

CASTLE SHANNON BOROUGH MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING

August 7, 2023

The following elected officials were present: M. Heckmann, J. Maloney; R. Astor; N. Kovach; B. Oates; D. Swisher; D. Baumgarten. Council Member M. Randazzo and Tax Collector E. O'Malley was absent. The following appointed officials were present: D. Biondo, Solicitor; J. Stanton, Borough Engineer; J. Trant, Interim Manager. Police Chief K. Truver and Codes Official P. Vietmeier were absent.

Public Comment – Agenda Items: Mr. Heckmann stated that this evening's session was advertised as a special session to review and discuss the results of the SHACOG 2023 Joint Bid for Solid Waste Collection. Mr. Heckmann opened the public comment section on agenda items.

Mayor Baumgarten commented that council received a letter from Waste Management that debated the quote by Westmoreland, and he believes that was unethical. Mayor Baumgarten also asked the manager if he had analyzed the bids and had a recommendation. Mr. Trant answered that he conducted an in-depth analysis of the extensive bid results from SHACOG, and provided a list of options for council's consideration, but not a specific vendor. Mr. Heckmann noted that council will not be voting this evening, and the item on the agenda is for discussion only. Mr. Heckmann also stated that both vendors contacted borough officials after the meeting via mail or email to clarify information.

Jerry Coombs – asked for a brief synopsis of the last council meeting on this subject. Mr. Heckmann stated that both Albert Pasquarelli, Public Sector Area Manager for Waste Management and Mike Liscinski of Westmoreland Sanitary Landfill LLC attended the meeting to discuss their proposals for trash collection through the SHACOG Solid Waste Contract.

The public comment section was closed.

Bid Openings: Mr. Heckmann reiterated that council is meeting to discuss, but not vote, on the SHACOG 2023 Joint Bid for Solid Waste Collection, Removal and Disposal Services. The contracts are proposed for five-year terms. Both proposals are very expensive compared to our current contract. Council will be weighing options for how garbage is collected, and what is in the best interest of the community long-term on how much waste is generated, how we are billed, the aesthetics of waste collection in our borough, etc.

Ms. Kovach questioned the bidding process through SHACOG and asked if the borough was choosing a vendor as a member of SHACOG. Mr. Heckmann noted that in previous years there may have been only one bidder for solid waste. For the current bid opening, there were two vendors. Every community can choose for themselves; however, through SHACOG the borough receives bulk bidding prices. Mr. Trant explained that SHACOG provides the bidding process and results, and council chooses the best vendor for their municipality.

Mr. Trant has provided council with several emailed information on the schedule. A decision needs to be made by August 19th. Mr. Trant has also provided council with notes on individual meetings with the vendors, and information provided directly from the vendors.

Council also received a multi-tab excel spreadsheet with information and the extremely complex SHACOG bid tabulation with a multitude of options. Policy decisions need to be made by council for the type of service provided to residents, then follow up decisions in terms of recycling and carts.

For this evening's discussion, Mr. Trant provided information and estimated pricing on automated or manual collection by unit or by tonnage. Waste Management is focusing on automated cart collection, while Westmoreland is focused on manual collection. Mr. Heckmann clarified that automated is one worker on a truck that can load a lidded bin that is standardized with a mechanical lift, and manual is two workers in a truck picking up cans/bags by hand. Mr. Trant explained that automated requires standardized carts either purchased by the municipality or provided by the vendor.

Mr. Trant provided estimated costs for a year one increase and five-year contract totals and discussed each option and cost. Mr. Trant noted that Westmoreland did not submit a bid for tonnage disposal, was the higher bid for automated collection, and was low bidder for manual collection.

Mr. Coombs questioned if the carts would be provided by the vendor, municipality, or resident. Mr. Heckmann answered that the standardized carts can be provided by either the municipality or the vendor. If a resident wants an additional cart, that cost would be billed by the hauler to the resident. Mr. Trant added that garage-door pickup would also be an extra charge to the resident.

Mr. Swisher noted that the representative from Waste Management who attended the July 24th council meeting had stated that their company will make it work for residential streets that cannot utilize automated pickup. Mr. Astor listed concerns that residents may stockpile garbage until large pickup collections or illegal dumping may increase.

Mr. Trant stated that bulk pickup would be one week a month with two items per household.

Council had a lengthy discussion on whether to use cart automated collection or continue with manual collection. The borough currently uses manual collection and pays per tonnage which can be abused by people disposing of business trash and excess yard waste. The shift to carts means that trash that is not in the cart will not be collected, other than collections on selected bulk pick up days.

Ms. Kovach questioned if data could be obtained from municipalities regarding the reduction in tonnage amounts when changing to automated cart collection. Mr. Trant will ask the vendor for this data. This data could determine whether the borough will pay by tonnage or by unit.

Mr. Heckmann discussed the benefits of carts: they deter pests and rodents, are aesthetically more pleasing than piles of trash bags, and keep trash out of the street from storms. The standard carts are 96 gallons; however, residents may have a one-time option to downsize to a smaller cart. Mr. Oates and Mr. Maloney both stated that they are in favor of a cart system.

The majority of council agreed that an automated cart system would be the preferred collection method for the contract with the cart provided by the vendor. Some manual collection may still be required on certain streets.

Billing by tonnage or by unit will be decided once additional information is obtained regarding a possible reduction in current tonnage when migrating to a cart system.

Mr. Heckmann closed the public comment section.

Other Business: Mr. Heckmann reported that council met in executive session prior to this meeting to discuss the manager search.

Mr. Astor motioned to adjourn. Mr. Swisher seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

Approved as presented this 14th day of August 2023.

John K. Trant Jr.
Interim Manager

Mark J. Heckmann
Council President