



ADOPTED Meeting Minutes

January 4, 2024

10:00 AM–12:00 PM

Community Center & Zoom

Commissioners Present:

D. Burnham, *Chair* (left at 12:10 PM)

G. Murphy, *Treasurer*

S. Malinowski, *Secretary*

K. Stevens, *Employee Liaison*

M. Doyen, *Community Liaison*

Staff Present:

B. Stern, *Business & Administration Manager*

E. Maggs, *Interim Manager*

The meeting began at 10:24 AM. The Commission welcomed its newly elected members: Mere Doyen and Gordon Murphy.

1. Additions to the Agenda

An extra item was added to the agenda to discuss the FIWMD’s weather policy—agenda item 6.

2. Financials

a. Bank Reconciliations

No comments.

b. Payables

\$24,000 was added for the quote from H. O. Penn for the backhoe repairs and maintenance. B. Stern had not received the bill yet. Also, payables included a bill for freon removal, which took place several months ago.

c. Transactions of the Month

A brief discussion ensued about whether altering the meeting/workshop schedule would better facilitate B. Stern’s financial work. This option was not pursued because the transactions are staggered and always rolling in.

d. Payroll Report

Casual laborers’ wood processing on Saturdays was reflected. There was \$36,000 listed for 5 weeks of gross payroll. Employees are paid weekly. There was a brief comment about the possibility of distributing cleaning chores between current employees versus paying someone annually specifically for that role.

e. P/L Reports

No comments.

f. Transfer Funds

A motion by S. Malinowski to transfer \$90,000 from the investment account to the operating account, and to pay the bills, was duly seconded by M. Doyen. The motion carried on a vote of 4–0. G. Murphy abstained. All Commissioners were present for this vote.

3. Minutes

Discussion ensued about clarifying part of the minutes. Amendments are kept on file and available to the public upon request.

A motion by S. Malinowski to approve the December 14, 2023 meeting minutes as amended was duly seconded by K. Stevens. On a vote of 4–0, the motion carried. G. Murphy abstained. All Commissioners were present for this vote.

4. Reports

a. Stations Update

The December 2023 Manager’s report from E. Maggs was in the Google Drive, with a comparison of 2022 and 2023. There was a question about the quantity of compost charged (or billed) to customers versus the quantity of the product being processed. E. Maggs stated that for a period of time in the summer, some was given away because it was not of great quality. Users were notified that they are using the inferior product at their own risk. The Commission also discussed the food scraps program, which collected 32,000 lbs in 2023 compared to 10,000 lbs in 2022; food scraps are weighed as they arrive. This means that 16 tons of food scraps did not have to be moved off the Island in 2023. The Commission agreed it would be good to share these details with the compost consultant, Jayne Merner, as well as the public.

There was also discussion of the 4th well at the landfill, which was unable to be found during the 2023 landfill testing, but staff had now located it. It was unclear whether the testing company would need to access the 4th well in the future. The FIWMD is approaching a time when this testing could no longer be required once a certain cap is reached; the Commission needs to understand the details of this possibility from the NY Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). B. Stern had received a report from the testing company for the most recent work that she would share with the Commission. The testing costs had increased significantly over time. The Commission agreed that E. Maggs should wait to remove the vegetation around the 4th well until it is clear whether DEC will need to access it again.

Further discussion ensued on the visit to Earth Care Farms, owned by the compost consultant, J. Merner, who has the largest compost organization in Rhode Island. The visit helped FIWMD staff to understand how their processes could be improved. The proposal from J. Merner was in the Google Drive.

It was mentioned that an insurance company was helping with the horizontal chipper. An incident report was created for the situation. It would be very expensive to repair due to issues such as wiring, so in the meantime, the FIWMD had no chipper.

There was a discussion about seminars and certifications available to FIWMD staff. Some staff members had already completed certain certifications and others were in progress. There was a brief conversation about staff accessing these options in the upcoming year, including a discussion of whether it was important to have a trained welder on staff. This led to comments about challenges with equipment maintenance going forward, and whether that maintenance should be in-house, or outsourced to a company like H. O. Penn. Keeping this maintenance in-house had not always worked well in the past. Ultimately, it is a matter of safety.

b. State Comptroller Letter

The Commission briefly discussed a letter (in the Google Drive) received from NY State about exceeding a budget cap, though it was unclear to the Commission whether this was accurate. Former Commissioner/Treasurer, Bob Evans, had a phone call with the State Comptroller, and B. Stern agreed to ask B. Evans to put the details of that conversation in writing for the Commission. G. Murphy agreed to make a follow-up call to the State Comptroller to get more clarity on this issue.

c. Station Hours & Staffing

The topic of staffing was tabled until the Executive Session.

A lengthy discussion ensued about the hours at the Compost and Transfer Stations, particularly about aligning hours so that FIWMD staff can use the Popeye or Ferry to get to the Island for work. There was a summary of these challenges in the Google Drive. There is very little traffic at the stations during the last hour of the day. There was mention of the need to be able to process hauls without customer interference. Giving the attendants about 15 minutes at the beginning and end of each day to open and close the station could be helpful. There was also a challenge of no leadership at the Stations on Mondays, when E. Maggs is off work. It was suggested that E. Maggs should lead team meetings on Fridays, so everyone knows what work priorities to accomplish on Mondays when he is not there.

The Commission primarily discussed changing the Station hours to 8:15/8:20 AM–4:15/4:20 PM, which would be in sync with the Popeye and Ferry, including the ability to use the Ferry on Saturdays. It would be ideal if both Stations have the same schedule. There was also mention of B. Stern and E. Maggs maintaining an earlier schedule to have some free time to focus on their work before other staff arrive, as well as eliminating hauls on Mondays. There was also a need to ensure that staff are clocking in and out for their lunch breaks, which are staggered so staff are always available at the Stations. A brief discussion ensued on the policy for whether staff would be paid when they cannot come to work due to weather. The topic was tabled until agenda item 6.

