



**MINUTES**

SOUTH BAYSIDE WASTE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY  
 MEETING OF THE Board of Directors & Technical Advisory Committee (Annual Retreat)  
 May 25, 2023 2:00PM  
 Canada College 4200 Farm Hill Blvd. Redwood City, CA 94061

**Call to Order: 2:07 PM**

**1. Call to Order/Roll Call  
Board Members**

Agency	Present	Absent	Agency	Present	Absent
Belmont	X		Redwood City	X	
Burlingame	X		San Carlos	X	
East Palo Alto	X		San Mateo	X	
Foster City	X		County of San Mateo		X
Hillsborough	X		West Bay Sanitary District	X	
Menlo Park	X				

Member Taylor (Menlo Park) Participated by Zoom, using 1 of 2 of her emergency declarations due to illness.

**Roll Call TAC Members**

Agency	Present	Absent	Agency	Present	Absent
Belmont	X		Redwood City	X	
Burlingame		X	San Carlos	X	
East Palo Alto		X	San Mateo	X (2:38PM)	
Foster City	X		County of San Mateo		X
Hillsborough	X		West Bay Sanitary District	X	
Menlo Park		X			

**2. Public Comment**

Persons wishing to address the Board on matters NOT on the posted agenda may do so. Each speaker is limited to three minutes. If there are more than five individuals wishing to speak during public comment, the Chairman will draw five speaker cards from those submitted to speak during this time. The balance of the Public Comment speakers will be called upon at the end of the Board Meeting. If the item you are speaking on is not listed on the agenda, please be advised that the Board may briefly respond to statements made or questions posed as allowed under The Brown Act (Government Code Section 54954.2). The Board's general policy is to refer items to staff for attention, or have a matter placed on a future Board agenda for a more comprehensive action or report and formal public discussion and input at that time. **Speakers may also submit comments via email prior to the meeting by sending those comments to [rethinker@rethinkwaste.org](mailto:rethinker@rethinkwaste.org).**

None

### 3. Board/TAC Retreat “Strengthening our Partnerships.”

Chair Aguirre welcomed board and TAC members to the retreat and introduced Jim Delia who would facilitate the retreat.

Jim Delia went over the agenda for the day with the intent of strategic planning and thinking about the big picture for the agency. Discussion topics include reviewing the agency’s mission and objectives, the value of RethinkWaste Stakeholder and Agency accomplishments, and its 2023 goals.

After discussing RethinkWaste’s current mission statement and our triple zero objectives (Zero recyclables to the landfill; Zero organics to the landfill; and Zero Green House Gas emissions generated from our operations) the group broke into smaller groups to discuss: 1) what do you love most about your work with RethinkWaste, and 2) what changes would you like to see.

#### 1. Points brought up by the groups for question 1: What do you love most about work with RethinkWaste:

##### **Collaboration**

- Love the collaborative nature of the Agency.
- More efficient than each City providing these services on their own – economies of scale.
- Members liked the fact that they are not on our own dealing with problems.
- There is no waiting a week for information. Appreciate working as a group so as we “aren’t alone” like other cities who have to work on issues independently.
- Gathering knowledge through a regional agency and bringing that knowledge back to city councils
- Rewarding to sit on a committee that is collaborative and has active work to do, and gets things done.

##### **Understanding complex issues around waste management**

- Get a better understanding of waste streams/systems to answer questions from constituents. Example being on issues with the numbers on plastics and how to recycle.
- How everything fits in infrastructure and how it connects to people
- Being on the front lines to combat greenhouse gas emissions.
- Being on the cutting edge of technology

##### **Dedicated staff expertise responsible for staying on top of technical issues.**

- Have up to date knowledge of the ever-changing plastics issue
- Structure and responsiveness of staff
- Working relationships and the people we work with
- SBWMA staff keeps track of things that should be done in the solid waste industry as city staff have a multitude of projects, so it is very helpful that SBWMA either takes care of tasks for city staff or reminds city staff what to do.
- Collaboration with the city

##### **Active and interesting work**

- Things are constantly changing, which is fun.
- Stretches our intellect in terms of the variety of technical projects.
- Opportunities to incubate new and innovative ideas.
- Work feels impactful on a direct and individual level.

