

WORKSHOP

MARCH 10, 1989

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, met in a Workshop Session on March 10, 1989, at 8:30 A.M.

The following Board Members were present: Vice-Chairman W.F. Miles, Commissioner Wilson Holley, Commissioner Robert G. Fleet, and Commissioner Donald D. Brown. The County's Administrative Supervisor, Mr. Ronnie Bell, was also present.

Vice-Chairman Miles opened the Workshop by stating that its purpose is to discuss a recycling program for the County. Commissioner Brown suggested that the Board hear comments from persons representing the local garbage franchises. Mr. Jerry Schnitzius, of Environmental Waste Systems, stated that there are three methods of facilitating the recycling process: 1) set out containers at specific drop sites, 2) curbside service by the franchises, and 3) setting up a plant at the landfill and sorting the refuse there. Mr. Schnitzius stated that the first alternative produces only a 3% recovery rate for recyclable materials. The second alternative is not economically feasible because of the sparse population concentration in many areas of the County. The third alternative would yield the highest percentage of recovered recyclables, but would also demand the highest cost in labor. Mr. Schnitzius further stated that the City of Destin would give the Board the information on their experience with recycling programs.

Vice-Chairman Miles stated that he feels the County should pattern its recycling program after the one in Putnam County. Commissioner Fleet stated that they were advised that Putnam County experiences at least a 30% recovery rate of recyclable materials. He further stated that the most attractive feature of Putnam County's program is that the "leftover" trash can be compacted to one-sixth of its original volume. Mr. Schnitzius agreed that compaction, or baling, will add years of use to the landfill. Commissioner Brown advised that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has found that the average cost for an acre of landfill will be \$200,000.00. Mr. Schnitzius stated that Walton County is in an enviable position and could continue as they are (with regard to the landfill) for perhaps 20 to 30 years. Mr. Schnitzius proceeded

to list several cities and states which are in critical situations because of their garbage collection and recycling programs. Commissioner Fleet advised that the County's "only hope of financial survival" is to spread the cost of recycling across the number of users.

Mr. Schnitzius suggested that Walton County may consider becoming the site for a regional landfill. In that way, the County may supplement the rising cost of recycling by charging fees to out-of-county users. Commissioner Brown advised extreme caution in opening Walton County's landfill to other Counties.

Mr. Leroy Day, of DAYCO, asked if the County will provide the labor for the construction of the recycling center. Commissioner Fleet answered that it will be contracted out.

The Board asked for Mr. Charlie Hunter, of Dartech, to present his views on recycling. Dartech is the company which installed the recycling center in Putnam County. Mr. Hunter agreed that Walton County's landfill is a valuable asset. Mr. Hunter further stated that the baling process (after recycling) would result in a 50-65% reduction in volume. This, in turn, would reduce the cost of lining cells in the landfill. Mr. Hunter agreed that a curbside service is not successful in rural areas. Commissioner Brown stated that his concern is that, once recycling centers are mandated, the market for recyclable materials will decrease. Mr. Hunter stated that the price for recyclable materials will change for a period of about a year. He further stated that educating the public is a costly procedure in a recycling program, but it will benefit the community.

Commissioner Fleet asked if the recycling program will adversely affect the collections franchises. Both Mr. Schnitzius and Mr. Day agreed that, if anything, the implementation of a recycling plant will be an advantage to their franchises.

Vice-Chairman Miles stated that he still feels that a recycling plant is the best route to follow.

Mrs. Barbara Dykman, DeFuniak Springs City Councilwoman, asked if there would be a County-wide mandatory garbage fee. The Board answered that there would be and it most probably would be collected by a municipal service tax based on the tax rolls. Mr. Schnitzius advised

that one county has added the fee to the monthly water bill. Vice-Chairman Miles advised that the County had attempted to add a charge on a utility before and was advised that it is illegal to do so. Mr. Schnitzius advised that it is acceptable to assess the fee in that manner, but the utilities cannot be denied for nonpayment of the fee. Commissioners Brown and Fleet stated that this assessment should be handled through the Tax Collector. Mr. Hunter advised that the garbage collection fee would not be subject to Homestead Exemption if it is assessed according to the tax rolls and only improved-property owners would qualify for the assessment. Commissioner Brown advised that the County would be asking the citizens to do nothing they are not already required to do.

