

MEETING NOTICE
PARTNERSHIP ON WASTE AND ENERGY BOARD

Date: Thursday, May 26, 2022

Time: 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm

Commissioners, Key staff, Presenters:

Ramsey County Environmental Health | 2785 White Bear Ave. N. | 2nd Floor Conference Room
 Maplewood, MN 55109 | [Map](#)

Public Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/98809748345?pwd=UUUV4ZUNRRDBhRnhrOExNY3RXZ1JGdz09>

Meeting ID: 988 0974 8345 | **Passcode:** 651074 | **Phone:** +1 651-372-8299

Members of the Partnership on Waste and Energy Board will meet at Ramsey County Environmental Health Offices in Maplewood along with key staff and presenters. Members of the public are encouraged to participate remotely via Zoom or may attend at the Maplewood address.

AGENDA

- | | | |
|---|-------------|---------|
| 1. Call to Order, Introductions, Commissioner Roll Call | | |
| 2. Approval of Agenda | Action | Page 1 |
| 3. Approval of Minutes of January 27, 2022 | Action | Page 2 |
| 4. Business | | |
| a. Budget Update | Information | Page 6 |
| b. Wood from the Hood Grant | Action | Page 8 |
| 5. Updates and Reports | Information | Page 13 |
| a. Legislative Update | | |
| b. 2021 PWE Annual Report | | Page 15 |
| i. Battery Campaign | | |
| ii. Hazardous Waste Online Training | | |
| 6. Other | | |
| 7. Adjourn | | |

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, September 22, 2022 | 12:30-2:00 PM | Ramsey County Environmental Health, Maplewood



THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 2022
PARTNERSHIP ON WASTE AND ENERGY BOARD

A meeting of the Partnership on Waste and Energy (PWE) was held as a virtual meeting at 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 27, 2022. Staff participants met at the Ramsey County Environmental Health Office, 2785 White Bear Avenue North, Suite 350, Maplewood, Minnesota. Other participants and public joined through Zoom.

The chair of the Partnership on Waste and Energy Board has determined that an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Commissioners will participate by telephone or other electronic means, and the board meeting will be conducted pursuant to and in compliance with Minnesota Statute 13D.021. Members of the public will be able to watch the public meeting live online.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Commissioner Debbie Goettel – Hennepin County
Commissioner Fran Miron – Washington County
Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt – Ramsey County

ATTENDING AT RAMSEY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, MAPLEWOOD

Leigh Behrens, Kevin Magnuson, Michael Reed, John Ristad, Nikki Stewart, Jody Tharp, Jordan Thone, Kris Wehlage

PARTICIPATING REMOTELY

Brendan Jordan, Dave McNary, Sam Richie, Rob Vanasek

ATTENDING REMOTELY

Mallory Anderson, Zitlali Chavez Ayala, Dave Benke, Dave Brummel, Alison Cameron, Carolyn Collopy, Max Dalton, Dan Donkers, Rae Eden Frank, Jamie Giesen, Michelle Gin, Sam Hanson, Sam Holl, Sara Hollie, Brendan Jordan, Filsan Ibrahim, John Jaimez, Jennefer Klennert, Juna Ly, Leslie McCollam, Shannon Mitchell, Jennifer Nguyễn Moore, Jim Redmond, Peder Sandhei, Minette Saulog, Brandan Strickland, Britta Torkelson, Jeff Travis, Ryan Tritz, Renee Vought, Kevin Walli, Sam Walseth

CALL TO ORDER AND COMMISSIONER ROLL CALL

Chair Miron called the meeting to order at 12:31 pm. The statement regarding conduct of a remote meeting was read. Introductions of attendees in Maplewood were made. A roll call of commissioners was conducted.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Reinhardt moved, seconded by Goettel, to approve the January 27, 2022, agenda as presented. Motion passed 3-0 by roll call vote. Ayes: Goettel, Miron, Reinhardt Nays: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Reinhardt moved, seconded by Goettel, to approve the minutes of September 23, 2021. Motion passed 3-0 by roll call vote. Ayes: Goettel, Miron, Reinhardt Nays: None

BUSINESS

Governing Board Leadership for 2022

Nikki Stewart, Washington County and PWE lead staff, presented the PWE leadership for 2022.

