



HEARING NOTES

Legislative Oversight: LO22-0019

Quarterly Legislative Oversight Hearing - Department of Public Works

Committee: Health, Environment, and Technology

Chaired by: Danielle McCray

Hearing Date: March 9, 2022

Time (Beginning): 10:00 AM

Time (Ending): 12:05 PM

Location: Webex Virtual Hearing

Total Attendance: Approximately 50 people

Committee Members in Attendance:

Danielle McCray John Bullock Mark Conway Ryan Dorsey
Phylicia Porter James Torrence Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer

Bill Synopsis in the file?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Attendance sheet in the file?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Agency reports read?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Hearing televised or audio-digitally recorded?.....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file?.....	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Evidence of notification to property owners?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Final vote taken at this hearing?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A

Major Speakers

(This is not an attendance record.)

Jason Mitchell, Department of Public Works
Yvonne Moore-Jackson, Department of Public Works
Kristyn Oldendorf, Department of Public Works

Major Issues Discussed

1. Chairwoman McCray called the hearing to order and explained the purpose and goals of the hearing.
2. Jason Mitchell and Yvonne Moore-Jackson presented for the Department of Public Works (DPW) on the Bureau of Solid Waste's operations (presentation in file).

3. Agency representatives responded to Councilmember questions:
- a. How many vacant positions did the Bureau have before the beginning of the pandemic? There were 51 vacancies before the pandemic.
 - b. Is it correct that DPW did not miss any trash routes in January or February? Yes.
 - c. Is it correct that DPW did not miss any recycling routes in February? Yes.
 - d. When did DPW switch recycling pickup to every two weeks? January 2022.
 - e. What is A-time? A-time is when an employee is injured on the job and cannot work. Injured employees stay on A-time until they are able to return to work.
 - f. What is DPW doing to fill vacant positions? Human Resources is recruiting for DPW constantly and there is a job fair on March 26. The nation-wide shortage of CDL drivers makes recruiting drivers a challenge.
 - g. How many retirement eligible employees work in DPW? DPW will follow up with the information.
 - h. How many tons of recycling is DPW collecting now compared to when it was collecting on a weekly schedule? DPW will follow up with the information.
 - i. What is DPW's plan for returning to the pre-pandemic street sweeping schedule? DPW started a CDL training program to help fill driver vacancies. It is currently sweeping gateways and expanding to some other zones. DPW expects to start street sweeping in the quadrants again in late spring or early summer.
 - j. Can the City work with contractors to provide street sweeping when DPW staffing is insufficient? Street sweeping requires drivers to have some mechanical skills to maintain the vehicles in addition to CDLs, so DPW has not worked with contractors to provide that service.
 - k. Does DPW use data from past years to proactively plan for grass-cutting and other property maintenance needs, rather than relying on current 311 complaints? DPW is working on strategies to improve grass cutting at vacant lots. It knows where many of the properties are from prior years, but often lacks the resources needed to perform work at all of the properties.
 - l. How can neighborhoods opt out of street sweeping? DPW can work with the Department of Transportation and Council members to remove routes or otherwise address community concerns.
 - m. What facilities is DPW planning to renovate and what are the planned renovations? DPW plans to renovate the Kane Street, Reedbird Avenue, Sisson Street, and Bowleys Lane facilities. The conditions at the facilities require total renovation.
 - n. What is the timeframe for the renovations? The exact timeframe is not known yet, but there is a pending request for proposals.
 - o. What is the Feet on the Street campaign? The campaign will educate residents on what materials can be collected for recycling by leaving information tags on containers that are not collected because they contain non-recyclable items.
 - p. How does DPW communicate with residents outside of social media? DPW uses the 311 system, community meetings, radio, and other media to reach customers with information.
 - q. How does DPW reach out to community leaders? DPW has community liaison staff (although fewer now than in the past) and maintains a listserv of community leaders.

- r. What are the pending state law requirements for organic waste diversion? The new state law requires diversion when an entity generates an average of 2 tons per week in food waste beginning January 1, 2023. There is a hierarchy for diversion prioritizing donations for food assistance, then animal feed, and composting last. The requirement extends to those producing 1 ton or more on average effective January 1, 2024. The Maryland Department of the Environment is leading implementation. DPW and other agencies have been planning for implementation in the city.
 - s. Does the weight get measured by entity or by location for the purposes of requiring diversion? DPW is waiting for MDE guidance, but it will likely be by location.
 - t. Will DPW provide a composting facility for entities covered by the law? DPW is working with other agencies to develop plans for diversion, such as connecting entities with groups that can accept food donations. A city composting facility would require significant investment, but DPW is looking at options.
 - u. Can DPW provide pickup locations for household composting in communities far from the drop-off locations? DPW would likely need additional funding to provide this service. The current composting drop-off sites are grant funded and there is not sufficient funding for expansion currently.
4. Chairwoman McCray noted that the next hearing on LO22-0019 would be on Wednesday, May 11, 2022, at 10:00 AM and recessed the hearing.

Further Study

Was further study requested?

Yes No

If yes, describe.

The Committee requested the following additional information from DPW:

1. The number of retirement eligible employees currently in DPW;
2. How many tons of recycling DPW has collected each month for the last 6 months;
3. Information on any additional households/areas identified that were missed in recycling cart distribution.



Matthew L. Peters, Committee Staff

Date: March 11, 2022

Cc: Bill File
OCS Chrono File