one of those organizations for help since they also dealt with grants. He agreed with the need to initially start off with non-profit organizations. Given that unused food under SB 1383 usually related to food that was uncooked, he questioned the relationship of food recovery with restaurants since they dealt with cooked food to order.

Ms. Dice clarified that SB 1383 had requirements for Tier 2 generators, which includes restaurants, and while most restaurants did not have excess food and would be compliant there were some larger restaurants that had a lot of stock that might not get cooked and that food could be donatable. She added that anything having to do with the large restaurants would be very strict.

Director Romero supported a 50/50 cost sharing in some grants or potentially 60/40 to be able to spread the grant money out. He also asked staff to identify whether the proposed programs would be ongoing and how funding would be available in the future.

Chair Rudnick did not want to alienate anyone from being able to apply for grants if they did not have the matching share to be eligible. She supported strong accountability and appropriate tracking.

Mr. Holtzclaw commented that part of the grant criteria was to tie it back to SB 1383. He noted the funding insecurity with respect to food banks that everyone was at capacity, and the hope that the grants would build on capacity but he emphasized that everything was compliance driven.

Director Zepeda asked if there was a grading system to identify what was edible, particularly with respect to restaurants. He noted, for instance, that Starbuck's food was wrapped with an "expiration" date and in some places foods set to expire were set aside for the non-profits.

Ms. Abraham reported that CalRecycle adhered to the State of California Health Codes and allowed FROs to identify non-edible foods based on those codes.

No written comments were submitted, or oral comments made, by any member of the public.

Ms. Abraham sought direction from the Board and stated that staff would return to the Board in September for action.

Each member of the Board expressed a preference for Option 1, and Director McLaughlin reiterated her request for one or two community workshops to be added to the process.

BOARD MEMBER AND STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Rudnick reported that the City of El Cerrito was in the process of the massive project of achieving compliance with the color of its waste bins.

Director McLaughlin announced that the movie about the Community First Village from Austin, Texas of formerly unhoused people would be shown in the Bermuda Room on July 29, 2023, from 2:00 to 4:00 P.M. Everyone was invited to attend the movie and the subsequent discussion.

Director Zepeda announced that the 2023 Taste of Richmond event, the first since COVID, would be at Civic Center Plaza on Saturday, July 15 at 11:00 A.M.; Thrive Thursdays would be held at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park in Richmond with healthy activities, healthy food giveaways, and information about activities and services from local community groups every Thursday through Labor Day; and on Saturdays he would host a banned book reading at the Multicultural Book Store in Richmond and then move over to the Richmond Library, now open on Saturdays, with guest readers.

Director Romero reported that I-80 would be closed on July 21, 2023 at 9:00 P.M. eastbound and would open again July 24, 2023 at 5:00 A.M.

ADJOURNMENT

With consensus of the Board, Chair Rudnick adjourned the meeting at 7:09 P.M. until the regular Board meeting scheduled for September 14, 2023 at 6:15 P.M.

I hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct statement of the Official Minutes of the West Contra Costa Integrated Waste Management Authority Board meeting held July 13, 2023.

Donald W. Sturman 9/14/2023

Board Secretary

Date