- Making a difference in the world
- Implementing innovative waste programs
- Simplifying complicated topics, so many different layers but everything is connected, and everyone has waste.
- Work we all do is understated, it touches everyone no matter if they're residents or businesses.
- Opportunities to incubate new and innovative ideas.

### **Education and Community Engagement**

- Level of efforts in education which increases engagement.
- It's on a personal level and it makes a difference.

## **2. Points brought up by the groups during question 2: What changes would you like to see:**

### **Proactive Agency Model**

- There are all sorts of changes imposed from the outside which puts us in a reactive mode as we work through them.
- Best practices research - RethinkWaste should continue looking at what is happening in other areas of the country.
- In the early 1990's, there was more of a hands-off approach and now it's more hands on in terms of elected boards vs staff board members; would like to see more focus from the board members as a board of electives can sometimes take longer to implement changes.

### **Legislative Focus**

- Having Agency action driven from legislation instead of the bottom is tough to happen.
- Legislation in CA isn't as aggressive in Europe. Support for governor's executive orders so they stick.
- Would like to see legislation start more so after the fact, not reactive.
- More legislation to help with the issues of manufacturing and more accountability for manufacturers.

### **Waste Processing and handling**

- Cradle to grave – focus on cradle because we're managing the grave, but externalities in manufacturing gets complicated in California.
- More accountability for upstream producer responsibility
- Increasing access to recycling/compost, especially when in the public (i.e., more public receptacles)
- Focus on minimizing waste, but managing the cost model because the more you reduce waste the higher the cost.
- Increase accessibility for unhoused population, such as more available services rather than abandoning waste on the side of the road.

### **Education topics to focus on more.**

- Reduction of consumption
- Strengthen education with the public - More programs like Trash-To-Art that get engagement from the public.
- More use of social media, more commercials and different types of media
- Short cartoons geolocated to service area
- Topics about sorting of recyclables, compost, and trash

### **Collaboration**

- Collaboration in the service area among Member Agencies

- Would like to see RethinkWaste be a County wide agency for waste management.

### **Administrative Items**

- Would like to see calendar year financials for permits, insurance policies and premiums, and fire risk.
- Would like the budget to include the entire cost of the agency, the budget includes the site operating contract but not the Recology costs.
- Room to improve Triple Zero Goals and focus less on solid waste – if we do only focus on solid waste then they should be called triple zero goals.
- It's a challenge to delineate the roles and responsibilities between city staff, RethinkWaste staff and the hauler.
- Clearer integration between operation/projects and public process

### **Shoreway Site**

- Decarbonize fleet.
- Increase accessibility to Shoreway Environmental Center - Changing shift operation hours to be better suited to members of the public.
- Stronger focus on innovation and technology
- Hardening the facility for risk

### **RethinkWaste Brand Identity**

- Looking at our “brand” identity. RethinkWaste is ok, but doesn't like the brand confusion with Recology, etc. “sounds like a waste think tank.”
- RethinkWaste sounds like Recology in terms of name and roles and responsibilities.
- Names can get confusing RethinkWaste vs SBWMA.

After hearing from each other, the groups then looked at the mission statement and Triple Zero goals again and were asked to discuss if they were still relevant or if they needed to be changed.

## **3. Mission statement**

### **Length Discussions**

- Mission should only be one sentence that you can remember.
- Overall tightening/shortening the Mission statement.
- Mission statements are intended to be broad-- ours is too wordy.
- Mission statement is pretty good, maybe need to change words so that a layperson can understand.

