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December 14, 2020

Mr. Thomas Fallon, CPA, RMA  
Acting Borough Administrator  
Borough of Tinton Falls  
556 Tinton Avenue  
Tinton Falls, NJ 07724

Dear Mr. Fallon,

Attached herewith is the Monthly Report for the month of November, 2020, which will supplement the Monthly Reports which were previously submitted for the months of July, August, September and October, 2020.

I have maintained the report structure so that the advancements and changes may be easily followed. The updates for November are written in **red ink**. My intention is to update the report every month in **red ink** and the previous month will then revert to black ink. I believe that this will make the progress at the MCRC easier to follow on a monthly basis. If you prefer a different layout, please so advise and we can discuss your thoughts.

I trust that you will find this report to be comprehensive and satisfactory. As we continue to communicate regarding the status of the projects and issues at the MCRC, should you require additional information, please let me know.

Sincerely,

  
Geoffrey S. Perselay  
Deputy County Administrator

# **MONMOUTH COUNTY RECLAMATION CENTER MONTHLY REPORT**

## **COVERING OCTOBER+, 2020**

### **CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS**

#### **1. LEACHATE TREATMENT PLANT MODIFICATION**

In November, 2018 the DEP issued an amended permit to the County of Monmouth which restricted the amount of leachate (liquid that is collected from the landfill) that can be processed on a daily basis, due to restrictions put in place on denitrification and the amount of gallons that can be processed, effective December 1, 2018. As a result, the County mothballed the plant in September, 2019 after finding that the denitrification and other restrictions made the continuation of the plant operation fiscally unfeasible. After a redesign to provide for additional supplementation of the plant, the County sought proposals for modifying the plant to achieve the new restrictions on the plant operation.

The County accepted three (3) proposals and selected Stone Hill Contracting as the vendor to provide value engineering services as well as construct the modifications. The contract is in the amount of \$2,884,000. There was a construction kick-off meeting on July 21, 2020 and the project is proceeding as planned. During the weeks of August 24, 2020 and August 31, 2020, over 180 piles were put in place as part of the foundation for the two (2) processing tanks that will be added to the plant. The project is anticipated to be completed by March 1, 2021.

#### **September, 2020**

During the past month, the foundations for the two (2) processing tanks were the focus of the major on-site work. The time consuming section of this work was the placement of reinforcing bars (rebar) on top of the piles that were put in place in August. In addition, the "starter ring" for the two tanks were delayed by about 2 weeks but will be delivered by the second week in October. The placement and installation of the starter rings is essential to the pouring of the concrete foundation for the two tanks which is scheduled for the third week in October. At this point in time, it is estimated that the project is 3 weeks ahead of schedule.

#### **October, 2020**

During the month of October, the major step for the construction of the two (2) Bio-Towers, was the completion of tying rebar and the receipt of the "starter ring" for both of the towers. That allowed for the pouring of the foundation for both towers. The pouring of the foundations was completed on October 22, 2020. It appears the project remains ahead of schedule by at least two (2) weeks.

## November, 2020

During the month of November, the major construction accomplishment was the delivery of the parts and materials for both towers. This allowed for the initial construction of the bio-towers, once the foundations were poured and cured. The first 350,000 gallon tower was constructed during the month of November. The second tower of the same size was initiated right after Thanksgiving. It is anticipated that the second tower and essential plumbing tie-ins will be well on their way to completion by the end of December. Various pumps and other related materials, which had a long lead time, have been delivered to the site and will likely be able to meet the county's construction deadlines with little delay.

## 2. GSF/MONTAUK GAS PROCESSING PLANT DEMOLITION

The most significant contributor to the odor issues that the MCRC faced was the lack of collection of the landfill methane gas due to a faulty landfill gas collection system. This was solely the responsibility of Montauk/GSF Energy as the company that had the contract since 2006. The County refused to extend the contract with GSF Energy for an additional period of time and, in response, GSF surrendered their contract and left the site on September 27, 2019. As a result, they have an obligation to remove the gas processing plant and associated systems and material within a year of the site being vacated. The demolition has commenced and will likely continue into late September or October. Hopefully, it will not continue later than that. While the County was concerned about noise, the demolition site is at the furthest point from any residential areas. We have not received any complaints about this project.

## September, 2020

The demolition project was completed by September 27, 2020 as was contractually required. All underground and above ground fixtures, systems and buildings have been removed and the site has been cleaned, top soiled and seeded; again as contractually required.

## October, 2020

No Change as the project has been completed.

