



DATE: March 10, 2026
TO: Ted Henry, City Manger
FROM: Bel Aire City Council
SUBJECT: Solid Waste and Recycling Service Agreement

Background

The City entered into its current agreement with Waste Connections in May 2016 following a formal Request for Proposal (RFP) process. The agreement provided residential solid waste and single-stream recycling services and included automatic renewals through May 31, 2026.

Utility Advisory Committee Involvement

At its October 2025 meeting, the Utility Advisory Committee (UAC) met with the City Manager and Herschel West, a representative of Waste Connections, to discuss upcoming agreement negotiations and several proposed contract terms. The UAC expressed satisfaction with the level of service currently being provided but pushed back on Waste Connections' proposal to eliminate the citywide curbside cleanup days and replace them with a voucher system for residents.

The committee also discussed collection hours during periods of extreme summer heat. While the UAC expressed some concern regarding noise associated with earlier collection times, the committee generally understood Waste Connections' desire to begin routes earlier on extremely hot days. Waste Connections emphasized that this issue was important for employee safety and operational efficiency.

At its March 2026 meeting, the UAC again met with the City Manager to review the proposed agreement and negotiation progress. The UAC supported staff's recommendation to negotiate directly with Waste Connections rather than proceed with a formal RFP process. At the March 17, 2026 City Council meeting, the City Council agreed with the UAC's recommendation and direction.

At its May 2026 meeting, the UAC again met with the City Manager to review the proposed contract prior to City Council consideration. The UAC supported staff's recommendation to approve the agreement as presented.

Background on the Solid Waste Industry and Regional Context

The solid waste industry differs from many municipal services due to the importance of regional disposal infrastructure, particularly transfer stations and landfills. Waste Connections owns and operates key disposal infrastructure serving the Wichita metropolitan area, which creates a significant competitive advantage within the regional market.

Several neighboring communities currently utilize Waste Connections through negotiated municipal agreements, including Derby, Park City, Valley Center, and Andover.

Staff also considered the operational impacts associated with changing providers, including the removal and replacement of thousands of residential trash and recycling carts, changes in collection schedules, and likely increases in service complaints during a transition period.

Negotiation Summary

Staff spent significant time negotiating contract terms, annual rate adjustments, fuel adjustment provisions, and operational service standards. During negotiations, staff reviewed surrounding community agreements and regional pricing structures.

As discussed above, Waste Connections has several advantages within the regional market, which made it challenging to create negotiating leverage. That said, the City Manager focused on using data and comparable market information to keep long-term rates as low as possible.

Current Resident Rates (Including Administrative Fees)

Bel Aire: \$18.13/month (1 standard trash cart and 1 standard recycling cart)

Valley Center: \$18.61/month (1 standard trash cart and 1 standard recycling cart)

Park City: \$18.90/month (1 standard trash cart and 1 standard recycling cart)

Andover: \$23.62/month (1 standard trash cart and 1 standard recycling cart)

Staff focused negotiations on securing the lowest possible long-term annual increase while maintaining current service levels. Waste Connections initially proposed a structure similar to other regional agreements that included annual increases of approximately 3% along with fuel-based escalators tied to diesel pricing indexes.

Using Bureau of Labor Statistics data for the garbage and trash collection index, staff negotiated a fixed annual increase of **2.1% beginning in Year 2 of the agreement**. If we look at the next 10-year period, the average annual increase will be 1.9%, which closely aligns with the Bureau's reported index growth of 1.84% from 2016 to 2026.

The agreement also includes a fuel adjustment provision beginning in Year 3 of the contract. The provision allows a 1% rate adjustment for every **\$1.00 increase above \$4.00 per gallon in Midwest diesel fuel pricing**.

Another important point during negotiations was maintaining residents' ability to choose whether to utilize Waste Connections for trash service. Under both the current and proposed agreements, residents are not required to use Waste Connections for trash collection services and may choose another provider if desired. However, recycling service remains mandatory under City ordinance. Staff believed maintaining resident choice was an important component of the agreement.

Staff believes securing a lower fixed annual increase now better positions the City for future contract negotiations and long-term affordability.

Other Terms of the Proposed Agreement

- Weekly residential trash collection for participating households (same as current agreement)
- Up to three additional bags allowed at no additional cost (same as current agreement)
- Citywide curbside recycling service (same as current agreement)
- Two annual citywide curbside cleanup events (same as current agreement)
- Annual community shred day (same as current agreement)
- Trash and recycling service for City-owned facilities (same as current agreement)
- Continued support for City festivals and events (same as current agreement)
- \$33 per month for trash carryout service (standard service rate is \$45 per month)
- \$25 cart pickup fee for service cancellation or nonpayment (passed through to the customer)

Financial Impact and Recommendation

The proposed agreement provides predictable long-term cost increases and maintains current residential service levels. Staff believes the negotiated agreement balances long-term cost control with continued service reliability and operational stability. Staff recommends approval of the proposed Franchise Agreement with Waste Connections of Kansas, Inc. and authorization for the Mayor to execute the agreement.