Hennepin County

Commissioner Debbie Goettel – PWE Vice-Chair

Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Board

Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County

Commissioner Fran Miron, Washington County – PWE Chair

Alternates

Commissioner Jeff Lunde, Hennepin County

Commissioner Trista MatasCastillo, Ramsey County

Commissioner Wayne Johnson, Washington County

2022 Board Meeting Schedule

Michael Reed, Ramsey County and PWE lead staff, presented the meeting schedule for 2022.

Commissioner Goettel moved, seconded by Reinhardt, to approve the 2022 meeting schedule.

Motion passed 3-0 by roll call vote. Ayes: Goettel, Miron, Reinhardt Nays: None

2022 Budget

Kris Wehlage, R&E accounting manager, presented the proposed 2022 PWE budget. Highlights include:

- Program contributions of \$83,250 are the same as the previous four budgets for PWE members
- Additional funding included for communications staff and graphic design
- Additional funding included for Product Stewardship Institute contract
- Additional funding included for online legislation tracking system
- Eliminated funding for battery recycling campaign
- Eliminated funding for energy policy development
- Carryover funds are unused funding from prior budgets

Commissioner Goettel expressed interest in additional information about the legislative tracking tool. Nikki Stewart stated that this tool replaces what has been used by staff, with tracking previously done using Excel spreadsheets. Dan Donkers, Ramsey County and PWE staff, shared that the tool automates work that has previously been completed manually. Additionally, the tool provides information on all federal legislation and bills.

Commissioner Goettel moved, seconded by Reinhardt, to approve the PWE budget for 2022.

Motion passed 3-0 by roll call vote. Ayes: Goettel, Miron, Reinhardt Nays: None

Legislative Session Preview

Dave McNary, Hennepin County and PWE lead staff, provided a brief overview. On September 23, 2021, the board approved the PWE 2022 State Legislative Platform. The Minnesota legislative session begins on January 31, 2022, and concludes May 23, 2022.

Sam Richie, Fryberger, shared that this is the second year of a biennium, which would traditionally be focused on policy and passing a bonding bill. Issues affecting the session include all members of the legislature up for election in 2022, a budget surplus, federal dollars, and a divided legislature. PWE is particularly focused on emerald ash borer (EAB) for the upcoming session. Letters have been submitted supporting funding for EAB at the community level and continued use of wood waste at St. Paul Cogeneration.

Commissioner Reinhardt noted that Sen. McCollum has raised the EAB issue at a federal level. From a climate perspective, reforestation must be emphasized. Richie said that this has been included in PWE's messaging on EAB.

Commissioner Miron noted that diversification of the tree canopy could result in less waste in the future.

Commissioner Goettel agreed that PWE should pursue support of reforestation efforts and shared that Hennepin County is having discussions about tree canopy diversification.

McNary stated that no changes to platform are needed, as this is consistent with what PWE has discussed before about EAB.

Brendan Jordan, Great Plains Institute (GPI), provided an update of GPI's work. GPI is addressing the policy framework for anaerobic digestion. A series of studies and interviews have revealed that policies like clean fuel standards are critical for renewable natural gas work. A broad coalition across Minnesota and nationally are supportive of technology/fuel-neutral policies, supporting multiple types of low carbon fuels, with no mandate to counties for specific technologies. Gov. Walz is in favor of this policy.

Commissioner Miron inquired how renewable natural gas produced via anaerobic digestion compares to other clean fuel types in a lifecycle assessment. Jordan said that organics has good carbon intensity reduction and places favorably in comparisons.