### **Wordsmithing Discussions**

- Environmental stewardship should be made more prominent (right now public health and safety is first)
- Add a short tag line in addition to the mission statement.
- Change “Member Agency climate action plans” to “supporting regional programs (or goals)” another group wanted to remove “Member Agency climate action plans.”
- Change “Solid waste” to Recycling.
- Keep “Serving the public with environmentally sound services.”
- Maybe include a “how” to describe how to execute the mission.
- Does not agree in being an "Industry leaders in environmental stewardship " as the member agency emphasis is on compliance, not innovation.
- Likes words in the mission statement to included dependable, improving community, efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

### **Cost-Effective Element in the Mission Statement**

- Mission statement is relevant, but the "cost effective" element can be hard to balance when we are trying to be more innovative (EV). Should we move away from "cost effective" so that we can prioritize the triple zero objectives?
- Cost effective and inexpensive are not the same. If the upgrades are producing the results we are looking for, maybe survey the rate payers about what they understand "cost effective" to mean - do they want lower rates or better programs?
- Cost effective vs cost efficient: maybe efficient is a better word for the Mission Statement

### **Overarching suggested changes**

- The real mission is to be the leaders in solid waste in diversion from landfill/disposal.
- Let the industry tell us we're the leaders, our mission is not to be the leaders.
- One group suggested an updated mission statement "To be environmental stewards by providing ratepayers with innovative, cost-effective zero waste programs."
- Member Agencies struggle with complying with additional state mandates that are being loaded on with timeframes that are almost impossible to meet. Doesn't help us achieve our mission when funding may not be available.
- The mission statement is a weird intersection between education and programs and running the facility.
- Keep ratepayers out of mission statement because that decision is pushed to cities.
- Add something broad based about environmental stewardship.
- One group noted that the PCE statement was really good, and you could just replace energy with waste.

### **4. Objectives**

- Either make all of the triple zero goals more aspirational or change them all to something more attainable, but likely remove the word "eliminate."
- Add something about minimizing the generation of waste, managing responsibility upstream on the consumer.
- Possibly change Triple Zero Goals from "eliminate" to "minimize."
- Change "Triple Zero Objectives" to be more aspirational.
- Include a focus on reduction.
- Don't limit GHG emissions to just the Member Agencies
- One group wanted to combine the first two triple zero objectives and add an objective about solid waste.
- These objectives are likely not enough to get to Zero GHG

The group then heard a presentation from Michael Brownrigg on the value of member agency participation in RethinkWaste.

He spoke on why RethinkWaste is the most important agency Board and TAC members can serve on because the price of getting garbage collection wrong is very high for public officials, noting historical instances where garbage collection led to the demise of governments. He noted three big issues the Agency works on that are important to public officials: public health, the ubiquity of plastic in the environment and the climate implications of waste. He noted that today in the US, Americans produce six pounds of trash per person every day, with only 25 to 30% being recycled. So, three quarters of our waste is still going to landfill. The American production cycle of extraction of natural resources, the production of the goods, then transporting those goods to US consumers produces about 40% of all the greenhouse gases. If 75% is then being thrown away, Americans are contributing to greenhouse gas pollution for no good reason.

He continued that California is actually one of the worst states for greenhouse gas pollution. California puts 35 tons per person to landfill every year, while Texas disposes 17 tons per person. He pointed to SB 1383 as an important reason for public officials to serve on this Agency. As much as the cost implications are disliked and

challenging it is so important to keep organic waste out of the landfill. He noted that elected officials are not paid and chose the issues that are important to them. With this agency we can work on issues that advance the goals of political stability, public health, climate change, and as an agency collectively we can move the needle on these issues.

He continued with why he thought the Agency could collectively move the needle. The Shoreway MRF is one of the top 50 (public-owned) MRFs in the country by tonnage. Most MRFs in this county are owned by the private sector. The public sector is not thinking about the big picture, at RethinkWaste we focus on public outcomes and therefore can take more risk to achieve a better public outcome. RethinkWaste is beholden to residents who are ratepayers not shareholders, and he believes the residents care about the issues the Agency is working to solve, but we always have to find the balance between the most efficient garbage collection and how to keep rates down.

