

Next stop: Casper



(Rawlins Daily Times, Kathy Johnson) The scraper at the Rawlins Municipal Landfill pulled up onto one of the facility's main roads on Tuesday morning.

City votes to accept waste management plan

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Any way they looked at it, Rawlins city councilors concluded that disposing of the city's waste wasn't going to come without a cost.

At a special meeting Tuesday, they chose to accept the option that is estimated to cost the least amount of money.

The City Council voted 5 to 0 in favor of accepting a draft integrated solid waste management plan. Councilors Judy Dixon and Jim Wells were absent Tuesday.

The document calls for bagging, baling and shipping residents' household garbage to the Casper landfill while allowing the Rawlins landfill to still accept demolition and construction waste.

The proposed plan is slated to cost \$63.30 per ton, including Casper landfill fees in addition to collection and hauling costs. That's about \$66 per ton cheaper than the estimated cost of installing lined cells at the existing landfill to comply with Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality standards, according to information provided by Inberg-Miller Engineers, a Riverton firm tasked with helping the city develop the waste management plan.

Exactly how those costs will translate to area residents is still unknown.

"We need to get going on what we're going to do, but most of all, we need to understand what it's going to cost us," Rawlins Mayor Ken Klouda said. "... Nothing in this plan is going to be free."

State mandates were motivating factors behind the plan's creation.

About three years ago, the state required that all Wyoming landfill facilities develop a plan for disposing of their solid waste, said Steven Moldt, Inberg-Miller president.

DEQ has also required that city landfills be lined to prevent contaminants from seeping into the ground, he added.

City officials called the special meeting in order to finalize the document before July 1, or the date all waste management plans are due to the state.

City authorities have also estimated that the Rawlins landfill will reach capacity in four to seven years.

Councilor DeBari Martinez expressed concerns over allowing Casper's landfill rates to dictate how much Rawlins city officials charge residents for their waste disposal.

A one-time, \$504,000 buy-in fee would entitle Carbon County residents to the same fees that are charged to Casper and Natrona County residents, Moldt said.

Still, Martinez said, "We wouldn't have a say-so in what we charge residents."

He suggested local officials consider creating a county landfill later.

But, that option could come with a higher price tag.

"If we did our own landfill, the increase in costs are 30 to 50 percent higher," Klouda said.

Moldt suggested other ways of controlling estimated landfill costs.

"The best control the city would have is to decrease that waste stream to Casper," he said

That could include increased recycling and making sure city trash is sorted properly.

"We have to educate the public," Councilor Steve Kovachevich said. "... It's not beyond them to sort out their stuff."

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By the numbers

Rawlins city officials considered several options for addressing projected space limits at the Rawlins landfill. Here's a breakdown of each alternative and how much they were estimated to cost:

Option 1

Bale and bag household waste at Rawlins landfill, then haul it to Casper; use remaining landfill space for construction and demolition waste

- Estimated cost: \$63.30 per ton

Option 2

Transfer loose household waste to Casper; use remaining landfill space for construction and demolition waste

- Estimated cost: \$65.25 per ton

Option 3

Install lined landfill cells at existing site and allow residents to dump household, construction and demolition waste there

- Estimated cost: \$129.13 per ton

Option 4

Build new landfill on a new site, line the cells there and open it to household, construction and demolition waste

- Estimated cost: \$95.84 per ton