## 3. LANDFILL GAS COLLECTION SYSTEM

In 2019, the County replaced the most significant portions of the failed gas collection system, which led to a virtual immediate cessation of the landfill odors that had been so prevalent in late 2018 and early 2019. By Memorial Day, 2019, about 98% of all of the odors were gone due to the drilling of 50 wells and connecting them, on a temporary basis to the existing vacuum system. That system was replaced, to a significant degree, by the new landfill gas header system, which was been completed in December 2019.

During the months of June and July, the County had an additional 38 wells drilled which are tied

into the new header system. In less than a year, the County has drilled almost 90 wells that are used to provide gas collection; liquid collection, which is now dewatering the landfill; and a vacuum system which replaced the previous system. This has resulted in virtually no odors in the community and the leachate seeps, which had been experienced in the past, are now drying up, adding to the solution which has eliminated the odors. This project cost \$1.6 million.

### **September, 2020**

The Gas Collection System continues to perform as designed. As noted above, the system continues to collect the methane gas and feeds it to Flare D, thereby removing virtually all odors from the site. In addition, the liquid pumps in the wells continue to pump leachate into the five (5) frak tanks that have been placed around the landfill. The tanks are designed to collect the leachate from the landfill and are pumped out, when full, and hauled to the Rahway Valley Sewage Authority. So far over six (6) million gallons of raw leachate have been collected through the gas collection system and removed from the landfill.

### **October, 2020**

The Gas Collection System, continues to perform as designed. As part of the landfilling process, it is necessary to continue to raise the wells and well caps to stay above the layers of waste that are landfilled and the cover material that is applied at the end of each day. This is a fairly laborious process that requires coordination with the landfill crews as to the placement of waste and what wells require raising. As part of that coordination, there is a requirement that the pumps that are used to collect and pump leachate to the frak tanks have to be removed and replaced after the well is raised. We have discovered that some of those pumps are fouled and require cleaning and, to some degree, rebuilding. As a result of the pumps getting fouled, the collection of leachate has gone well, but is somewhat inconsistent. Therefore, it has been recommended by Waste Management that the main header for the Gas Collection System be scoped and cleaned out as needed in order to ensure that the system continues to operate as designed and expected.

### **November, 2020**

**Waste Management hired the company to scope and clean out the Gas Collection System of any materials that are hindering the collection of methane gas and leachate from the system. Their work started in the third week of November and will continue into early December. It is anticipated that their work will be completed by mid-December.**

### **FLARES D and C**

These two flares were used as backup gas processing facilities when the gas processing plant (which turned methane gas to electricity) was not functioning. Since September, 2019 when GSF abandoned the site, the processing plant has been shut down and all gas that is collected is

currently being "flared" through Flare D. There have been times where Flare D has been taken off-line to make repairs and improve its operation.

Flare C is currently under reconstruction as it was left by GSF in a totally non-functional condition. This flare is located near the site of the former gas processing plant and will be refurbished within the next couple of months (waiting for parts to be shipped and received) and will act as a backup to Flare D when it is taken off-line for repairs or maintenance.

### **September, 2020**

The reconstruction of Flare C has been finished. It is in the final stages of inspections and certification prior to being tested. It is expected that the Flare will be ready to be tested in late October.

### **October, 2020**

Flare C was tested at the end of October as anticipated. There were a few items and issues that needed to be addressed before the Flare could be registered with NJ DEP and used at the landfill. Those issues are being addressed and the Flare C should be fully operational by the end of November, 2020.

### **November, 2020**

Flare D continues to operate on a daily basis, burning off methane gas that is being collected through the gas collection system. Flare C had some initial problems with starting up automatically. However, the issues that caused those problems have been resolved and were completed by the end of November. Final testing and operations are being scheduled for the month of December. All appropriate information has been discussed with the County's engineering consultants and the appropriate notifications will be made to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, most likely in December.

## **MAJOR ISSUES FACED DURING: THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER, 2020**

DEP NOTICES OF VIOLATION (NOVS): NONE

September, 2020: None

### **October, 2020**

The inspector for the DEP issued an NOV on October 1, 2020 for insufficient cover material on the landfill. While the NOV was issued, the landfill crews had already been catching up on the cover material and process. The daily cover was not at issue; rather it was the interim cover of material

that had been previously landfilled that caused the issuance of the NOV. The need to catch up on the interim cover was due to the excessive rain that we experienced in late September. There were several storms which dumped 2-4 inches of rain in a period of 3 weeks which wore down the interim cover, washing some of it away.

Nevertheless, by the end of October, the crews had recovered the waste and were ready for a re-inspection by the DEP inspector.