The Commission agreed that it would be important to advertise the changed hours at least a few weeks in advance, so the public knows about the change. The new hours would be tested this winter to see if they should be implemented year-round.

d. Manager Recruitment

The Commission reviewed resumes that were received to date. There was a challenge because the job ad was not reaching everyone it could, because the consultant only posted it to generic job boards (i.e., LinkedIn and Indeed), and would impose an additional charge to post it to more industry specific sites. The Commission agreed to not pursue more services from the 360 Recruiting Group, and formed a Subcommittee (M. Doyen & K. Stevens) to post the job ad to more specific sites.

e. Open Meeting Law

The topic was tabled until the January 25 meeting because the Deputy Town Attorney had not yet responded to some questions.

f. Website

January 4, 2024

K. Kibler, Minute Taker, continues posting back-dated minutes to the old website. K. Stevens, B. Stern, and K. Kibler would set a time to meet with the new website designer to help the site to better reflect the FIWMD.

g. Coastal Path

This effort continued to progress. The final steps are to agree on an operational boundary that will be surveyed at the Museum's expense and added to the license agreement, and to obtain a blessing from the Town Board, which, while not required, is something the Museum and the FIWMD would like to have for posterity.

h. Solar Field

Now that a resolution had been passed and the coastal path license was in good shape, the Commission was ready for M. Finnegan to focus on this lease with Pickett Power. All documents were in the Google Drive.

5. Upcoming Agendas

The Commission discussed the wood grinder. A quote of \$16,000 was received for on-site repairs. The price was anticipated at \$5,000–\$6,000 per day. D. Burnham did not think it would require 3 full days of work; it was anticipated that the brush pile could be completed in less than 1 day. There was a need to avoid past issues of processing raw wood that broke teeth on the machine; it was anticipated that the machine could handle older, rotten logs. After Evergreen works on the grinder, it could prove more cost effective to outsource once per year than to buy a new machine. There were several variables to consider, particularly that making compost requires double grinding, which is more effort and more cost. It was mentioned that there is room at the landfill to segregate piles of leaves and twigs in their own windrow. D. Burnham would share more details via email once he knew when Evergreen would be coming and what the cost would be. It was anticipated that 1 day would be enough time to get rid of the existing pile and some more rotten logs. Firewood was already being diverted, and there was a question of whether other materials from the existing pile could be diverted to decompose on site. Picking up and moving all of the existing rotten logs would be a big project and the FIWMD does not have the equipment or staff to do it at this time. There was a suggestion that the logs could be used to define the operational boundary between FIWMD and the area licensed to the Museum for a coastal path.

There was also discussion of maintenance needed for the log splitter, which no longer worked as it was built and intended, posing a potential safety issue as well as being inefficient. The machine needed to be used as it was designed. The Commission considered adopting the following policy: (1) accepting—for free—long straight logs that are clear of knots and no larger than 8 inches in diameter, which could be run through the machine correctly; (2) no longer accepting anything greater than 18 inches. The Commission thought that contractors would adapt to this change but they should be notified well in advance. Further, the Commission discussed whether they should send the log splitter to be fixed (in Canada), though E. Maggs was told that repairing it would cost more than buying one new. The success of the firewood program was also mentioned. All agreed that it was worth looking into the cost for a more robust machine, particularly as there were issues with the current cutting blade. A Subcommittee (D. Burnham & E. Maggs) was formed to research prices and make a recommendation to the Commission. Once there is a new policy, it could be posted to FishersIsland.net well in advance so users are prepared for the changes.

6. Weather Policy

A lengthy discussion ensued about a weather policy; documents were in the Google Drive. A particular focus was on whether FIWMD staff would be paid for a day's work if, for example, the Popeye was not running to get them

January 4, 2024

to the Island for work. It was proposed that if staff were notified of the closure via text the night before or by 5:00 AM the day of, they should not be paid for that day's work; though it was mentioned that not everyone sees these text messages. So, it would be good to have the same person sending those texts, like E. Maggs, until a new manager is hired. The Commission agreed that people understand if the Stations need to close due to weather. The Commission had discussed partnering with the Ferry District on plowing, but the Ferry District had their own arrangement; this led the Commission to decide it was better to close during snowstorms. There was further agreement that there would also be times when the FIWMD should be closed for all employees due to weather, notifying everyone the night before; they would have the option to use a personal or vacation day to still get paid. Ultimately, the Commission agreed that there should be a more detailed policy in writing, in addition to other handbook revisions. A Subcommittee (S. Malinowski & G. Murphy) was formed to work on this policy. There was also a suggestion to implement \$5 bucket racks in the summer to ensure wood taken for beach fires is paid for.

7. Executive Session

- a. Commissioner Evaluations
- b. Employee Evaluations
- c. Casella Proposal

A motion by S. Malinowski to enter Executive Session to discuss employee and Commissioner evaluations, as well as the Casella proposal, was duly seconded by M. Doyen. The motion carried unanimously. All Commissioners were present for this vote. The Executive Session began at 12:00 PM. E. Maggs and B. Stern departed. D. Burnham departed at 12:10 PM.

A motion by S. Malinowski to exit Executive Session was duly seconded by M. Doyen and the motion carried unanimously. D. Burnham was not present for this vote. The regular meeting recommenced at 12:30 PM.

An Executive Session would be added to the January 11, 2024 reorganizational meeting to review evaluations and determine raises.

8. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Katie Kibler, Minute Taker
January 10, 2024

All Commissioners were provided with the opportunity to suggest clarifying edits for accuracy.

Respectfully revised by Katie Kibler on January 18, 2024