



Legislation Text

File #: 20-1841, **Version:** 1

Resolution to Approve the City of Ann Arbor Membership in the Washtenaw Regional Resource Management Authority (WRRMA)

This resolution approves the City's participation as a member in the Washtenaw Regional Resource Management Authority (WRRMA) and directs the City Administrator to take the necessary actions to execute the provision of the resolution on an ongoing basis.

The City first brought Resolution 19-1189, a Resolution to Approve the City's Constituent Membership in the Washtenaw Regional Resource Management Authority, to City Council in 2019. However, the City withdrew the resolution due to Council concerns about potential contract labor terms and membership voting structure. City staff have subsequently participated in WRRMA meetings as non-voting observers and consider that full participation in WRRMA would result in both financial and intangible benefits for Ann Arbor by achieving an economy of scale through participation in a regional authority.

In July 2020, WRRMA adopted a resolution to consider and acknowledge the particular needs and requirements of each member, including but not limited to existing and future labor terms and wage matters, in negotiating and securing any future contracts involving the management of recyclables or for other authorized purposes for WRRMA. Additionally, in July 2020, WRRMA resolved that, in the process of negotiating and securing contracts as the Authority, it will consider amending the WRRMA voting structure to a weighted voting system-to be decided by the then sitting WRRMA Board and subsequently approved by member legislative bodies per the Articles of Incorporation-designed to reflect a voting system linked to the contract costs or the contract tonnages at issue in the contract. WRRMA resolved that no single member community will retain a majority of the voting structure for any contract situation. These actions by WRRMA address the concerns raised by City Council in 2019.

Pending Ann Arbor City Council's adoption of this resolution, the City will seek WRRMA members' approval to become a voting member of the Authority.

Budget/Fiscal Impact: The total cost of membership is \$5,000.00 per year. The County has committed a \$5,000.00 match for each paying member to support funding the Authority, subject to County budget approvals.

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Reviewed by: Craig Hupy, Public Services Area Administrator

Approved by: Tom Crawford, City Administrator

Whereas, Regional recycling authorities permit members to manage multiple materials in order to increase community diversion rates and decrease landfill amounts; to save costs through economies and efficiencies of scale that cities and counties cannot attain on their own; to share risk and investment among community partners; and to consolidate educational efforts and provide consistent message to all residents within the authority;

Whereas, There are more than a dozen authorities in Michigan, such as MMWA (Mid-Michigan Waste Authority) and within Southeast Michigan, such as WWRA (Western Washtenaw Recycling Authority), SOCCRA (South Oakland County Resource Recovery Authority), and RRRASOC (Resource Recovery and Recycling Authority of Southwest Oakland County) that have successfully reduced cost, increased diversion rates, and improved levels of services;

Whereas, In 2017 Washtenaw County amended its Solid Waste Plan to operate collaboratively within the County and regionally outside of the County for a comprehensive sustainable materials management strategy;

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor participated in the Authority Formation Committee that developed Articles of Incorporation of the Washtenaw Regional Resource Management Authority (WRRMA) along with representatives from Ann Arbor Township, the City of Dexter, Pittsfield Charter Township, the City of Saline, the Township of Scio, the City of Ypsilanti, and the Charter Township of Ypsilanti met monthly over a twelve-month period to draft Articles of Incorporation;

Whereas, Institutions, such as the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University were also part of this process;

Whereas, WRRMA formed September 23, 2019 so the City must now either submit a petition to each member to be added to the Authority, or join as a non-voting member, a status that will eventually be offered to area institutions such as the University of Michigan;

Whereas, On January 24, and again on April 25, 2019, the Environmental Commission unanimously approved a resolution to recommend that City Council approve the City become a constituent member of the Washtenaw Regional Resource Management Authority;

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor is the only municipality that participated in the drafting the WRRMA Articles of Incorporation that has not yet joined the Authority;

Whereas, The first and second-year dues for joining the authority is \$5,000.00 per year. These dues, with matching funds by the County, are being used by the Authority to coordinate communications, improve outreach to increase the quantity of quality recycling streams, gather and analyze member communities' concerns, define priorities, elect officers, and develop relevant metrics;

Whereas, WRRMA members have expressed a strong desire to increase the quantity of quality recycling first, with a desire to move closer to zero waste in the long-term;

Whereas, In 2020 the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes & Energy awarded a \$118,605.00 grant to WRRMA support efforts to increase the quantity of member communities high-quality recyclables;

Whereas, The City's Environmental Commission adopted a Zero Waste goal in 2007;

Whereas, Ann Arbor City Council adopted the A2zero Carbon Neutrality Plan (A2Zero) in June 2020; approved of a Materials Recovery Facility run by Recycle Ann Arbor in July 2020, and adopted the Solid Waste Resource Management Plan in October 2020 (SWRMP);

Whereas, These actions move Ann Arbor towards our solid waste and sustainability goals and may be enhanced by joining WRRMA;

Whereas, In July 2020, WRRMA resolved that, in the process of negotiating and securing contracts as the Authority, it will consider a weighted voting system and acknowledge the needs and requirements of each member;

Whereas, The Authority is not empowered to impose unilateral directions to change contracts that affect members without gaining approval; and

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor's ability to determine specific contracts that meet Ann Arbor-specific ordinances and policies such as the living wage ordinance and other requirements would remain within the City's purview and would not be decisions over which the Authority would have any governing power;

RESOLVED, That the City Council authorizes the City Administrator to petition the WRRMA for status as a member and to revise the WRRMA Articles of Incorporation to include the City of Ann Arbor as a member to participate in a regional approach to resource recovery and materials management.

Sponsored by: Mayor Taylor