**November, 2020**

As noted for the month of October, above, the interim cover was repaired to the satisfaction of the DEP inspector with an admonition to stay on top of that situation. The NOV was satisfied within the 30 day time frame. The County has passed a change order to the contract that it has with Waste Management. The change order adds additional money to the Waste Management contract for additional staff, provided by Waste Management, to assist the County with the following tasks: laying interim cover; digging and repairing leachate seeps and assisting with the cleaning out of the retention basins surrounding Phase 3 of the landfill. This is part of the County's obligation under the Administrative Consent Order, and the last major project to be completed.

**EMERGENCY RESPONSES/ISSUES THAT REQUIRED COMMUNICATION**

**FIRES: NONE**

**September, 2020:** None

**October, 2020:** NONE

**November, 2020:**

During November, there were several issues related to a woodchip / mulch storage area. The stock pile of mulch was smoldering on several occasions which caused teams of employees to respond to the stock pile both during the day and on several nights to scatter the affected area of the pile and douse it with water and mix it with sand. However, on Thanksgiving night, 11/26/20, the on-shift security guard noticed large amounts of smoke emanating from the stockpile. He called the Tinton Falls Fire Department around 8:30 pm. and they responded. In addition, the Colts Neck Fire Department and the Earl Weapons Station Fire Department responded to the scene. In addition, several MCRC heavy equipment operators responded as well, separating the smoldering pile enough for the fire departments to hose it down. The MCRC is very appreciative of the assistance that was rendered by the surrounding community fire departments.

**MAJOR LEACHATE LEAKS: NONE**

**September, 2020:** None

**October, 2020**

Due to the excessive rains that were experienced in October, the MCRC had to deal with over 12 inches of rain in the span of 3 weeks. This caused several minor leachate seeps which have stayed on the landfill. However, a crew was assigned to fix the seeps as soon as possible.

**November, 2020**

There have been no major leachate leaks at the landfill. As noted earlier, there has been leachate seeps that are caused by the amount of rain received. However, there has been no breaching of the landfill structures which are designed to keep the leachate seeps within the area above the Phase 3 liner. As was noted earlier, Waste Management has supplied supplemental staffing resources to ensure that there are no further issues with interim cover and leachate seeps.

**ODOR COMPLAINTS RECEIVED:** 1 (not verified)

**September, 2020:** None

**October, 2020:**

The DEP and the Monmouth County Health Department received three (3) odor complaints during the month of October. The Health Department responded to the complaints and was unable to verify any of the odor complaints.

**November, 2020:**

In November there were five (5) odor complaints early in the month. However, none of those complaints were verified by the DEP or the County Department of Health.

**ODORS COMPLAINTS (VERIFIED):** NONE

**September, 2020:** None

**October, 2020:** None

**November, 2020: Five (5)**

During the month of November, there was one night that had confirmed odor complaints. That was the night of November 24<sup>th</sup> where the DEP and consequently the County Department of Health were alerted to 11 odor complaints within a 3 hour period of time; starting around 5:30 pm and lasting to around 8:30 pm. On that night the County Department of Health called each complainant and responded to those who wanted to pursue a complaint at their addresses. The initial assessment is that there were several confirmed odor complaints and the Department of Health is moving through the process that they follow, as a result of a confirmed complaint. The initial explanation for the number of complaints was that it was an atmospheric issue. The night was very cloudy and bitterly cold with no wind blowing. This led to the odors that were present to stay close to the ground and in a "holding pattern" due to the lack of wind. This condition eventually did break and there were no noticeable odors later in the evening.

**CONCERNS:** Notification to Town of Tinton Falls

**Flare D:** Notification was provided to the Town regarding work on the emergency generator for the Flare which could have resulted in odors escaping (8/18/20)

**Gas Processing Plant Demolition:** Notification to the Town that the plant was being demolished and there was the possibility of noise issues.

**Leachate Treatment Plant Modification:** Notification to the Town that the foundation piling was going to be started and that it could be noisy. We did have two complaints from the noise. However, rather than an anticipated 6 week project, we completed it within 6 days and ended on August 31, 2020.

**September, 2020:** None

**October, 2020:**

The Township of Tinton Falls was notified regarding the pouring of the foundation of the leachate treatment tanks and requested an inspection before and during the pouring of the foundation. The Township Building Department responded in a timely fashion and provided the inspection service that was requested.

**November, 2020: None**

**KEY PERSONNEL CHANGES:** None

**September, 2020:** None

**October, 2020:** None

**November, 2020: None**

**STATUS OF OPERATIONAL CHANGES:**

After the County received Qualification Statements from two (2) firms that were interested in submitting proposals to Operate and Maintain the Monmouth County Reclamation Center the County issued an Request for Proposals (RFP) to both of those companies. The proposals were due July 14th, which was later extended to July 28, 2020. The County received one proposal with the other company dropping out of the competition.

