



## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

# AGENDA REQUEST & STAFF REPORT

**MEETING DATE:** Monday August 16, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Addition of Three FTE Landfill Site Attendant Positions to the Department of Solid Waste

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:**

Consideration of a Resolution that will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners on Wednesday, August 25, 2021 to add three FTE Landfill Site Attendant positions to the Department of Solid Waste.

**BACKGROUND AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS:**

Converting the equivalent of two contract labor positions to FTE Landfill Site Attendants

Current Landfill Site Attendant staffing during the November-April period is 8 FTE County employees plus contract labor providing coverage comparable to 1.75 FTE employees. This includes site attendants at all five solid waste facilities in the pay booths and two attendants performing customer service and safety duties at the Knott Landfill transfer station. For the most part, contract labor work full time schedules, including providing some of the needed coverage for employee vacations and absences.

Staffing for the May-October period includes the November-April levels described above plus the equivalent of an additional 2.25 FTE contract employees to accommodate seasonal Sunday operations at Knott Landfill and an additional attendant at Southwest Transfer Station to assist with site operations with the heavier spring/summer season traffic flow.

Over the past several years, growth in traffic and volumes of solid waste being received at all facilities has necessitated the extended use of contract labor at Knott Landfill and Southwest Transfer Station. The customer traffic count at Knott Landfill has risen from 129,000 in 2017 to 153,638 in 2020. The trend to date in 2021 is to exceed the 2020 traffic count by an additional 20,000 transactions.

During the 2006 recession, several FTE positions in the Solid Waste Department were eliminated. As the economy recovered and Sundays were added seasonally to operations at Knott Landfill, additional landfill attendant positions were filled with contract labor. At

that time, the Solid Waste Department and the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) agreed to take a “wait and see” approach and has continued to fill positions with contract labor as the economy stabilized. As there are no indications that waste flows will abate nor the operating schedule for Knott Landfill being reduced in the foreseeable future, an assessment of the use of contract labor is warranted. In order to maintain compliance with the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) between Deschutes County and the IUOE, the equivalent of two of the contract labor positions should be converted to FTE County employees.

#### Adding one FTE Landfill Site Attendant position for Negus Transfer Station

Bureau of Labor and Industry regulations and the IUOE CBA require that employees be provided with two uninterrupted 15 minute rest breaks during their work shifts. Historically, the rural site attendants were able to get breaks at times there were lulls in customer traffic at the sites. This is still the case at both the Alfalfa and Northwest transfer stations. Southwest Transfer Station is staffed with a County FTE and a seasonal contract labor person during the May-October busy season and the attendants are able to provide the mandatory rest breaks for each other.

Negus Transfer Station is staffed by one site attendant only and Republic Services furnishes labor services for facility operations and customer service outside the tollbooth. Traffic volumes at Negus Transfer Station have grown steadily to the point where the employee has little, if any, time to take their mandatory breaks. Over the past three years, the traffic count has risen from 61,500 in 2019 to a forecasted count of 76,500 for 2021. Staff considered 4 options to facilitate the Negus site attendant breaks:

- Closing Negus Transfer Station mid-morning and mid-afternoon for breaks  
This option was dismissed as impractical for customer service needs.
- Having Republic Services staff cover tollbooth operations during attendant breaks  
This is a departure from the services that Republic Services provides at Negus Transfer Station and Solid Waste has maintained a policy that all cash handling duties be conducted by County staff. In discussing this option with Republic Services, they indicated that they prefer to not participate in cash handling duties for the County’s tollbooth operations at this time.
- Having a Knott Landfill attendant drive to Negus twice daily to provide rest breaks  
The option was deemed an impractical use of County resources to apply on a continuous basis. Additionally, customer safety is a primary area of focus at the Knott Landfill Transfer Station and reducing transfer station staff during the middle of the day by taking an attendant away from duties at the Knott Transfer Station to accommodate breaks at Negus is a safety concern.

- Adding an FTE to facilitate rest breaks

This was ultimately determined to be the most effective solution. In addition to providing for the mandatory breaks, the additional employee would be able to affect more efficient tollbooth operations when customer traffic is heavy. During less busy periods, the second attendant would perform other site operation duties such as traffic control and customer assistance. Additionally, Negus Transfer Station will be undergoing substantial improvements over the next two years and will transition to weighing operations, which will require two site attendants for scale operations.

**BUDGET IMPACTS:**

The addition of 3.0 FTE Landfill Site Attendants is estimated to cost \$69,452 per FTE or \$208,626 for the remainder of FY22. If approved, increases in Fund 610 Personnel costs would be offset by other vacancy savings and reduced Materials and Services costs for contract labor services in FY22. Beginning in FY23, these positions would be funded as an ongoing portion of Solid Waste personnel costs in fund 610.

**ATTENDANCE:**

Chad Centola, Interim Director of Solid Waste