Solid Waste & Curbside Recycling Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

October 26, 2026

Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan called the meeting to order at 5:18pm. Councilor Hayward was in attendance via Zoom. Councilor McCarthy was excused. Finance Director Ignacio Palacios arrived at 5:24pm. Kevin Miracle from Sanitary Disposal was in attendance.

Solid Waste and Curbside Recycling Updates

Mr. Morgan stated there will be some minor code updates on solid waste coming to the council soon. The updates are to rectify what is currently taking place with recycling, such as clarifying in the code that Solid Waste Management includes recycling. The code states each occupied address must have adequate solid waste service. Including recycling as a solid waste service aligns the code with the services required.

Sanitary disposal has proposed taking over solid waste billing from the city's Finance department. The city receives 2.5% of every penny Sanitary Disposal collects in franchise fees as well as 11% in billing fees. The billing fee compensates the city for staff time and materials cost of providing the billing service. The billing fee last year brought in a little over $600,000 to the general fund. Sanitary Disposal proposes absorbing all billing of City of Hermiston accounts while the City continues to receive 13.5% percent. The Finance Dept would gain staff capacity if not processing the billing for Sanitary Disposal. The council would have the options to keep Sanitary Disposal rates the same for customers and absorb any proposed rate increases or remove the billing rate in the future.

There is much interfacing between city staff and sanitary disposal staff. Providing account service in one place (through Sanitary Disposal) creates a better experience for the customer. Customers would receive two different bills and may see their "water" bill dropping as they mischaracterize the city utility bill. Code enforcement may experience some issues as existing customers who do not pay their garbage bill can have their water shut off. It may prove more difficult to enforce when loss of water service is no longer a consequence. Mr. Miracle said only a small amount of accounts go to collections. The garbage stops being picked up when payments are not made. Mr. Palacios stated the City sends less than 3% of bills to collections, however garbage only accounts tend to have higher collections rate.

Councilor Hayward commented additional garbage providers may wish to bid on the contract to provide services if the city is not handling billing. Mr. Miracle responded that there is a significant start-up cost to provide infrastructure and materials for service.

Mr. Miracle stated that Stanfield transitioned to Sanitary Disposal billing and the main issue was determining when payments transition over. They are working through Echo and will then move onto Boardman. If the cities agree, Umatilla and Hermiston would be targeted to begin the billing change in July.

Mr. Morgan stated the proposal will be brought to the council within the next couple of months.

Solid Waste & Curbside Recycling Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

October 26, 2026

Public Comment

None given.

Adjourn

There were no other items of discussion, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:38pm.