



## CITY COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** January 28, 2025

**DEPARTMENT:** Utilities

**SUBJECT:** Motion to approve an Amendment to the City's Contract with Synagro South, LLC for hauling and disposal of wastewater bio-solids. - **Utilities**

### **CITY MANAGER RECOMMENDATION:**

The City Manager recommends approving an Amendment to the current Contract between the City of Cooper City and Synagro South, LLC for wastewater bio-solids hauling and disposal services, to address regulatory and industry service changes that are impacting the current bio-solids hauler and resulting in the selection of a different location for disposal by composting instead of land application as has been past practice.

### **BACKGROUND OF ITEM:**

The City's George A. Haughney Wastewater Treatment Plant produces a variable amount of class "B" (partially digested biosolids), depending on operations constraints, and these quantities averaged approximately 320 cubic yards (40 tons or about ) of wastewater bio-solids per month for year 2024. The City contracted with Synagro South, LLC in April 2024 for this hauling and disposal of bio-solids at a cost of \$37.50 per cubic yard. This Contract was expected to run for three (3) years and be renewable for one additional two (2) year period. However, changes in the Florida Administrative Code (regulations) and the bio-solids management industry occurring since 2013 have effectively tightened the conditions for landfill disposal and land application sites significantly. Also, wetter conditions in recent years on land application sites in south-central Florida from longer, more intense storms saturated conditions have been observed also at many land sustained in the areas of southern central Florida (St. Cloud) where the waste haulers have been contracting or using for final placement of these wastewater bio-solids.

### **ANALYSIS:**

Some of the recently required changes affecting land application sites are to:

- 1) Limit application of bio-solids to sites which have unsaturated soil depth of 2 feet,
- 2) to not allow application on soils with a seasonal high water depth within 6 inches of the surface unless other assurances are made, and
- 3) Require enrollment in a Florida Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACs) Best Management Practice (BMP) program.

Due to these requirements many land application sites including the one utilized by Synagro South, LLC at the Deseret Ranch resulted in the decision to cease acceptance of bio-solids from waste haulers at this time. Synagro South, LLC has searched for another site for disposal. Their new contracted site is also in St. Cloud and is called Osceola Organics, which is a composting site requiring additional spreading and working and management of the materials, resulting in a higher cost \$69.26 per cubic yard, or an 84% increase. The City of Melbourne is another customer that recently required a contract amendment to continue their services with Synagro South, LLC, although their hauling component is much lower due to their close proximity to the new land application site.

Staff reached out to H&H Liquid Sludge Disposal, Inc. (H&H) and Merrell Brothers, Inc. – two additional companies offering service to several Broward based utilities. H&H advised our staff that although other facilities are being serviced for costs in the neighborhood of \$40 to \$50 per cubic yard, they cannot extend these prices to Cooper City because their land sites are full with their commitments to the other utilities they serve, and indicated Cooper City would likely be better off staying with its current hauler due to industry changes, even if it means the city must go to a composting site as is proposed by our hauler due to the strain on land application sites state-wide. Merrell Brothers, Inc. is currently serving Sunrise and its costs for disposal of their sludge is \$75.53 per cubic yard, and although staff tried to reach Merrell Brothers, Inc. they have not returned our call, but would likely extend the same price which is about 9% higher than the increased price Synagro South, LLC has already offered Cooper City.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The Utilities Department has current year funding in the Fiscal Year 2025 budget of \$225,000 for this expense. The costs incurred for sludge disposal in 2024 were approximately \$144,000. Due to the increased costs and assuming sludge production remains the same as for Fiscal Year 2024 would be approximately \$266,000.

<u>General Ledger Acct. Number</u>	<u>Budgeted Amount</u>	<u>Requested Amount</u>	<u>Remaining Amount</u>
450-931-531240-535-00000 Wastewater Plant Sludge Removal	\$225,000.00	\$TBD	\$225,000.00

**ALTERNATIVES:**

The alternatives available for addressing this price change proposal from Synagro South, LLC would be to prepare a new invitation to bid and advertise for updating this contract with the lowest bidder, reach out to individual companies serving other utilities (which staff has done), or to continue service with Synagro South, LLC by Amending their contract, resulting in an 84% increase over the current rate of \$37.50 per cubic yard to haul and dispose of the bio-solids at a the proposed Osceola Organics composting site.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Synagro South, LLC - Cooper City Pricing Letter
2. Cooper City Bio-solids Production for 2024
3. Deseret Ranch response to Compost Notice
4. Melbourne Contract First Amendment for 2024