Rob Vanasek, Capitol Hill Associates, provided an update on the solid waste aspect of the PWE platform. Capitol Hill will play a supportive role on EAB and will be leading a push to secure more SCORE funding. A lot of work has been done on mattresses; the top priority from the county perspective is protecting infrastructure that has been invested in and including all mattresses in recycling efforts.

At a House Environmental Committee hearing on MLCAT and CLIF, PWE supported repayments and took the opportunity to highlight SCORE, EAB and capital needs, including those of Hennepin County. MPCA has a proposal to increase the cap on Capital Assistance Program (CAP) to \$5 million. PWE wants to quadruple the amount, but a fight is looming with the waste industry, which wants to get rid of CAP entirely. Hennepin County's project could fall under the Governor's new \$10 million bonding proposal.

Tier 1 Priorities: PWE started the extended producer responsibility (EPR) stakeholder process. An environmental group is pushing a bill that will come up before PWE's process is complete. PWE will monitor this bill's progress. MPCA has proposed a food hierarchy that is problematic from PWE's perspective; lead staff submitted comments and will be monitoring movement on that.

Tier 2 Priorities: The need to defend waste-to-energy is being monitored, as are activities around advanced recycling.

Tier 3 Priorities: There is an opportunity to support the compostable products bill. PWE will submit a letter in support. An e-waste, carpet and solar panels proposal may also come forward. If committees come together on additional legislation, there might be opportunities there.

Commissioner Reinhardt inquired whether there is any urgency regarding spending of federal funding. Vanasek said there is close to \$1.25 billion in ARPA funding. The legislature had planned to spend \$250 million during special session for frontline workers, but that didn't happen, so all of that money is in play. While the legislature does not have to act on that, it is in their interest to do so. After close of session on May 23, all remaining funds will be available to Gov. Walz for spending at his discretion.

OTHER

Dave Benke, MPCA, said the food hierarchy is not likely to proceed. MPCA recognizes there is more work to do before that proceeds. MPCA is excited about what's been introduced in the Governor's budget and bonding. MPCA appreciates the work of counties to advance technologies to manage waste.

ADJOURN

Chair Miron called the meeting adjourned at 1:27 pm.

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, May 26, 2022 | 12:30-2:00 pm | Zoom or Ramsey Environmental Health, Maplewood

ATTESTED TO:

Approved: _____
Commissioner Fran Miron, Chair
May 26, 2022

Approved: _____
May 26, 2022

PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING DATE:	May 26, 2022	AGENDA ITEM:	4.a
SUBJECT:	Budget Update		
TYPE OF ITEM:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION	<input type="checkbox"/> POLICY DISCUSSION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACTION
SUBMITTED BY:	Kris Wehlage – Accounting Manager, Recycling & Energy		

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

For information only.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Partnership on Waste and Energy Governing Board approved the 2022 budget at its January 2022 meeting. Staff will provide a budget status report.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 2022 Year-End Projection Report as of March 31, 2022

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES	DATE
Hennepin County Recycling & Energy	<i>Dave McNay</i> 5/17/2022
	<i>Michael Reed</i> 5/17/2022
	<i>Nicole Stewart</i>

Partnership on Waste and Energy
2022 Year-End Projection Report
As of March 31, 2022

Category, Item, Description	2022 Approved Budget	Year-end Projection	Variance
<u>Staffing and Administration</u>			
- Planning Specialist Salary, 10%	9,600	9,600	-
- Accounting Manager, 5%	6,900	6,900	-
- Contract Manager, 5%	5,200	5,200	-
- Communications Staff	5,000	5,000	-
Staffing and Administration Subtotal	26,700	26,700	-
<u>Contracts</u>			
- Insurance, MCIT	1,407	1,407	-
- Platform and Annual Report (Metre)	10,000	10,000	-
- Lobbying Contract - Capital Hill	50,000	50,000	-
- Lobbying Contract - Fryberger	25,000	25,000	-
- Anaerobic Digestion	25,000	25,000	-
- EAB Woodwaste	48,000	48,000	-
- Product Stewardship Institute	57,000	57,000	-
- Legislation Tracking Contract - Civic Eagle	6,000	6,000	-
- Contracts Subtotal	222,407	222,407	-
Grand Total	249,107	249,107	-
<u>Total Available Partnership on Waste and Energy</u>			-

PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING DATE:	May 26, 2022	AGENDA ITEM:	4.b
SUBJECT:	Wood from the Hood Grant		
TYPE OF ITEM:	<input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION	<input type="checkbox"/> POLICY DISCUSSION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ACTION
SUBMITTED BY:	Partnership Lead Staff		

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

1. Approve a grant for Wood from the Hood to scale lumber production from urban tree waste and increase messaging related to responsible utilization of urban forest resources for the amount of \$24,000 for the period of execution through May 31, 2023, with the option of one one-year renewal should funding become available.
2. Authorize Partnership lead staff to execute the grant agreement upon approval as to form by the county attorney.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

For several years, the Partnership on Waste and Energy (Partnership) has been monitoring the increasing amount of wood waste from trees infected with emerald ash borer (EAB). All ash trees are susceptible to EAB, and, according to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota’s estimated 900 million ash trees are especially vulnerable because the state has more ash trees than any other state. Ash trees make up about 15% of the trees in Minnesota communities, but, in some cities, ash trees can account for as much as 30% to 60% of the tree canopy.

EAB is now identified in more than 30 Minnesota counties and continues to spread. Communities are removing and replacing ash trees to slow the spread of EAB as quickly as funding allows. Properly managing the surge of waste wood created from EAB-related removal is a priority concern of the Partnership.

Local governments statewide face unfunded mandates to respond to EAB and the growing volume of wood waste. Minnesota is entering the peak phase of ash tree loss in the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area this decade, requiring the management and disposal of more than 1.67 million tons of wood waste over the next ten years.

Wood from the Hood, a small, women-owned business located in Minneapolis, was formed with the goal to reclaim discarded trees from the local neighborhoods to create beautiful, high-quality wood products. In fact, the idea for the business came to owners Cindy and Rick Siewert as they watched an EAB-infected ash tree being cut down in the backyard of their Minneapolis home and saw an opportunity to give the tree a second life.

Wood from the Hood currently works with local cities, park boards and other partners to turn urban tree waste into unique, hand-crafted products, including wood slabs, tables, built-ins and more. In 2021, the national furniture retailer Room & Board invited Wood from the Hood to be part of their Urban Wood Project and utilize wood waste to produce dining room tables and coffee tables for a new product line. The

SUBJECT: Wood from the Hood Grant

response from customers has been strong, and the collaboration is expected to expand to additional product lines made from urban tree waste sourced from the Twin Cities. This partnership has allowed Wood from the Hood to utilize a higher volume of urban waste wood and reach a global audience about the importance of environmental stewardship.

Wood from the Hood is now working to secure funding to scale up production and increase wood waste processing capacity by seven times – from 75 tons annually to over 600 tons annually. This includes the recent purchase of a larger production sawmill and plans to purchase an additional forklift to help process tree waste at their facility. The small business also plans to add a full-time permanent position to their current staff of six. This growth will enable Wood from the Hood to not only process additional wood waste from the Twin Cities metropolitan area, but also meet the increased demand for their products.






As the Twin Cities metropolitan area now grapples with increased ash tree removals in response to EAB, the Partnership sees Wood from the Hood as a valuable partner in managing increased wood waste and keeping the associated carbon sequestered as lumber. Funding from the Partnership would assist Wood from the Hood in purchasing equipment and hiring additional staff needed to process an increased amount of urban tree waste. Partnership lead staff recommend that the Governing Board authorize a grant of \$24,000 for Wood from the Hood to scale lumber production from urban tree waste and increase messaging related to responsible utilization of urban forest resources.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1. Draft Resolution
- 2. Proposal from Wood from the Hood

