



# Minutes

## SW MI Materials Management Planning Committee (MMPC)

Monday, April 21, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.

**LOCATION:** Pokagon Band Community Center  
27043 Potawatomi Trail 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							
Hauler	Christopher Phillips (Vice-Chair)	IP	E	IP	IP							
Materials Recovery Facility Operator	Donovan Kelley		IP	E	IP							
Composting Facility Operator	Kim Haneberg		IP	IP								
Waste Diversion, Reuse, Reduction Facility Operator	Sheila Bergen				IP							
Environmental Interest Group	Kalli Marshall (Chair)	IP	IP	IP	IP							
Elected Township Official	David Kuhn	IP	IP	IP	IP							
Elected City/Village Official	Deah Muth	IP	IP	V	IP							
Business that generates Managed Materials	Al Pscholka	IP	IP	E	E							
Regional Planning Agency	John Egelhaaf	IP	IP	IP	IP							
Sovereign Nation	Jennifer Kanine	IP	IP	IP	V							
<b>Berrien County</b>												
Elected County or Municipal Official	Dave Vollrath	IP	IP	IP	IP							
Business that Generates Managed Materials	Jeff Doroh	IP	IP	IP	E							
<b>Cass County</b>												
Elected County or Municipal Official	Roseann Marchetti (Secretary)	IP	IP	E	IP							
Business that Generates Managed Materials	Amy Huser	IP	IP	IP	IP							
<b>Van Buren County</b>												
Elected County or Municipal Official	Paul Schincariol	IP	A	A	A							
Business that Generates Managed Materials	Robert Baran	IP	IP	A	IP							
IP - Present in Person; V - Participating remotely; E - Excused absence; A - Unexcused absence; A blank spot means the position is vacant												

### PUBLIC PRESENT:

Adams, Jill  
Graves, Genevieve  
Field, Jaysen  
Krcmarik, Jeff  
Marchetti, Jerry  
Poole, Grant

## 1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Kalli Marshall called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. She took roll call, and a quorum was present.

## 2. Approval of Agenda

Roseann Marchetti moved to **“ACCEPT THE AGENDA.”** Christopher Phillips seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

## 3. Approval of Minutes

Roseann Marchetti moved to **“APPROVE MARCH 17, 2025 MINUTES.”** Deah Muth seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

## 4. Communications

Bekah Schrag informed the committee that the Materials Management Grant has been approved by the EGLE planning staff, and a draft grant agreement has been written that will need to be approved by their finance department.

## 5. Old Business

### *ChewMax Pet Products*

Bob shares challenges his business faces with recycling, including cost-effectiveness and uncertainty about proper recycling practices.

### *Lake Michigan College*

Al Pscholka was not present at the meeting.

## 6. Hearings

### *MRF – RecycleWorks*

The committee discussed tabling the MRF hearing to later in the meeting to accommodate shift breaks.

John Egelhaaf moved to **“TABLE THE MRF HEARING.”** Roseann Marchetti seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

### *Hauler - Best Way*

Christopher Phillips discussed the challenges and considerations in the management of recycling collection systems. He emphasized the importance of consumer education and willingness to pay for recycling services. The cost-

effectiveness of collection varies between urban and rural areas due to differences in population density and fixed costs for staffing and equipment. Phillips explained that recycling is a commodity with fluctuating values, and processing fees have increased. He also mentioned that Michigan's recycling policy aims for a 45% residential recycling rate, and describes different collection methods like subscription-based and contracted services. Contamination, particularly from plastic bags, was highlighted as a major issue in recycling streams.

## **7. New Business**

### *Facility Capacity*

Bekah Schrag discussed the current capacity of waste management facilities in the region. This included landfill capacity if waste is disposed of at the same rate, Recycling Works MRF, and compost facilities in the region. It was mentioned that The City of Dowagiac Compost Facility will no longer be considered a compost facility under the new state statute, and no facilities in the region accept food waste.

