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Advisory council looks at wide range of possible solid waste solutions
City, county leaders considering options as Middle Point closure approaches

Members of the Rutherford County Solid Waste Advisory/Steering Council met last night and heard about a broad range of options for dealing with solid waste when the Middle Point landfill reaches capacity.

The options discussed ranged from keeping a landfill in-county, to regional solutions, to recycling, to transfer stations, and reducing trash at its source. Also discussed were various ways to pay for a solution and how to govern it. The council heard detailed presentations from GBB Solid Waste Management Consultants, TriAd Environmental Consultants, and Cooley Public Strategies. They make up the consulting group that was commissioned to study the Middle Point situation.

According to Murfreesboro Mayor Shane McFarland, “Nothing is off the table.”

“We heard a lot of information that ran the gamut – recycling, regional solutions for example” said McFarland. “Our task now is to zero in on the options that will be economically and environmentally sound for our communities.”

Funding options were discussed, and Rutherford County Mayor Ernest Burgess said:

“There is no one simple answer in a community that is growing as rapidly as ours is.

“Cost is a critical factor, and we know, without question, that our costs are going up. The challenge is to minimize those costs and provide the service our community needs.”

Middle Point is expected to reach capacity in no more than 8 years. At that time, taxpayers will lose free use of the landfill – worth at least \$4 million annually – and the county will lose about \$900,000 a year paid by other counties that use Middle Point. Against this backdrop, the Advisory Council members are looking for potential solutions that will best serve Rutherford County for years to come.

Members recently took a “field trip” to the PHG Energy facility in Lebanon. PHG touts itself as being able to process as much as 64 tons of waste a day and produce up to 400kw of electricity, without smoke or odors. Advisory Council members plan to visit additional facilities.

The Advisory Council includes representatives from Rutherford County government as well as the cities of Murfreesboro, Smyrna, La Vergne, and Eagleville.

Based on the discussions Monday night, the consultants will narrow the focus and develop several scenarios for the Advisory Council to consider. Community input will be an important part to the process, as the Advisory Council makes decisions on what action to recommend.

Members of the Advisory Council include:

Rutherford County

- Mayor Burgess
- Mike Kusch, County Commissioner
- Lynnisse Roehrich-Patrick, former Executive Director of TACIR
- Dr. Kathy Mathis, associate professor, MTSU
- Merry Hickerson, County Highway Department coordinator

Murfreesboro

- Mayor McFarland
- Kirt Wade, City Council Member
- Paul Latture, Chamber of Commerce
- Joe Whitefield, Vice President for Facilities, MTSU
- Jeremy Harrison, All in One Recycling

LaVergne

- Kyle Brown, Assistant City Administrator
- Garlon Russell, Public Works Manager

Smyrna

- Harry Gill, Town Manager
- H.G. Cole, City Council Member

Eagleville

- Andrew Ellard, City Manager

The next meeting of the solid waste advisory committee will be held in April, with a date to be announced later. The public is invited to attend. The meeting will be streamed on local community access television, and video of Tuesday's meeting is available from CityTV [here](#).

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