

**City Council of the Mayor and Council of New Castle**  
**Special Workshop Meeting**  
**Town Hall – 201 Delaware Street – New Castle**  
**Tuesday – September 1, 2009 – 6 p.m.**

**Present:**

Council President William Barthel  
Councilperson Ted Megginson  
Councilperson Teel Petty  
Councilperson John Gaworski

**Absent:**

Councilperson John Cochran

**Also present:**

City Administrator Cathryn Thomas, Finance Director Marian Delaney

1. Discussion of recycling and trash issues pertaining to the City of New Castle.

Council President Barthel said Administrator Thomas had brought this matter to his attention some time ago and there is some urgency to it.

Administrator Thomas said the time sensitivity to recycling is that the City Council signed a contract with Delaware Solid Waste Authority (DSWA) for recycling two years ago next January. It was “sweetheart” deal that the agency loses money on. It charges \$1 per household per pickup, which occurs every other week. There are just under 800 carts or containers, 1,600 pickups a month. The City has seen some reduction in the amount paid for tipping fees at the landfill for trash.

The contract expires in January. Administrator Thomas said she expected DSWA to provide a price. Its board, however, decided not to do that because then the price is out there already if it goes to bid. They are interested in continuing to provide the service. The way they would do that is to have the City competitively bid it.

The City could award the business to a private hauler. The other option would be for the City to do recycling itself. If the City added it, and kept all of its current services, it would require a significant investment in equipment and people. Administrator Thomas suggested that if the City Council opts to perform recycling services with City crews, it could consider reducing garbage pickup to one day a week, rather than twice a week. That would allow for City crews to pick up recycling at no added costs, except for the carts. Another alternative is once a week trash pickup and keep recycling on every other week. That would free up Public Works staff to do other work.

Administrator Thomas said it would be a big culture change for City residents to get garbage pickup only one day a week. Twice a week is rare and many Delaware municipalities have scaled back to once a week.

DSWA officials said it would be willing to sell the carts currently in the City to the City.

Councilperson Megginson said he thinks the City should seek bids for prices for recycling service.

Councilwoman Petty said she thinks the City needs to look at different recycling programs. City Council just raised taxes and if garbage pickup is reduced, people will see it as another loss.

Administrator Thomas said any of the big trash collectors offer recycling pickup service. DWSA does provide recycling pickup for individual households in the unincorporated areas as well.

Council President Barthel said that if you switched to once a week for regular (garbage) pickup you almost have to make recycling mandatory.

Administrator Thomas suggested the City Council also think about it philosophically, in terms of whether the City should have recycling as the correct thing to do.

Council President Barthel said the City Council can wait until the bids come in and also do a cost and cash-flow analysis of the different options.

Administrator Thomas said she will put together a bid proposal and have a quick turnaround, with sealed bids.

### **Other issues**

Administrator Thomas said the City has not been enforcing the current limits in the code relative to trash and many residents are not aware of what the limits are.

Council President Barthel asked how many people are putting out more than two cans. Is there a way over the next two months to determine how much of an issue it is?

Administrator Thomas said the City can quantify. She is under the belief it is a rampant issue. Newark gives everyone a toter and picks up only what is in the toter each week.

Councilperson Petty pointed out there are different sizes of garbage cans.

Administrator Thomas said the code allows for two 35-gallon cans that do not weigh more than 50 pounds each.

Administrator Thomas said the City pays a lot of money to pick up grass. She explained about “grasscycling”, which encourages leaving clippings on the lawn. The City should push to get away from putting grass clippings, or any yard waste, in plastic bags, which becomes garbage. The City does have that prohibition in its code.

City Council also discussed dumpsters and what is allowed and not allowed by City Code.

Councilperson Petty said she would favor amending the code to reflect dumpsters. She also asked who would enforce this.

Administrator Thomas said right now the rules on trash pickup is subjective.

Council President Barthel said the City needs to say to the drivers that they are responsible for this and in some way implement some checks and balances. He concurred with the idea of Administrator Thomas to make people aware of the rules and then say it is going to be enforced.

Councilperson Gaworski suggested using signs on the trucks to educate residents about the rules related to trash.

President Barthel asked if there is a way to quantify the additional costs of pickup items such as additional grass.

2. Process of approving and processing peddler applications.

A brief discussion was held about peddlers being allowed to work on weekends.

Councilperson Gaworski made a motion to adjourn. Councilperson Petty seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Michael Dickinson  
New Castle City Clerk