



# Minutes

## SW MI Materials Management Planning Committee (MMPC)

Monday, May 19, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.

**Location:** Pokagon Band Community Center  
27043 Potawatomi Trail Dowagiac, MI 49047

Role	Member	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Nov	Dec
Solid Waste Facility Operator	Bob Kras	IP	A	IP	IP	E						
Hauler	Christopher Phillips (Vice-Chair)	IP	E	IP	IP	A						
Materials Recovery Facility Operator	Donovan Kelley		IP	E	IP	A						
Composting Facility Operator												
Waste Diversion, Reuse, Reduction Facility Operator	Sheila Bergen				IP	IP						
Environmental Interest Group	Kalli Marshall (Chair)	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP						
Elected Township Official	David Kuhn	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP						
Elected City/Village Official	Deah Muth	IP	IP	V	IP	V						
Business that generates Managed Materials	Al Pscholka	IP	IP	E	E	A						
Regional Planning Agency	John Egelhaaf	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP						
Sovereign Nation	Jennifer Kanine	IP	IP	IP	V	A						
<b>Berrien County</b>												
Elected County or Municipal Official	Dave Vollrath	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP						
Business that Generates Managed Materials	Jeff Doroh	IP	IP	IP	E	A						
<b>Cass County</b>												
Elected County or Municipal Official	Roseann Marchetti (Secretary)	IP	IP	E	IP	IP						
Business that Generates Managed Materials	Amy Huser	IP	IP	IP	IP	E						
<b>Van Buren County</b>												
Elected County or Municipal Official	Paul Schincariol	IP	A	A	A	A						
Business that Generates Managed Materials	Robert Baran	IP	IP	A	IP	IP						
IP - Present in Person; V - Participating remotely; E- Excused absence; A - Unexcused absence; A blank spot means the position is vacant												

### Public Present

Tietema, Dan

Palthe, Justin

Bodtke, Jeff

Adams, Jill

**1. Call to Order & Roll Call**

Chair Kalli Marshall called the meeting to order at 1:05. Role call was taken, and it was established that NO quorum was present.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

Approval of the agenda was unable to be conducted due to a lack of quorum.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

Approval of the minutes was unable to be conducted due to a lack of quorum.

**4. Communications**

None.

**5. Old Business**

*Lake Michigan College*

Al Pscholka was not present at the meeting.

**6. Hearings**

*Compost Facility – Organicycle*

Dan Tietema, owner of Organicycle, presented on curbside composting and landfill waste reduction. He shared his experience in the waste management industry, highlighting composting as a key strategy for addressing landfill capacity challenges. Organicycle has expanded services from Kent County to Holland, Muskegon, and Kalamazoo, with potential growth into South Bend.

Tietema described the composting process, which involves mixing carbon and nitrogen sources and maintaining specific conditions over 4–6 months. While commercial accounts are prioritized for efficiency, residential participation remains vital. Strategies for residential programs in East Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo include education, incentives, and monitoring. Facility tours are also used to promote public understanding. Tietema noted the need for residential customer commitment and proper cart sizes, and the importance of communication with commercial clients to reduce contamination. Organicycle partners with farmers to maintain compost quality and manage land use impacts.

Tietema emphasized the importance of transparency and reducing contamination to maintain credibility. Trash in compost increases operational costs, and rising landfill tip fees are anticipated. Expansion into southwest Michigan is being explored, with a site ideally located 45–60 miles from major population centers. Organicycle aims to divert 12 million pounds of waste annually, with a goal to double that in two years. The use of compostable products was discussed, along with benefits and challenges.

### *Hydro Aluminum*

Sheil Bergen described Hydro's aluminum recycling process, which involves collecting scrap aluminum from various sources, melting it down, and refining it to meet customer specifications. 25% of the recycled aluminum comes from construction and demolition of windowpanes and door frames, and another large percentage of material comes from their client manufacturing process. Before processing the aluminum, they have to ensure it is completely dry to avoid a large explosion incident. Once the aluminum is dried, it is melted down, refined to the alloy desired by their client, and formed into large cylinders to be sold to their client. Hydro is able to add different metals and alloys to fit the needs of their clients.

