

# Rawlins Daily Times

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## Ton of garbage not always a ton

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Published: Wednesday, January 4, 2012 2:08 AM MST

The Rawlins City Council requested Tuesday a third workshop on proposed fee increases on Jan. 17 prior to the council's next public meeting.

The city staff presented more information concerning the city landfill and recycling center at the second workshop Tuesday. The landfill budget for the 2011-12 fiscal year was based on collecting gate fees for 6,500 tons of household waste at the Rawlins facility, said City Finance Director Dan Izzo. After six months, the city is anticipating collecting only 6,058 tons at the end of the fiscal year, meaning a projected shortfall of \$70,000 in gate fee revenue.

The city increased the gate fee for household waste from \$3 to \$4.50 for every 100 pounds in March. The staff was anticipating the rate increase would result in 50 percent more gate fee revenue. But the increase in gate fees is projected to be only 35 percent because of fewer tonnage.

Increased recycling, contractors doing a better job of sorting out construction and demolition materials from their trash hauls, and some local garbage collection companies bypassing the Rawlins facility and taking the trash directly to another landfill, were cited by Rawlins Public Work Director Blane Frandsen as reasons for the decrease in tonnage.

The city staff continued to recommend increasing the gate fee again for household waste from \$4.50 to \$6 for every 100 pounds to help cover the anticipated shortfall.

In addition, the city staff presented the City Council the option of increasing the monthly-based rate to all residents and businesses to use the city landfill from \$9 to \$10, or enact a \$2 monthly fee for recycling. The recycling fee would appear on customers' electric bills, such as the based rates for water, sewer and the landfill do now. The recycling fee would mean the base rate for the landfill would not have to be increased, City Manager Steve Golnar said.

The increase in the based rate or the implementation of a \$2 recycling fee would cover some higher expenses, Frandsen said. Landfill expenses have increased as the City Council approved a new hauling contract with Sagecreek Excavation for 2012. The contract calls for a 9 percent increase as the company receives \$24 for every ton it ships, compared to \$22 a ton in the old contract.

The city also had to pay \$7,600 in fuel surcharges to Sagecreek for eight months in 2011. The terms of the old contract required Rawlins to pay for every cent above \$3 a gallon for diesel fuel.

In the new contract, the city only has to pay a surcharge when diesel fuel is above \$4 per gallon, said Izzo.

The City Council requested a third workshop because the city staff did not have an answer to a discrepancy between the tonnage being shipped to Casper and the tonnage being weighed at the Casper landfill.

Izzo said the household waste being shipped from Rawlins to Casper is being weighed on two different scales and the city appears to be shipping 500 more tons of household waste than is being weighed in at the Casper landfill over the last eight months.

"We are paying what we should be paying in tipping fees to Casper, but we are overpaying Sagecreek Excavation for transporting the trash," said Councilman Steve Kovachevich.

Looking at invoices from April to November 2011, Izzo said the city paid Sagecreek Excavation to haul 6,567 tons of household waste, but the Casper landfill has billed the city for only 6,083 tons.

"We've got to make sure that the landfill is operating efficiently before we change any fees," said Mayor Kenneth Klouda. "We have to negotiate a new recycling contract where the city receives more revenue. And I think it's time to see if the smaller communities want to start bringing their household waste to Rawlins to increase our tonnage."