



MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION

Salem-Keizer Recycling & Transfer Station (SKRTS) Franchise
Minutes

Tuesday, September 8, 2026, 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Commissioners' Boardroom
Courthouse Square, 555 Court St. NE, Suite 5231
Salem, Oregon 97301

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners: Danielle Bethell, Kevin Cameron and Colm Willis.

Board's Office: Jonathan Sanford, Alvin Klausen, Toni Whitler, Trevor Lane, and Matt Lawyer.

Legal Counsel: Steve Elzinga and Andrew Mittendorf.

Public Works: Andrw Johnson and Brian May.

Commissioner Colm Willis called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.

1. Welcome & Introductions

-Commissioner Colm Willis

2. Presentation

-Brian May

- Agreement entered in September 2022 includes:
 - Initial five-year term ending September 30, 2027.
 - Options to extend:
 - One three-year term and one additional one-year term.
 - For a potential total of 10 years.
- County must notify Republic Services by September 30, 2026, if it intends to exercise three-year extension option.
- Describe current operating conditions:
 - SKRTS maintains healthy margin between revenues and operating costs.
 - SKRTS is an important tool for County's solid waste system:
 - Especially as other disposal and processing options are in flux.
- Reviewed regional disposal context:
 - County utilizes Coffin Butte as short term disposal option while market conditions and assets are evaluated.
 - About 20% of SKRTS customers come from Polk County:
 - Share is likely higher on weekends and holidays.
 - Proposed Polk County transfer station in Rickreall remains uncertain due to property, volume, and potential legal challenges regarding flow control.
 - Reduction in Polk County volume at SKRTS may reduce Marion County's costs:
 - County would no longer pay to process, transload, and dispose out of county loads.

- Under agreement, termination is limited to breach of contract or mutual agreement:
 - Republic may seek changes if agreement is reopened.
 - Straight extension preserves the existing 2.75% annual escalation.

3. Discussion

-All

- Extension of Franchise Agreement:
 - Commissioner Willis supports extending franchise for a three-year term:
 - The ongoing value of SKRTS to the community.
 - Need time while broader solid waste system questions are addressed.
 - Commissioner Kevin Cameron stated he did not see a reason not to extend.
 - Commissioner Danielle Bethell questioned if County previously wanted to exit arrangement:
 - Need clarification on what's next for solid waste strategy.
 - Steve Elzinga stated agreement allows termination for breach or mutual walk away, not at will.
 - Given existing uncertainties in regional solid waste markets and negotiations with other partners County is not in position to transition away from SKRTS.
- Use Patterns and Polk County Volumes:
 - SKRTS usage is tracked by ZIP code.
 - About 20% of SKRTS traffic originates from Polk County:
 - Proportion is likely higher on weekends and holidays.
 - Potential impact of a future Polk County facility in Rickreall:
 - Less Polk County volume may improve capacity and experience.
 - May reduce Marion County's disposal and processing costs.
- Out-of-County Rate Structure:
 - Revisited concept of charging higher rates for out-of-county users at Marion County transfer stations.
 - Commissioner Bethell repeatedly advocated higher rates for non-Marion County customers.
 - County is collecting ID information at facilities to determine customer home origin:
 - Public aware that it is for adjusting price for out-of-county users.
 - Commissioner Cameron stated Salem charges East Salem more for water than in city residents:
 - Supports County's authority to upcharge non-residents for services.
 - Need to confirm legal authority, in light of flow control issues:
 - Before implementing differential rates.
 - Interest in leveraging existing scale house technology:
 - Use ZIP code and ID data to identify out-of-county users.
 - Addressing edge cases:
 - Out-of-county drivers working for Marion County entities.
- Approach to Republic Services:
 - Republic Services may seek to modify current agreement if opened.
 - County should pursue extension of existing agreement to preserve:
 - Current 2.75% fixed annual escalation.
 - Existing terms and risk allocations without reopening broader negotiations.

4. Next Steps

-All

- Franchise Extension with Republic Services:
 - Brian May will:
 - Work with Steve Elzinga to submit a letter to Republic Services:
 - Choice to extend SKRTS franchise agreement for three-year term.
 - State intent to maintain existing 2.75% annual escalation provision and other current terms.
 - Letter to be sent by September 30, 2026:
 - In accordance with notice requirements in franchise agreement.
- Out of County Rate Authority and Implementation:
 - Steve Elzinga will:
 - Prioritize completion of legal analysis on:
 - If county may charge higher rates to out-of-county users.
 - How rate differentials intersect with flow control authority and other applicable laws.
 - Prepare memo and recommendation to Board outlining options and constraints for implementing out-of-county upcharges.
 - Brian May and Public Works staff will:
 - Refine data collection at SKRTS and other facilities to support potential differential rate structures.
 - Explore scale house programming options to automatically identify out-of-county customers for possible future pricing changes.

Adjourned – time: 1:44 p.m.

Minutes by: Mary Vityukova

Reviewed by: Gary L. White