Hydro can recycle aluminum multiple times without losing quality, unlike some plastics. The facility processes around 18 to 19 million pounds of aluminum per month and is expanding to meet increasing demand from manufacturers, particularly in the construction industry. Bergen mentioned that Hydro plans to eventually enter the automotive market.

### *Green Earth Electronics*

Jeff Bodtke provided an overview of how Green Earth Electronics Recycling was founded and discussed the company's current operations and challenges. The business, based in St. Joseph, primarily serves commercial clients by focusing on reuse, resale, and recycling of electronic equipment to maximize value.

A significant portion of the discussion centered on the growing complexity of handling batteries, particularly lithium-ion batteries, due to associated fire risks and safety concerns. While the company also facilitates residential recycling through one-day events, these are less financially viable compared to their commercial services. Bodtke suggested that permanent drop-off locations may offer a more efficient and sustainable solution for residential recycling. However, Green Earth Electronics is grateful to the community that they operate in, and provide residential recycling as a service to give back to their community.

The presentation concluded with an introduction to their sister company, Maverick Industrial Sales, which specializes in recycling industrial assets and automation equipment from manufacturing facilities.

## **7. New Business**

### *Solutions Activity*

This item was not discussed due to lack of a quorum.

### *Goal Review*

This item was not discussed due to lack of a quorum.

**8. Public Comment**

None.

**9. Miscellaneous**

*MRC Conference Takeaways*

This item was not discussed due to lack of a quorum.

*Subcommittees*

This item was not discussed due to lack of a quorum.

**10. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

## **Next steps**

- Becca to send out a reminder about the next meeting location at the Pokagon Band Tribal Police Department's Emergency Operations Center.
  - Jill to send the attorney's presentation on the tax elimination proposal to Becca for distribution to interested committee members.
  - Committee members to consider composting options and potential public-private partnerships for the region.
  - John to assist in identifying potential locations for composting facilities in the area.
  - Committee members to explore the possibility of establishing permanent drop-off sites for electronic waste in their respective counties.
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## **Composting Initiatives and Waste Reduction**

The discussion focused on composting initiatives and food scrap programs, with SWMPC sharing their experience in Van Buren County and emphasizing the importance of education to increase community acceptance. They highlighted that composting works effectively when combined with the right materials and conditions, aiming to divert 12 million pounds of waste annually and potentially double that in the next two years. The conversation also touched on the use of compostable products, their benefits, and challenges, while Sheila Berkin introduced her company's recycling efforts, including electronic waste collection for employees.

## **Recycling Facility Global Operations Overview**

The discussion focused on the geographical scope and operational logistics of recycling facilities, particularly for aluminum and electronics. Sheena explained that their Minneapolis facility processes aluminum waste from a large geographical area, including Texas and the West, and collaborates with nearby facilities like postal operations for material exchange. Jeff elaborated on the international nature of precious metal recovery, noting that different processes and grades of metals require specialized facilities in various global locations, including Japan, Europe, and potential sites in Texas and Chicago, to optimize efficiency and reduce shipping costs.

## **Recycling Operations and Safety Challenges**

The meeting focused on discussing the operations and challenges of a recycling company, particularly in handling electronics and batteries. The company, based in Saint Joe, primarily serves commercial entities, focusing on reusing equipment and maximizing value through resale and recycling. They highlighted the increasing complexity of managing batteries, especially lithium-ion batteries, due to fire risks and safety concerns. The company also operates residential recycling events, though these are less profitable than commercial services. They suggested that permanent drop-off sites could be more effective than one-day events for residential recycling. The discussion concluded with an overview of their sister company, Maverick Industrial Sales, which focuses on recycling industrial assets and automation equipment from manufacturing companies.

## **Composting and Partnership Updates**

The conversation ended with discussions about composting initiatives and public-private partnerships, with John offering to help find locations. The group was informed about upcoming changes to their meeting location in June, which will be held at the Pokagon Band Tribal Police Department's Emergency Operations Center. Two members, including Kelly Marshall from the conservation district, were recognized at the Michigan Great Southwest Sustainable Business Forum Green Gala.