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The grant is for an amount of \$24,000. Funding is available in the 2022 budget.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES		DATE
Hennepin County		5/18/2022
Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy	 	5/18/2022
Washington County Attorney		5/18/2022
Approved as to form: Ramsey County Attorney		5/18/2022

Draft Resolution: Wood from the Hood Grant

**Resolution PWE-2022-03
Wood from the Hood Grant**

WHEREAS, The joint powers agreement (“JPA”) between the Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Board and Hennepin County for a Partnership on Waste and Energy (“Partnership”) directs the Governing Board of the Partnership to develop an annual budget; and

WHEREAS, The Partnership has determined a need for collaboration in certain areas of waste management, including legislation and policy development, communications and outreach, planning and evaluation of waste processing and other selected programs; and

WHEREAS, the JPA further specifies that the Governing Board may negotiate, enter and enforce contracts necessary to accomplish the purposes set forth in the JPA; and

WHEREAS, The Partnership has been monitoring the increasing amount of wood waste from trees infected with emerald ash borer (EAB); and

WHEREAS, Ash trees make up about 15% of the trees in Minnesota communities, and in some cities account for as much as 30% to 60% of the tree canopy; and

WHEREAS, Communities are removing ash trees to slow the spread of EAB as quickly as funding allows, and properly managing the surge of waste wood created from EAB-related removal is a priority concern of PWE; and

WHEREAS, Wood from the Hood, a small, women-owned business located in Minneapolis, was formed with the goal to reclaim discarded trees from local neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, Wood from the Hood currently works with local cities, park boards and other partners to turn urban tree waste into unique, hand-crafted products, including wood slabs, tables, built-ins and more; and

WHEREAS, Wood from the Hood is working to securing funding to scale up production to increase wood waste processing capacity by seven times – from 75 tons annually to over 600 tons annually. This includes the recent purchase of a larger production sawmill and plans to purchase an additional forklift to help process tree waste. The small business also plans to add a full-time permanent position to their current staff of six; and

WHEREAS, As the Twin Cities metropolitan area now grapples with increased ash tree removals in response to EAB, the Partnership sees Wood from the Hood as a valuable partner in managing increased wood waste and keeping the associated carbon sequestered as lumber; and

WHEREAS, With a grant from the Partnership, Wood from the Hood will purchase equipment and hire staff to process an increased amount of urban tree waste. NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, The Governing Board hereby approves a grant for Wood from the Hood to scale lumber production from urban tree waste and increase messaging related to responsible utilization of urban forest resources for the amount of \$24,000 for the period of execution through May 31, 2023, with the option of one one-year renewal should funding become available. BE IT FURTHER

Draft Resolution: Wood from the Hood Grant

RESOLVED, The Governing Board authorizes Partnership lead staff to execute the grant agreement upon approval as to form by the county attorney.

Chair, Governing Board
May 19, 2022

Attest, Vice Chair
May 19, 2022

Partnership on Waste & Energy Governing Board:

PWE funds awarded to Wood From the Hood would be utilized to help scale not only our lumber production capabilities but also our message of responsible utilization of urban forest resources.

For us it all starts with our ability to produce lumber. This year we hope to purchase a larger production sawmill for \$77k that will enable us to utilize seven times (From 75 tons annually to over 600 tons.) more waste wood than in 2021. We will also be adding two fulltime and one parttime permanent positions to our team which will add 130K to our annual payroll. This growth will enable us to meet the increased demand for custom furniture, urban lumber, finished products, and continue to build our relationship and product lines with Room & Board.

In 2021, Room & Board invited us to be a part of their Urban Wood Project and utilize waste wood to produce dining room tables and coffee tables for a new product line called the Orlin Collection. The response from customers was significantly stronger than anyone expected and soon after we were in collaborations to use the same urban waste wood to produce the Prospect Collection and provide material for their outdoor furniture lines in 2023. This partnership has allowed us to utilize a higher volume of urban waste wood and reach a more global audience about the importance of environmental stewardship.

