

Recycling Fund Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes of October 19, 2023

The following members were present:

John Frederick, Chair
Michele Nestor, Vice Chair
Gordon Burgoyne
Brian Guzzone
Jason Leck
Representative Ryan Mackenzie
Frank Mazza
Timothy O'Donnell
Gregg Pearson
Shannon Reiter
Kyle Rosato
Joanne Shafer
Ed Vogel
Robert Watts
James Welty
Gerald Zona

The following members were absent:

Eli Brill
Senator Carolyn Comitta
Joseph Reinhart
Senator Gene Yaw

The following alternates were present:

David Buzzell	on behalf of Eli Brill
Emily Eyster	on behalf of Sen. Carolyn Comitta
Matthew Osenbach	on behalf of Sen. Gene Yaw

The following guests and Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) staff were present:

Derek Bartram	DEP Bureau of Waste Management (BWM)
Kevin Beer	DEP BWM
Elizabeth Bertha	Vogel Holding, Inc.
Bob Bylone	Pennsylvania Recycling Markets Center (PennRMC)
Donna Cooper	Children First
Hoa Dao	DEP BWM
Jay Enoch	Republic Services

Megan Gahring	Lawrence-Mercer County Recycling/Solid Waste
High Garst	DEP Policy Office
Nikolina (Smith) Gaudin	DEP Bureau of Regulatory Counsel (BRC)
Veronica Harris	Montgomery County Solid Waste Authority/Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania (PROP)
Laura Henry	DEP BWM/Liaison to the Committee
Lawrence Holley	DEP BWM
Jeff Ivicic	PA Senate Policy Office
Glendon King	PA House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee
Jim Lambert	Monroe County Solid Waste Authority
Curtis LeSuer	DEP BWM
Patti Lynn	Chester County Solid Waste Authority
Trent Machamer	PA Senate Policy Office
Amy Mazzella di Bosco	Greater Lebanon Refuse Authority/PROP
Winnie Okello	DEP Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ)
Tiffany Piaskowski	DEP BWM/Acting Recording Secretary
Ann Saurman	City of Allentown
Jessica Shilladay	DEP BWM
Joy Smallwood	Allegheny County Health Department
Christopher Solloway	DEP BWM
Jennifer Summers	PROP
Mark Vottero	DEP BWM

Call to Order; Introduction of Members and Guests; Old Business

John Frederick, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. Laura Henry conducted roll call. No old business was discussed.

Public Comments

No public comments were presented or made for discussion.

Informational Item: Food Recovery Infrastructure Grant (FRIG) Overview

Jessica Shilladay, Organics Recycling Coordinator in the Division of Waste Minimization and Planning, BWM, provided an overview of the FRIG Grant. The grant is a 100% DEP-funded, competitive, reimbursable grant developed in accordance with Act 101. Its purpose is to reduce the amount of fresh, safe and wholesome food currently entering the waste stream. The grant supports non-profit organizations who operate programs in the Commonwealth that partner with food retailers and wholesalers to capture and serve safe, fresh and wholesome foods to segments of the public before this food becomes waste. Eligible equipment includes, but is not limited to, refrigerators, freezers, cargo vans, stoves, ovens and pallet jacks plus the shipping and installation costs for these items. The grant requires a pre-application meeting with their respective DEP Regional Recycling Coordinator. Applications must be submitted through the Department of Community and Economic Development's (DCED) electronic single application (ESA) website. Approved applicants have two years to purchase the eligible equipment. Grantees

must submit disbursement requests in order to be reimbursed for grant-eligible purchases. Once all eligible purchases have been completed, the grantee must maintain their enhanced program for three years.

In the first round of the FRIG grant, 145 non-profit organizations were awarded approximately \$9.6 million dollars. Grant awards were announced in mid-2020 and the maximum award was \$200,000 per grantee. Grantees in the first round included soup kitchens, food pantries, shelters and food banks.

The second grant round opened in late 2022 and closed in March 2023. 114 applicants were awarded approximately \$4.2 million in grant funding. The maximum award per applicant was \$50,000, a \$150,000 decrease from the maximum award amount in the first round. 102 applicants identified as having impacted Environmental Justice (EJ) areas. Round 2 grants are in the process of being executed.

Vice Chair Michele Nestor commented that food waste is one of the largest components of the materials that go into landfill and the material the FRIG program is recovering is an important benefit of the Recycling Fund. Legislators should take this into consideration when it comes to dipping into the fund.

Larry Holley mentioned this is one of the first programs consistent with Act 101 that directly impacts waste reduction and aids in DEP's climate efforts.

