

Waste commission implementing recommendations

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The Mountain View Regional Waste Management Commission (MVRWMC) is already implementing recommendations made in a report that looked at waste commission operations in 2013, say officials.

The waste commission board established the review in December 2012 to see if improvements could be made in daily operations.

Terry Hurlbut, an associate of Civic Solutions, took over the waste commission as temporary chief administrative officer while he evaluated the operation and looked for ways to improve it.

In gathering evidence, Hurlbut compared the commission to four other waste management operations around the province: Newell County, Drumheller and District Solid Waste Management Association, Foothills Regional Waste Management Facility and Francis Cook in Canmore/Banff.

He tendered his report to the MVRWMC in March.

Hurlbut made several recommendations, including reviewing whether the equipment the commission currently has meets the requirements of its operations and developing a policy regarding replacement of equipment that no longer meets the commission's needs.

Hurlbut also advised developing a marketing strategy to inform the public about its business and how it differs from competitors such as Waste Management Inc.

A third recommendation was also made regarding expanding recycling as much as possible, thus extending the landfill.

"Extending the life cycle of an existing landfill is paramount and the commission's low tonnage per capita among their peers, their recycling and composting programs are all evidence it is doing a good job of the business of waste management," Hurlbut wrote in the conclusion of his report.

"MVRWMC is a leader in the industry in some issues such as collection and sale of baler twine materials from farmers. Considering that the entire Province of Alberta has only shipped four loads, it is impressive that half the loads have originated in Mountain View."

Al Graham, the commission's chief administrative officer, who took over last July about a week after all the facts were gathered for the report, said he is happy to note that the commission is well on its way to implementing the suggested changes.

"There were some helpful things that came out of it. From my position coming in, I see it as a useful piece of information," said Graham.

Regarding the marketing and recycling aspects identified in the report, Graham said those items have already been implemented in about 90 per cent of cases.

Graham said the commission has spent the last month to two months developing policy around purchasing and upgrading equipment.

"Now it's a procedure that we will now constantly review through tendering processes and constantly reviewing purchases and constantly reviewing our vendors. What is the best equipment and what is the best pricing we can get on that equipment," he said.



Mountain View Waste Commission landfill just north of Didsbury.

Noel West/MVP Staff

In his report, Hurlbut said the baler that the commission uses should be automated so that items can be tied automatically, rather than taking up staff time to do.

Graham said the commission is actively seeking a new baler that would address that concern.

The baler the commission currently uses is in regular need of maintenance, so the commission is looking at alternatives, but "there's not a million people out there making balers but we actively have bids out, actually across North America for a (machine)," he said.

But, Graham said, replacing aging trucks take precedence over a new baler, with the latter possibly being purchased in 2015.

"We're trying to bring our fleet up to an acceptable standard," he said.

Hurlbut also suggested that equipping commission vehicles with Global Positioning Systems would help the commission to comply with provincial waste legislation.

It would also be a good way for recording where a truck is at a given time and track whether a bin pickup was completed or missed.

Graham said this recommendation has already been implemented and that the GPS system was purchased in August of 2013.

As for the marketing aspect, Graham said the commission is fully engaged in going to schools and talking about recycling, talking to community leaders about reducing waste and getting involved in recycling efforts.

"We only have a limited time on our landfill and we need to, part of moving forward, to make sure that we can get as much time out of this landfill as we can," he said, noting that the agreement late last year with Airdrie-based Durham Energy to incinerate all non-deposit plastic and turn it into diesel fuel is one of the innovative ways the commission hopes to deal with waste in the future. The commission also began a single-stream recycling program with Olds last month.

Graham said citizens in Olds are now recycling 50 per cent of the plastic they purchase, which is then turned into other products.

"The commission is starting to be an industry leader in regards to that. Public education needs to be a part of that," he said.