Our plans for reclaiming 600 tons of waste wood in 2022 is just the tip of the iceberg for Wood From the Hood. As we continue make investments in both equipment and people our ability to streamline processes and increase production will only continue to grow in the decades to come.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our plans for increasing our ability to utilize urban waste wood and being considered for PWE grant funding. We look forward to any questions you may have.

Thank You,
Rick Siewert

Rick Siewert

Wood From the Hood
2640 Minnehaha Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55406

T: 612-581-0252

F: 612-721-1181

E: <mailto:rick@woodfromthehood.com>



PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING DATE:	May 26, 2022	AGENDA ITEM:	5
SUBJECT:	Updates and Reports		
TYPE OF ITEM:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION	<input type="checkbox"/> POLICY DISCUSSION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACTION
SUBMITTED BY:	Partnership Lead Staff		

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

For Information only.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Legislative Update

The 2022 regular legislative session concluded on May 23, 2022. Partnership staff and lobbyists will provide a brief report and answer questions. Summaries will be provided on bills of interest to the Partnership.

2021 PWE Annual Report

Staff will present an overview of the Partnership on Waste and Energy (PWE) annual report. Highlights include:

- Legislative work
- Online training for hazardous waste generators in Spanish
- Product stewardship
- Anaerobic digestion
- Battery campaign

Additionally, staff will highlight two 2021 efforts: the battery campaign and the hazardous waste online training.



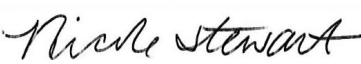
ATTACHMENTS:

- 2021 Annual Report

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None.

SUBJECT: *Updates and Reports*

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES		DATE
Hennepin County		5/17/22
Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy	 	5/17/22

Partnership on Waste and Energy 2021 Annual Report

Letter from the Chair

The Partnership on Waste and Energy (PWE) is a joint powers board comprised of Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Board and Hennepin County members. PWE, established in 2017, is the organization through which Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington counties collaborate on solid waste management issues.

The three counties serve over two million residents and are responsible for managing about a third of the state’s municipal solid waste. The counties invest heavily in industry-leading technologies to aggressively recover resources from trash, reducing the need for landfilling. Working together around shared interests in reducing and managing waste has allowed for efficient, targeted, rapid efforts at impacting the legislative process. PWE partners with other organizations on priority issues and is grateful to its partners in this shared work.



- Fran Miron, Washington County Commissioner and 2022 PWE Board Chair

Governance and Administration

PWE is governed by a board of three county commissioners, including the chair and vice chair of the Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Board (Ramsey County Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt and Washington County Commissioner Fran Miron, respectively) and Hennepin County Commissioner Debbie Goettel. The chair of the PWE Board rotates annually, and in 2021 the chair was Commissioner Reinhardt. Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy serves as the administrative agent for PWE, providing financing, procurement, communication and planning services to the partnership.



Legislative Work

PWE, through its legislative advocacy efforts, seeks to end waste, promote renewable energy and enhance the health and resiliency of its communities while advancing equity and responding to the challenges of a changing climate. Each year, the PWE governing board adopts a legislative platform. In the 2021 legislative session, PWE’s lobbying activities included the following successes:

More funding for waste reduction and recycling, including a 4% increase in SCORE grants

Preventing the loss of St. Paul District Energy as a biomass energy solution for wood waste

Securing community grants and assistance to fight the impacts of the emerald ash borer

Bolstering markets for biofuels from anaerobic digestion through the Natural Gas Innovation Act

Prohibiting PFAS chemicals in food packaging

PWE board members and lobbyists engaged with legislators around these topics and continued ongoing collaboration with partners toward common goals. PWE provided written and oral testimony and created policy position statements to advance its interests.

Online Hazardous Waste Training Now in Spanish



PWE initiated a project in 2020 to create online, on-demand hazardous waste generator training materials in all three counties, in part as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic making classroom trainings infeasible. In 2021, Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington county compliance staff again partnered to develop a Spanish version of the online training, further expanding accessibility for hazardous waste education.