Schrag outlined state-mandated goals for recycling and waste reduction, including the benchmark recycling standards and the food waste reduction goal. She introduced the SMART method for goal-setting and presented various aspects of the recycling process, including collection methods and material flow.

### *Diversion Requirements Goal Exploration*

The group conducted an activity to brainstorm ideas and goals for recycling management. A major theme was the need to boost public trust and participation through education, transparency, and consistent communication—such as standardized signage and better outreach to assure residents that recyclables are actually being processed. Infrastructure improvements were also a top priority, with strong support for county-wide recycling access, manned and rural drop-off sites, curbside services, and local recycling offices. Members emphasized the need for sustained funding, both from state and local sources, and proposed data-driven strategies like hiring consultants, using GIS mapping, and requiring haulers to report tonnage. Reducing plastic waste, limiting contamination, and creating business opportunities through community-level recycling efforts were also noted. School involvement, tech integration (like AI messaging and battery drop-offs), and legislative changes—such as requiring haulers to offer recycling—rounded out a comprehensive set of goals to support a more effective, accessible, and circular recycling system.

The group conducted an activity to brainstorm ideas and goals for organics management, focusing on food waste reduction and composting. A major theme was expanding composting access through curbside pickup, rural drop-off sites, neighborhood programs, and regional facilities. Many responses emphasized the need for public education on food waste, composting practices, and promoting awareness through social media, schools, and community events. There was also strong support for engaging youth through school programs and partnerships with groups like FFA and 4H. Several members advocated for funding new or existing composting businesses, providing compost for public use, and integrating food recovery initiatives like redirecting edible food from restaurants and stores to pantries. Suggestions included baseline data collection, consultant support, and pilot programs to guide future strategies.

The group conducted an activity to brainstorm ideas and goals for other diversion methods. Including electronics, textiles, and hazardous materials. Committee members emphasized the importance of expanding waste diversion through better infrastructure, education, and access. Key ideas included establishing full-time or regularly scheduled drop-off sites for hazardous household waste (HHW), electronics, tires, mattresses, textiles, batteries, and medications—ideally with at least one comprehensive site per county quadrant. Education was a recurring theme, with members calling for campaigns to raise awareness about safe disposal, the environmental impacts of improper waste handling, and benefits of reducing electronics consumption. Suggestions also included partnering with or promoting businesses that handle difficult-to-recycle items, supporting textile and thrift donation programs, and capturing diversion data for state reporting. Some proposed financial incentives or penalties, such as fines for hazardous items in trash or rewards for community cleanups. There was also support for regional materials management offices to coordinate efforts across counties.

Roseann Marchetti moved to **“UNTABLE THE MRF HEARING.”** Deah Muth seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

#### *MRF Hearing*

Donovan Kelley provided a virtual tour of the recycling facility, explaining that they process about 500 tons of recyclable material daily from Northern Indiana and Southwest Michigan. He highlighted the commodity nature of recycling, emphasizing that it shouldn't be free and needs to be paid for. The facility operates two plants: one for direct bale operations and another for single-stream recycling. Kelley provided a

detailed tour of a recycling facility, explaining the process of sorting and baling various materials.

He described the machinery used, including optical sorters, magnets, eddy currents, and balers, and highlighted challenges such as lithium-ion batteries and plastic bags. The facility is undergoing upgrades to improve efficiency, particularly for aluminum can sorting. Kelley emphasized that recycling is often an expensive operation for waste management companies, with low profit margins and high overhead costs. He also mentioned the importance of human workers for accuracy in sorting, especially compared the facility's robot.

Current market prices and the negative impacts of tariffs on recyclable materials were also discussed.

#### **8. Public Comment**

None.

#### **9. Miscellaneous**

None.

#### **10. Adjournment**

Christopher Phillips moved to adjourn the meeting. Deah Muth supported the motion. Chair Marshall declared the meeting adjourned at 3:07 pm.

Submitted by:  
Bekah Schrag

Date:  
April 25, 2025