



STAFF REPORT

To: Council
From: Ryan Jamieson, Waste Diversion Officer
Approved by: Trudy Payne, Chief Administrative Officer
Date: September 14, 2020
Subject: Regional Materials Recovery Facility-Brush Fee & Size requirement

Origin

Council requested comparative data with other Municipalities to assist in determining if the brush we accept should have a tipping fee for cost recovery for commercial and residential users as well as to define what type of brush we should be accepting at our site.

Recommendation

THAT Council of the Municipality of the District of Shelburne implement a fee to Commercial users at a rate of \$40.00 per metric ton for full cost-recovery for future brush, sediment, soil and rock deposits; and

THAT Council of the Municipality of the District of Shelburne limit the size of brush to no larger than 6 inches in diameter, resulting in tree trunks, logs and stumps no longer being accepted at the RMRF site.

Background

When it was identified that the brush pile at the Regional Recovery Materials Facility posed a potential fire hazard, The Municipality of Shelburne prepared a Request for Proposal for the remediation of the brush pile. Halifax C&D were awarded the contract for the price of \$25 per metric ton plus HST and with the amount of brush we had stockpiled at the RMRF site the total cost of removal was \$45,500.00 with HST.

This report is to define what is acceptable material for brush waste at the RMRF site and to explore implementing a tipping fee for brush waste as well as soil, rock and sediment to assure cost recovery moving forward.

Discussion

We have been accepting brush, logs, stumps, rock, and sediment in the past which increased the difficulty of processing the materials, as well as increases the cost to processing the material. For instance, when we receive a load of mud mixed with brush and stump, an excavator is needed to pick out the brush, separate it, then clean it to assure it does not damage the grinder during processing. Now that the area has been cleared out and there is a passable access road leading to the field area, this provides us with the ability to have clean brush in one pile, then the field behind the brush pile we can accept soil and rock materials as a separate item.

It has been identified by this writer that the bulk of the waste that we receive that is classified as "dirty" brush has been from commercial users. Residential users are bringing branches, leaf and yard waste, whereas Commercial users are bringing loads from clearing land for roads as well as new development. When a

residential user brings us a load of brush it varies in weight from approximately 100 lbs. up to 3000 lbs., but when we receive from a commercial user who is developing a road, or a new home lot it is typically 10-30,000 lbs. per load, mixed with rock, stumps and sediment. In the month of July 2020 for instance 1% of brush brought in was from residential users, 99% of brush brought in was commercial users.

Currently we do not have tipping fees in place for these materials, nor do we have any written guidelines pertaining to the type of brush and yard waste we accept at our site. To assure that we do not stockpile brush in the future this writer is exploring what other sites, similar to ours, in the province are doing for cost-recovery as well as methods they use for managing their brush and yard waste piles.

This writer contacted nine different landfill/transfer stations throughout the province to identify what they were accepting as well as how they process the material. Of all nine sites that were contacted, only four of the sites charged for leaf and yard waste. The difference with the sites that did charge versus the sites that did not charge was that they had their own composting program on the site. Because the mulch is so valuable to the decomposition of their compost, they would have to pay externally to bring mulch into their site otherwise.

Two of the sites I spoke with had been using a wood-chipper on their site for mulching their own brush but mentioned to writer that both of their machines needed repair. They typically have 1-2 operators for the bulk of November and part of December that are dedicated to chipping the brush and they landfill the stumps or "dirty brush". Both sites were currently re-evaluating their operations as they found that with capital costs of the equipment, paired with the cost of the labor was not an efficient use of their operational funds. One additional site that used to have a wood-chipper on site until it broke and has now been stockpiling their brush for four years with no strategic plan in place to process their growing brush pile.

Four of the nine sites I had contact with only accepted branches that were no bigger than 6 inches in diameter. None of these four sites accepted stumps, or sediment due to the material having no market. The remaining five sites did not have parameters pertaining to what they accept. The trend with the five who accept all materials is that they have sites with multiple employees that allow for better control of materials deposited as well as equipment to allow for them to add their stumps/sediment to be landfilled.

Where we have no composting on site, nor the ability to landfill materials, paired with our current staffing model, our site is unique in nature. With the staffing and equipment limitations, we truly have no option, other than to stockpile brush as we have done in the past, or continue to do annual processing to assure we do not create a fire hazard in the future. The goal of a brush tipping fee would be solely for the purpose of cost-recovery for processing the materials.

Our current tipping fee for all paid C&D materials is .03 cents per lbs. or \$60.00 per metric ton. For us to have cost-recovery for our brush pile we would want to look at .015 cents per lbs. or \$30.00 per metric ton at minimum. With the rate of inflation to be accounted for in the coming years it would be most responsible to charge for 0.020 cents per lbs. equaling \$40.00 per metric ton. We can re-evaluate over a year and adjust this rate accordingly to assure a fair balance between tipping fees charges versus the revenue created to account for total cost of the recovery fee. This is on par with the median scale from the comparative data of other sites, who charge as low as \$30.00 per MT and as high as \$55.00 per MT. To add some perspective in cost, a commercial user that brings us a load of 22,000 lbs. would pay a tipping fee of \$440.00 at the rate of \$40.00 per metric ton.

This writer also supports putting in place a size requirement of 6 inches or less for the brush, leaf and yard waste that we accept at our site. It would cut down on "dirty brush" or brush that is packed in sediment/rock

and allow for our scale operator to easily inspect the loads. Typically, commercial customers are bringing their loads in dump trucks or dump trailers up to 40 ft. in length, they are difficult if not impossible to inspect until after it has been deposited at the site, whereas in contrast residential is being brought on a small trailer, or the back of a truck.

The contractor that was awarded the contract for the brush remediation typically does not put stumps through their grinder as it can cause damage, however they made an exception for our site to accommodate the 100 or more stumps we had, but this will not be an option for our site moving forward as most sites landfill theirs with their contaminated wood as there is no option otherwise. Stumps in the soil and sediment pile will effectively re-create the problem we rectified with the brush remediation and where it has no marketable value this should not be an item we accept.

Budget Implications

Cost-Recovery for annual brush remediation.

Attachments

None.