Both the English and Spanish trainings are free and available anytime, allowing regulated parties to obtain this important information at their convenience. Future considerations include translating the training into additional languages.

Product Stewardship

“Product stewardship” is a policy approach that holds producers responsible for the management of their products and packaging for the materials’ full life cycle to minimize the environmental and social impacts.

PWE partners with the Minnesota Solid Waste Administrators Association (SWAA) Product Stewardship Committee to advance a shared vision of product stewardship across the state. This includes:

- Supporting product stewardship efforts that reduce lifecycle impacts of products and packaging
- Reducing financial burdens associated with waste disposal on local government and taxpayers
- Establishing measurable and enforceable goals

In 2021, PWE counties partnered with the Product Stewardship Institute to develop consensus with multiple stakeholder groups on extended producer responsibility for packaging in Minnesota. The effort will result in a bill to be introduced in the 2023 Minnesota Legislative Session with a coalition of support. PWE also collaborates to advance policies related to other products like carpet, mattresses and electronics.



Anaerobic Digestion

Diverting organics from the trash through anaerobic digestion (AD) is a strategy that would help PWE counties make progress toward zero waste. Food and organic materials decomposing in landfills produce methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Climate experts rank AD as a top climate solution because the methane created and captured from the controlled process reduces greenhouse gas emissions and creates renewable natural gas, fertilizer and compost.



In 2021, both Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy (R&E) and Hennepin County advanced efforts to develop organics recycling infrastructure. Hennepin County added an AD facility to its 2021 capital budget, requested \$21 million from the state's 2022 bonding bill, and released a request for proposals for an AD facility to process organic materials. R&E initiated phase two of its procurement process to partner with private end markets, potentially including an AD technology vendor, to manage source-separated organics and other organic-rich material.

The shared interest in recovering the resource value of organic waste drove PWE collaboration in 2021. This included support for legislative initiatives, such as the Future Fuels Act and the Natural Gas Innovation Act (now passed into law) and ongoing work through partnerships with Great Plains Institute, EcoEngineers, Coalition for Renewable Natural Gas, American Biogas Council, Minnesota Future Fuels Coalition and the Bioeconomy Coalition of Minnesota.

Battery Campaign

Fires caused by batteries are a growing concern for waste and recycling facilities across the country, including those owned by PWE counties. Through PWE, the counties launched a 2021 campaign to educate residents on proper battery disposal. Goals of the campaign were to increase the number of batteries brought to drop-off sites and reduce the number of batteries in the trash and recycling.

The campaign was shared widely by municipalities and residents in the three counties, and partners across the state and country asked PWE to share the campaign assets to educate their communities. Comparing 2020 and 2021 battery collection numbers at county drop-off facilities, Ramsey County saw a 7% increase and Washington County saw a 10% increase in battery collection. Hennepin County's overall numbers stayed relatively flat, but the county did see a significant increase in lithium battery collection (lithium batteries are the most hazardous in terms of fire risks). The counties will continue using the assets created as part of the campaign in educating their residents.



Financials

Each year, the board approves a budget for the following fiscal year, which aligns with the calendar year. PWE is funded with contributions by Hennepin County and Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy. In 2021, the PWE budget expenditures were as follows:

Lobbying Services	\$74,975	Contracts with lobbying firms Capitol Hill Associates and Fryberger Law Firm.
Battery Campaign	\$47,835	Communication campaign to educate the public about proper battery disposal.
Anaerobic Digestion	\$28,626	Contract with Great Plains Institute to explore anaerobic digestion opportunities.
Personnel	\$21,800	R&E staffing support to PWE for planning, accounting, and contract management
Hazardous Waste Training	\$19,079	Online training for hazardous waste generators in English and Spanish.
Product Stewardship	\$11,524	Contract with the Product Stewardship Institute to explore product stewardship opportunities.
Communications	\$8,850	Designing of professional materials such as the legislative platform and position statements.
Insurance	\$1,524	Organizational insurance.
Total	\$213,913	



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