Mr. Day suggested removing all the green boxes and placing containers at certain business locations. Those business owners would sell the tags to the citizens to place on their garbage bags which would be placed in the containers. The incentive for the businessman would be to resell the tags to the customers for a small profit. The Board agreed that some people still may not buy the tags and that the scattered rural populations may not be conducive to large amounts of garbage being brought into "town" to place in the specified containers.

Vice-Chairman Miles suggested that a sales tax is the only "fair" way to operate the landfill. Mr. Schnitzius suggested that sometimes a decision must be based on what is best for the County in general, rather than what is "fair." Commissioner Brown stated that the landfill may already employ enough workers to man the recycling center without hiring more workers. Mrs. Dykman advised that the City of DeFuniak should be exempt from any special tax.

Mr. Mike Standley, City Manager, advised that he supports the idea of mandatory payment.

Mr. Charles Helton, Mayor of Freeport, suggested reconsidering the idea of "attaching" the fee to the monthly power bill. Mr. Hunter suggested using information from the power companies without actually asking them to collect the fee. The Board agreed with Mr. Hunter's suggestion. Commissioner Fleet advised that the fee collection should be kept "in the Courthouse."

Discussion continued.

Vice-Chairman Miles stated that some families should be exempt from the charge because of their low-income status. Mr. Schnitzius advised that he has worked with HRS in exempting certain qualified families. Mr. Hunter stated that Putnam County has several "fee exempt" families. He further stated that Putnam County has created a Solid Waste Management Advisory Board. Individuals may petition that Board for "exempt" status. Commissioner Brown stated that certain provisions should be made for those people who honestly cannot afford the assessment.

Commissioner Fleet advised that the budget indicates that things of this nature (i.e. the recycling plant) must pay for themselves. The Board agreed.

Mr. Bell advised that the Grants Department is still awaiting the paperwork for the Solid Waste Recycling Grant.

Vice-Chairman Miles suggested that bid specifications be prepared for a recycling plan and center along the same lines as the one in Putnam County.

Mrs. Dykman suggested allowing the clients of the Walton County Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC) pick up curbside garbage. Commissioner Fleet stated that he feels that that may not be feasible due to the fact that the number of available clients would be indefinite and also that transportation would pose a problem. Commissioner Fleet further stated that he had considered placing a baler at the ARC building.

Mr. Hunter advised that Dartech would construct a building adjacent to the landfill. The "up-front" cost to the County would be virtually nothing. In addition, Dartech agrees to hire at least 70-75% of their employees from the County. Mr. Hunter advised that four to five acres would be needed at the landfill to construct the recycling center. Commissioner Brown added that, after the center is complete, the County will then negotiate Dartech's price to process the County's "waste-stream" and also the percentage of recyclable sales to be returned to the County. Mr. Hunter agreed.

Mr. Hunter advised that "white goods" (stoves, refrigerators, washers, etc.) can be baled. He advised that it has been his experience that the condensers do not have to be removed.

Mr. Hunter further advised that his company is studying the possibility of shredding used tires or contracting the job. Commissioner Brown asked if the shredded tires can be used as a road base. Mr. Hunter advised that DOT will be conducting research on that issue. Mrs. Dykman advised that shredded tires have been used to construct porous irrigation tubes. Mr. Schnitzius advised that there are mobile shredders, but they are very costly. Mr. Ronnie Hudson, Public Works Director, stated that perhaps the shredded tires can be mixed in with asphalt as a road top. Mr. Hunter advised that a County on the East Coast attempted that and a great number of road travelers experienced flat tires because steel-belted radial tires had been used in the mix.

Mr. Standley advised that he feels the addition of a sales tax to cover the cost of operating the landfill should be saved as a last resort. He supports the mandatory payment suggestion. Commissioner Holley advised that a sales tax would include tourists who expel a reasonable amount of the County's trash, especially in the south end of Walton County. Discussion continued.

Vice-Chairman Miles adjourned the Workshop.

APPROVED: Sam Pridgen
Sam Pridgen, Chairman

ATTEST: Catherine King
Catherine King, Clerk