The group then heard presentations from each of the senior staff and the committee work they are responsible for on the accomplishments and challenges from 2022, as well as RethinkWaste's contracting partners: Zero Waste Committee (Staff Gans); Finance Committee (Staff Mangini); Public Education Committee and Legislative Committee, Technical Advisory Committee (Andra Lorenz TAC Chair representing Foster City); Recology (Evan Boyd, General Manager San Mateo County); South Bay Recycling (Phil Couchee, General Manager SBR); and new facility operator (in 2024) South Bay Industries (Chris Valbusa, General Manager Alameda County Industries for Dwight Herring, General Manager SBI)

The group then had the opportunity to question the presenters.

TAC Member Johnson commented that he was very moved by what Board Member Brownrigg had to say about the many challenges of plastic pollution, the people of San Mateo County, and encouraged members to take it seriously and give staff direction to take action.

New discussion groups were formed, and small groups discussed Agency goals for 2023. Goals that came up in the groups included:

### **Facility Operations Contract Transition**

- All groups agreed that a smooth Facility Operator transition over the next year is critical.

### **SB1383 implementation and related facility work**

- SB 1383 compliance (the goal listed by staff currently only mentions outreach)
- Linking O2E to SB 1383 Compliance
- SB 1383 Contamination and Enforcement process and procedures
- General SB 1383 Compliance

### **Facility**

- Comprehensive facility master plan that includes office space and rethinking of the back lot site plan (vs the MRF/TS buildings) - well planned industrial site. Traffic loop around the outside to separate truck traffic from office traffic routes.
- Site acquisition—possible options
- Long term funding
- Site optimization
- Tie the Administrative Office move to site optimization plan since the two are linked.
- Organics to Energy program a becoming carbon negative
- UST replacement project
- Correctly specifying the MRF equipment phase II planning (to be innovative and forward thinking in the

field especially sorting materials better, especially plastics)

- SB 54 Implementation and Reducing Plastics
- Implementation of CRV for everything we want to see recycled.
- Zero waste at the Shoreway Facility

**Budget**

- Cost control
- Explanation of costs to rate payers (Site optimization, Operator Transition etc.)

**Outreach and Agency Messaging**

- Get everyone on board with the same mission.
- Rate messages in outreach since there are increases all around. Not just ratepayers but also the constituents
- Provide guidance on residential and commercial SB 1383 outreach before enforcement starts.
- Education to the public is important and don't want to let up because it's tied to compliance.

**Legislative**

- Ways to reduce labor costs, processing and disposal costs and working towards more disposal and processing options.
- Supporting more statewide manufacturing responsibilities
- Advancing vehicle electrification (Legislation towards moving industry along for better electric trucks)

Executive Director La Mariana provided summary remarks that closed the retreat by thanking Board and TAC members and Contracting partners and staff for their attendance and participation and adjourned the public/retreat portion of the meeting.

**4. Board and TAC Member Comments**

**5. Board Members Adjourn to CLOSED SESSION**

**CTO: 4:13PM**

**Roll Call**

Agency	Present	Absent	Agency	Present	Absent
Belmont	X		Redwood City	X	
Burlingame	X		San Carlos		X
East Palo Alto	X		San Mateo	X	
Foster City	X		County of San Mateo		X
Hillsborough	X		West Bay Sanitary District	X	
Menlo Park	X				

Member Taylor (Menlo Park) Participated by Zoom

Member Rak recused himself from the discussion.

- A. Pursuant to Government Code (§ 54956.8): Real Property Negotiations 1245 San Carlos Ave. Suite E, San Carlos, CA 94070 Agency Representatives Executive Director Joe La Mariana and Legal Counsel Jean B. Savaree

**6. Adjourn 5:18PM**