

COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

The Thermopolis Town Council met in a special session on October 1, 2024, at 5:30pm at Town Hall. Present were Mayor Adam Estenson, Council members John Dorman Sr., Rachel Hughes and Dusty Lewis. Also present were Mayor/Codes Administrative Assistant Jim Jeunehomme, Clerk/Treasurer Tracey Van Heule, Police Chief Pat Cornwell, Public Works Director Basil Sorensen, Town Engineers Heath Overfield and Anthony Barnett and Town Attorney Marshall Keller. Council member Bill Malloy was absent.

ADMINISTRATION: TRANSFER STATION - PRESENTATION: Mayor Estenson reviewed a power point presentation. The presentation began with a brief history of solid waste in Thermopolis from 1996 to the present. The landfill opened in 1996, in 2007 DEQ began cease and transfer, in 2020 the town traded land for land closer to highway 20, in 2022 concerns were raised about Hwy 20 access, in 2023 a new administration began investigating alternative options and in 2024 the town council approved a purchase agreement for property on Hwy 120. If no action is taken, the landfill will close on July 1, 2025. Time is of the essence, as upcoming October 31, 2024, deadlines include landfill permit amendment revisions and the transfer station permit application.

The cease and transfer program was established to close municipal landfills and move to regional landfills. In recent legislation the legislature funded \$2 million for a transfer station and \$2.5 million for landfill closure, for the Town of Thermopolis. Other than the transfer station, State funding would allow for the purchase of large packer trucks, which would pick up trash in the alleys, then transport to another landfill. Other options without state funding include trying to permit additional landfill cells, seeking a waiver from lining cells, permitting a new landfill site, privatizing sanitation services and doing nothing.

Estenson reviewed prior and current transfer station locations. Many prior locations were excluded due to current DEQ requirements, including no permits for sites in a flood zone. The Hwy 20 (prior site) and Hwy 120 site were compared. The cost of the Hwy 120 site, with the land purchase will cost less to develop due to the availability of 3-phase power, other utilities and no turning lane construction.

Pictures of transfer stations at Saratoga and Powell were shown and discussed.

Current plans are for the Town to continue to operate a trash collection service, and to participate in the cease and transfer program with the Hwy 120 site. This will also allow for self-haul operations for county residents and will allow contract sanitation services to use the facility. The town plans to operate a transfer truck, which will haul from the transfer station to a landfill.

Decisions yet to be made include what landfill will receive the trash, the transfer station architectural design, landscaping, permitting a C&D operation at the current landfill, annexation of the transfer station into town limits, operating hours, county dump stations, compost and recycling.

Public comment included transfer station sites, with Cheyenne's being clean and easily accessible to one in California being smelly. The geology of the land under the current landfill, recycling in Riverton, the nearness to homes with the Hwy 120 site, the cost of the land, bore holes at the current site drilled by the prior bentonite company, the lack of smell downwind of the landfill, who voted for the purchase agreement (unanimous except for Bill Malloy who was absent for medical reasons) and if there was negotiation. Estenson noted the price was firm, but accommodations were made for more land and the configuration of land. A purchase agreement has been signed, but the sale has not yet been completed. Questions ensued about property values and Jeunehomme noted residential property values won't be affected. Jeunehomme again stated that if nothing is done, the landfill will close on July 1, 2025. Overfield noted when the state created the regional solid waste management plan in 2008, they made a list of all the landfills affected and the money that would need to be spent to correct the situation. After the lists were developed, there were 21 landfills ahead of the Town of Thermopolis for funding. Funding is currently available. Questions were asked about the areas set aside for steel, tires and wood, Estenson noted with a C&D permit, the plan is to use the landfill site. Additional discussion ensued on the vehicle approach to the Hwy 120 site and that the next meeting will be with the DEQ.

The meeting ended at 6:50pm.

ATTEST:

Tracey Van Heule, Clerk/Treasurer

Adam Estenson, Mayor