

Assembly Member Meucci request for information on costs to provide Saturday Baler/Landfill business hours.

Karl Hagerman, PW Director January 18, 2018

I understand that Member Meucci has been asked by constituents if a Saturday baler/landfill schedule could be established and has asked for information in this regard. The following is my initial response after talking with staff and sorting through some possible scenarios to make this work.

Currently, the sanitation department is open to the public on M – F (noon to 3pm) and on Sunday (9am – 3pm). The reduced hours during the week were approved by past Assembly to account for collection time of the commingled recycling carts in addition to the normal residential and commercial garbage collection.

Firstly, understanding that the department has four employees and these four employees must collect all garbage and recycling routes every week without fail is important. The staff is covered by an employment contract that specifies they work a full 8 hour shift per day. Compensation for time outside of this normal schedule is covered in the contract as well. Currently, Saturday is the only day that we do not have staff at work. Garbage routes for commercial and residential customers are collected M-F at all times of the year and additionally on Sundays in the summer. Recycling routes are picked up on Tuesday – Friday at all times of the year. Two employees work M-F and two work Sunday-Thursday. Working two employees on the same weekly schedule offers built-in backup to sick leave and vacation time and is very important to keeping OT costs under control during instances of vacations, illness or injury.

The first scenario for Saturday service at the baler and landfill would be to shift schedules of at least one employee to make them available at the facility on Saturday. This impacts the ability for backup coverage as mentioned above and potentially puts one employee on shift at the baler/landfill alone. As the work area can be very hazardous/dangerous, single person shifts have been avoided historically as much as possible.

Another option would be to shift two employees to work on both Saturday and Sunday. This covers the weekend well, but it decreases manpower during the weekdays when we have the most materials to collect. That issue in addition to decreases in coverage of weekdays during PTO periods makes this option somewhat less attractive.

A question on whether a schedule for every other week collection of recycling would free up time for a Saturday shift was posed. Since the crew is mandated by contract to work 40 hours each week, it makes little difference to staffing levels or assignments if we shift to an intermittent collection schedule. The fact would remain that during the “on” weeks, we will need four employees to cover the work. During the “off” weeks, there will be more time to perform tasks and maintenance at the facility, but it would be against the labor contract to shift an employee from one weekly schedule to another every week to cover a Saturday shift.

Ultimately, the one way to try a Saturday shift at the baler/landfill would be an added expense to the department. By assigning extra work on Saturday in a rotating schedule, the department could provide

business hours to the community but it would be over and above the 40 hour week prescribed in the contract and would be paid at the overtime rate. This shift would have to be evenly assigned to all employees so they would take turns opening the facility. If a shift of 11:30 – 3:30 pm on Saturday (facility open from noon – 3pm) was tried, the salary and benefits expense would range from a low of approximately \$210 per Saturday to a high of approximately \$272.64 per Saturday depending on which employee worked the shift. Evenly spread between all employees and salary levels, the annual cost above current salary budgets would equal about \$12,000.

Increased business hours may be thought to equate to additional revenues, but we are confident that all residents and businesses that visit the baler/landfill currently are fitting in their visits into the existing schedule.

The considerable upside to a Saturday shift is purely to increase the convenience to the public. This is a very valid reason for a change and would be great to offer to our customers. However, in light of the information presented and the additional costs proposed, I feel that it is not the right time to address this request for additional business hours.

I'll be happy to clarify this information or answer any further questions on this issue.