

County backs recycling plan

By Carole Cloudwalker, Cody Enterprise

Declaring that recycling is an issue for “all of Park County,” Mayor Nancy Tia Brown Tuesday encouraged the county commissioners to financially support the city’s recycling efforts.

On a second vote Tuesday, the commissioners approved \$20,000 for the city of Cody and \$5,000 for the town of Meeteetse for recycling, but dropped an initial proposal to also provide \$20,000 for city of Powell recycling.

That was because Powell didn’t ask for support, and also because Powell has the Powell Valley Recycling Center to which the county gave \$20,000 last year, the commissioners said.

The money was to help purchase a new facility, but that did not materialize and the county allowed the money to roll over into the coming fiscal year budget.

It’s understood that once the PVRC obtains a new, larger and more suitable location “possibly the county road and bridge building in Powell” they will spearhead recycling efforts countywide.

“We want support from the county in the short term, before a regional recycling center can be brought on-line,” the mayor said during the Tuesday morning discussion at the courthouse. “We all have a stake in it.”

Brown said while a regional recycling center is the “ultimate goal and best solution,” in the interim there is a need to keep as many items as possible out of the county landfills.

Commissioner Dave Burke agreed, saying “what we’re buying is space at the landfill,” so it makes sense to detour all possible items from that destination to make the landfill last longer.

“I’m quite an advocate of recycling,” Burke added. “Recycling helps our landfill, of which we all are part.”

Commissioner Tim French opposed backing Cody recycling, explaining that “it seems like recently if anything’s short, it’s the rural people’s fault.”

He said he’s heard “no hard numbers” about county use of city recycling facilities, adding that “there’s never been any criticism of tourists who drop off recycling.”

County residents contribute “millions in sales tax,” French said.

“It bothers me that the city is against rural (residents),” he added. “I hope I’m perceiving it wrong.”

The mayor and Cody city administrator Andy Whiteman said that notion is incorrect. Whiteman said there are 27,000 county residents, including some 9,000 living in the city limits.

“We love having county residents come to Cody,” he added. He said that for every sales tax dollar generated, the county receives 42 cents and the city gets 33 cents.

“There is a definite advantage to having county residents come to the city to spend money,” Whiteman said.

He added that the city’s recycling effort costs about \$140,000 per year, but the process generates only about \$20,000, leaving a \$120,000 annual deficit.

“This process has never broken even,” Whiteman said, explaining the need for financial support.

Commissioner Bucky Hall moved to allocate \$20,000 each to the cities of Cody and Powell and \$5,000 to the town of Meeteetse to support their respective recycling efforts.

Burke seconded, but French and Jill Shockley Siggins voted no.

Commission chairman Bill Brewer broke the tie with a no vote "because the city of Powell has not even requested money."

Burke immediately moved to give Cody \$20,000 and Meeteetse \$5,000 for recycling, omitting Powell, and Hall seconded. That motion carried.

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