Overall, members were very supportive of the program.

Discussion Item: Review of FY 2022-2023 Recycling Fund Expenditures

Mark Vottero, Environmental Group Manager for the Recycling Implementation Section, BWM, provided an overview of expenditures for the Fund. \$4.2 million dollars was provided to 114 grant recipients of FRIG in Round 2 of the program. All eligible projects were supported in both grant rounds. The FRIG program was part of a pilot program and to Mark's knowledge is the first time a competitive grant program was posted in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*. Services were provided to applicants who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf/blind and have a speech disorder. Language access was available for any translation services over the phone. Documents were translated to other languages when needed.

Seven counties were awarded \$312,099 in Section 901 Planning grants; this was in line with previous years' awards. Staff was currently reviewing six 901 HHW Education grants totaling about \$100,000. There was a drop from previous years that may be due to turnover in County Recycling Coordinator staff. Targeted outreach will be done to make sure counties are taking advantage of the HHW Education grant program.

\$1,914,798.11 in Section 903 County Recycling Coordinator grant funding was awarded to 61 counties in calendar year 2021. This is an increase from the previous year and includes 3 new counties (Armstrong, Greene and McKean). Vice Chair Nestor asked if the total amount of the 903 County Recycling Coordinator grants awarded reflected County Recycling Coordinators

serving in multiple roles for counties; Mr. Vottero responded that the duties of the County Recycling Coordinator is specific to each county's needs.

\$16,283,470 in Section 902 Recycling Development & Implementation grant funding was awarded to 80 applicants. All eligible projects were funded. The maximum amount that could be requested was \$350,000. To date, 71 of the 80 grant agreements have been executed. Special consideration was given to projects that enhanced or impacted an EJ area; 39 of the awards were identified in an EJ area. Another grant round is anticipated to open in early 2024 with \$20 million in available funding. It is expected to be highly competitive since applicants can apply every other round. All projects may not be funded in this round. Priorities for this funding round will include newly mandated communities.

Vice Chair Nestor asked how many municipalities have been added since the last census. Mr. Vottero responded that based on 2020 census data, 20 newly mandated communities have been added.

As of October 16, 2023, \$13.1 million dollars was awarded to 462 Section 904 Recycling Performance grant applicants for calendar year 2021. 181 grants projected to be around \$7-8 million are still in the review process. The total dollar amount of grants to be awarded is projected between \$20 and \$21 million, an increase from \$19 million the previous year. The calendar year 2022 application period is open; to date, 231 applications have been submitted. Thirteen applications have been identified that are required to meet the provisions of Act 140. This is attributed to the construction of distribution centers and warehouses; DEP is looking to update the formula used to calculate grants as a result.

Chair John Frederick remarked that he would be supportive of DEP's move forward on a policy and calculations that reward those with residential and significant commercial programs rather than those with distribution centers; Vice Chair Nestor agreed.

\$1.4 million was awarded in grant funding for the HHW program (Act 190). This is in line with what was awarded in previous years.

Action Item: FY 2024-2025 Recycling Fund Spending Plan

Larry Holley, Acting Bureau Director, BWM, summarized the proposed spending plan. Projected revenue for Recycling Fees is \$43.5 million. Expenditures for Recycling Coordinator Reimbursement is \$2 million. Expenditures for Reimbursement for Municipal Inspections is \$275,000. Some of the expenses included in the Public Education/Technical Assistance line item include \$75,000 for the Recycling/CDRA Hotline and \$50,000 for Commonwealth Recycling Implementation. Larry stated that more targeted outreach must be done for Local Government Technical Assistance because the level of participation is not where it should be.

Michele Nestor motioned to approve the 2024-2025 Recycling Fund Spending Plan. Tim O'Donnell seconded. All approved, none opposed; motion carried.

New Business

Vice Chair Nestor asked Mr. Holley to discuss potential changes to DEP's municipal waste planning process for counties and how they plan for disposal capacity and improve recycling programs. Mr. Holley indicated that the Bureau hired a Planning Coordinator 2022 to concurrently review planning applications with Regional Offices. After Planning staff was furloughed in 2009 and Central Office coordination and oversight was eliminated, consistency in Regional Office reviews and municipal waste plans across the Commonwealth disappeared. In addition to restoring concurrent Central Office review of plans to restore consistency, DEP has formally begun to revise its Technical Guidance Document (TGD) for the development and implementation of county municipal waste management plans.

Chair Frederick called for a motion to adjourn the meeting; a motion was made by Tim O'Donnell and seconded by Vice Chair Nestor. The meeting adjourned at 1:31 p.m.