

Solid Waste Committee

Date: 09/15/2025

Time: 5.15 pm

Committee Members in Attendance:

Arienne Childrey

Jim Christman

Michael Aquaro

Others in Attendance:

Jim Harris - Council President

Joe Hurlburt - Mayor

Greg Foxhoven - Dir. of Public Service and Safety

Zach Ferrall - Law Director

David Lunz

Dan Uhlenhake

Bob Fitzgerald

John Bubp

John Burd

News Media in Attendance:

The Evening Leader and The Daily Standard

Meeting was called to order by Chair Arienne Childrey.

Chair Childrey took the roll call: Childrey, Christman and Aquaro; all in attendance.

Jim Christman made a motion to accept the Minutes of the previous meeting. Michael Aquaro seconded the motion. Chair called for a vote: all yea.

Michael Aquaro made a motion to accept the Agenda. Jim Christman seconded the motion. Chair called for a vote: all yea.

Mr. Foxhoven spoke: Explained the history of rate studies for St. Marys.

Water rates increased 17% in 2013 and 2014, and 14.9% in 2016 for 6 years with a 3% increase each year thereafter.

Electricity had gone 34 years without an increase, until 2016.

Sewer rates follow the water rates. In 2022, there was a 5% increase for 5 years and 3% each year thereafter.

Solid waste has gone 26 years since it's last rate increase.

Corey Stoker - Supt. of Solid Waste Operations, is 8 months in his current role. He spoke on the comparison of rates with other similar cities and waste management companies. He and his team compiled the numbers, which were then presented to Alexa Schwaderer - Auglaize County District Office Coordinator and Environmental Educator.

Alexa has served as the Asst. District Coordinator for 10 ½ years.

She took the information compiled by Mr. Stoker to complete the rate study (as presented in a packet to committee).

For 2025 the Solid Waste department expenses outpace revenue.

She discussed the added cost of recent truck purchases and explained that our fund is not currently self-sustaining.

She presented the study, also explaining that we are currently 43% - 69% lower than waste company residential pickup.

She also mentioned that non-city residential solid waste pick up was to be terminated.

Jim Harris - asked for clarification on non-resident pickup termination. It was explained that generally if they didn't have city utilities their pickup was ending. Customers have been notified.

Mr. Foxhoven explained that this decision was made based on cost and safety concerns, considering the ability of the new truck to pick up with the motorized arm. Pick up will end for these residents after the first week of October. Approximately 209 non-resident pickups have been dropped.

Alexa Schwaderer - explained from the rate study packet a recommendation of a \$22 increase per month, bringing average cost for residents from \$9.95 (the cost for the prior 26 years) to \$31.95 per month. Commercial rates were of greater concern and would need to see a more significant increase. She recommended a first of the year (2026) increase to the new rate.

John Bubp - asked about what was included in the expenses listed. Questioned if the inclusion of the truck costs should be included in the study. He expressed his concerns about the amount of the rate hike and its inclusion of the truck cost.

Jim Harris - asked Alexa to clarify that we were banking enough money for future needs - such as truck repair/replacement costs.

Arienne Childrey - questioned the difference in our proposed rate and those cities listed in the study - (St. Marys seemed to be proposing a change significantly higher). Alexa explained that some cities had their own landfills, reducing costs; others were looking at or considering rate increases as well. She also mentioned that with the elimination of the bag tag program, families were actually saving money.

John Bubp - recommended that we go back to the study and consider the average cost for bag tag - to give the public a better understanding of how this is truly financially impacting their households.

Arienne Childrey - requested that we look at truck replacement spread out over a five-year time frame - rather than including the cost of a full truck in the yearly rate. Also requested consideration of the tags to be factored into the rate.

John Burd - spoke from the audience, expressing concerns that the city needed to be able to properly educate the public about all the cost factors involved if we were to move forward with the rate increases. Arienne Childrey agreed.

Jim Christman - asked about the average lifespan for a truck - with 3 to 5 years as the answer.

Michael Aquaro - expressed that he believed the rate study was likely correct and that the numbers seemed to line up.

Arienne Childrey - requested that Alexa Schwaderer and Cory Stoker revise the rate study to include the concerns raised - bag tag calculation, truck replacement cost spread over time, more detailed breakdown of the expenses and return with those numbers.

Arienne Childrey - requested a follow-up meeting on Oct. 20th at 5:15 to present their findings. Jim Christman and Michael Aquaro agreed to the date and time.

Jim Christman made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Michael Aquaro. Chair Childrey called for a vote: All yea.

Meeting adjourned approximately 6:35 p.m.