



Minutes

SW MI Materials Management Planning Committee

Monday, June 16, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.

Location: ***Pokagon Band Tribal Police Department's Emergency Operations Center***
58620 Sink Rd, Dowagiac, MI 49047

Role	Member	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Nov	Dec
Solid Waste Facility Operator	Bob Kras	IP	A	IP	IP	E	IP					
Hauler	Christopher Phillips (Vice-Chair)	IP	E	IP	IP	A	IP					
Materials Recovery Facility Operator	Donovan Kelley		IP	E	IP	A	E					
Composting Facility Operator												
Waste Diversion, Reuse, Reduction Facility Operator	Sheila Bergen				IP	IP	IP					
Environmental Interest Group	Kalli Marshall (Chair)	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP					
Elected Township Official	David Kuhn	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP					
Elected City/Village Official	Deah Muth	IP	IP	V	IP	V	IP					
Business that generates Managed Materials	Al Pscholka	IP	IP	E	E	A	E					
Regional Planning Agency	John Egelhaaf	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP					
Sovereign Nation	Jennifer Kanine	IP	IP	IP	V	A	IP					
Berrien County												
Elected County or Municipal Official	Dave Vollrath	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP					
Business that Generates Managed Materials	Jeff Doroh	IP	IP	IP	E	A	IP					
Cass County												
Elected County or Municipal Official	Roseann Marchetti (Secretary)	IP	IP	E	IP	IP	IP					
Business that Generates Managed Materials	Amy Huser	IP	IP	IP	IP	E	IP					
Van Buren County												
Elected County or Municipal Official												
Business that Generates Managed Materials	Robert Baran	IP	IP	A	IP	IP	IP					
IP - Present in Person; V - Participating remotely; E - Excused absence; A - Unexcused absence; A blank spot means the position is vacant												

Public Present

Wallace, Mandy

Adams, Jill

Brent, Adam

Krcmarik, Jeff

Marchetti, Jerry

Doroh, Kurt

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Kalli Marshall called the meeting to order at 1:00. Role call was taken, and it was established that a quorum was present.

2. Approval of Agenda

Bob Kras moved to **“ACCEPT THE AGENDA.”** John Egelhaaf seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

3. Approval of April 21, 2025 Minutes

David Kuhn moved to **“APPROVE APRIL 21, 2025 MINUTES.”** Bob Kras seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

4. Approval of May 20, 2025 Minutes

John Egelhaaf moved to **“APPROVE MAY 20, 2025 MINUTES.”** Jeff Doroh seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

5. Communications

None.

6. Old Business

Grant Update

Bekah Schrag informed the committee that all three counties have their grant agreements from the State and are getting them signed shortly.

7. Hearings

Food Waste Program Best Practices

Bekah Schrag presented on best practices for food waste management, emphasizing the food waste hierarchy. This hierarchy begins with preventing waste at the source—by producing, purchasing, and serving only what is needed—followed by food donation or upcycling, feeding animals, creating compost or generating energy from waste, and lastly, sending food waste to the landfill as a last resort. Schrag highlighted opportunities for food donation and upcycling, including local food pantries, Kalamazoo Valley Gleaners, and other regional resources. She also noted the number of food pantries available in each county and mentioned that Berrien County currently has one subscription-based composting program. Additionally, she pointed out that yard waste collection in the region could be improved.

Schrag shared several best practices for designing food waste programs. These include accepting all types of food waste, allowing certified compostable products, and using compostable liners whenever possible to help control odors and pests. For drop-off programs, it is recommended to require participant registration to facilitate communication, use clear signage and instructions, and offer consistent outreach and education. She also advised that drop-off sites should be conveniently located, offer room for expansion, and include nearby trash bins. Tracking diversion rates and participation, maintaining regular communication with both participants and haulers, and monitoring contamination are also key components of a successful program.

Many best practices for curbside food waste collection overlap with those for drop-off programs. However, curbside programs require some additional considerations. These include using bins with latches, lining both kitchen and curbside bins with compostable liners, keeping bins out of direct sunlight, minimizing liquids, and double-lining bins in winter to prevent freezing.

Schrag also discussed a company offering curbside food scrap collection for restaurants and outlined both benefits and challenges. Advantages include the use of curbside bins instead of dumpsters, which are more maneuverable, easier to clean, less expensive to replace, and waterproof. The company's trucks can carry large volumes of waste, seal in wet materials, and clean and sanitize bins during collection. However, challenges include the bins becoming heavy if liquids aren't limited, food caking onto unlined bins, odor issues, and the need for some restaurants to use multiple smaller bins. To manage contamination, the company uses handwritten "oops" tags placed directly on the bins, and then follows up with the customer to discuss the issue.

8. New Business

Solutions Activity

The committee split into four groups to discuss solutions for food waste in the following categories: Households & Residential, Restaurant & Food Service, Institutional, and Farms & Food Producers. The groups were tasked with thinking of prevention, diversion/donation, education, and infrastructure/policy solutions for food waste. Each group then shared their solutions with the committee.

Prevention efforts focused on smarter purchasing, portion control, food storage, and repurposing leftovers. Diversion ideas included home composting, food

donation to schools, pantries, shelters, and using food scrap drop-off sites. Education was emphasized through behavior change campaigns, student engagement, transparency, and promoting social norms. Infrastructure and policy suggestions involved easing donation restrictions, supporting composting services, requiring compostable packaging, and strengthening municipal and state-level systems. Both urban and rural contexts were considered, with tailored solutions like composting in rural schools and mandating recycling in urban institutions.

Goal Review

Christopher Phillips moved to **“TABLE THE GOAL REVIEW.”** Roseann Marchetti seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

9. Public Comment

Mandy Wallace, who owns a local dumpster rental company, introduced herself and expressed interest in learning about the committee's goals and how they might apply to her business.

10. Miscellaneous

MRC Conference Takeaways

Bekah Schrag, Kalli Marshall, and Jill Adams shared takeaways from the Michigan Recycling Coalition Conference they attended back in May. Schrag said the food scrap program best practices were part of the takeaways, and more information will be coming in future meetings. Adams shared about the tour of a composting facility in Grand Rapids.

Subcommittees

Roseann Marchetti moved to **“TABLE SUBCOMMITTEES.”** Deah Muth seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

11. Adjournment

Deah Muth moved to adjourn the meeting. Roseann Marchetti supported the motion. Chair Marshall declared the meeting adjourned at 3:01 pm.

Submitted by:
Bekah Schrag

Date:
July 8, 2025