The proposal that was received has been under review and internal discussion for the past several weeks. At this point in time, no decision has been made as to whether there will be an operational change.

**September, 2020:**

The County has met with the firm that has submitted the proposal and requested a further breakout of the financial terms proposed. This will include a further description of the costs anticipated in operating and maintaining the landfill operation. It is expected that the County will receive this information by the beginning of October at which point it will be reviewed and another meeting will be scheduled.



**October, 2020:**

The County received additional information from the firm that the County met with in September. There was a meeting that lasted several hours in which there was a clear discussion of potential opportunities to partner to assist the County in the operation of the landfill. That resulted in the company returning to revise their proposed budget and the concept of partnering with the County rather than simply contracting with the County as a “vendor” rather than a partner. It is expected that towards the end of November or beginning of December, the County will be able to determine whether there will be a proposed operational change in management of the MCRC.

**November, 2020:**

During the month of November, the County and Waste Management, the company that has been negotiating with the County on ways to improve the operations of the landfill, arrived at a potential partnership arrangement that could/would be proposed to the County Administrator and the Board of Chosen Freeholders. While the proposed arrangement was not fully finalized, the Board met in Executive Session to hear the proposed recommendation and to ask questions and request additional information. The presentation including additional information was presented to the Board for their consideration prior to the end of November. It is expected that a Special Meeting of the Board of Chosen Freeholders, will be scheduled for early December, and that the Board will take action, one way or the other, regarding the proposal to privatize the management and maintenance of the Reclamation Center landfill operation.

**FORWARD LOOKING EVENTS:** The main events that will occur in future months this year and into 2021 are the following:

1. Continuation of the repairs of Flares C and D in order to maintain redundancy for flaring the methane gas from the landfill until a Gas Processing Plant can be built (target date for all flare work to be complete December 31, 2020);

**October, 2020:** On Schedule

**November, 2020:** Repairs are completed. Testing is scheduled for December.

2. Continuation and completion of the Leachate Treatment Plant Modification (target completion in February 2021).

**October, 2020:** On Schedule

**November, 2020:** Continues on schedule.

3. Completion of the demolition of the gas processing plant utilized by GSF/Montauk (Target October 1, 2020)

**September, 2020: Completed**

**October, 2020: Completed**

4. Phase 4 continues to be under review by NJDEP. It is expected that DEP will be initializing this stage of their review in the coming months and will issue a Technical Notice of Deficiency (TNOD) for any issues that they note need to be reviewed and addressed. Once received, the County will respond as rapidly as possible depending on the significance of the issues raised by DEP.

**September, 2020:**

On September 10, 2020, the County received a Technical Notice of Deficiency (TNOD) from the NJ DEP in response to the report that the County filed on August 16, 2019 entitled "Amendments to the Solid Waste Facility Permit Renewal and Phase IV Expansion Major Modification." This report was filed with DEP in response to an earlier TNOD issued by DEP dated May 8, 2018. Essentially, the TNOD declares that the application is technically incomplete and provides the issues for which they are seeking further information. The County has 30 days from the date of the TNOD to provide a response to the issues raised.

The TNOD contained several very technical questions on calculations and questions on some relatively minor inconsistencies in submitted documents. Interestingly and importantly, the TNOD also contained the comments from the Borough of Tinton Falls raising questions regarding some issues with the landfill as well as concerns over the "lack of communication" between the County and the Borough. As discussed with the Borough Officials, it is this concern that is being addressed on an on-going basis, through these monthly reports.

As noted last month, the County has emphasized and embraced communication with the Borough and its citizens. The Freeholder Director sent, to anyone who expressed an interest, weekly updates as to projects and accomplishments taking place at the MCRC for over a year. It was during this period that it was vitally important to keep the public advised as to the steps that were being taken at the MCRC to mitigate and solve the issues that had been identified.

It was only when the pandemic became the priority and demanded that all essential personnel focus on safety and public health, due to the spread of COVID-19, that the weekly updates ceased to be issued. However, the MCRC continued to work on the issues identified and solved those problems over the last several months.

The County is proud of the accomplishments that have been made over the last 18 months and is pleased to resume the updates on a monthly basis in order to continue to keep communication lines open and keep the Borough Officials and their constituents up to date, regarding the events occurring at the MCRC.

**October, 2020:**

On October 14, 2020, the County supplied full responses to the NJ DEP answering the concerns raised in the TNOD that the County had received on September 10, 2020. The response contained full technical answers to the questions raised after the review by DEP as well as a commitment to continue to communicate, on a monthly basis, with the Township of Tinton Falls.

**November, 2020:**

DEP has yet to send any response to the County regarding the submission in response to the TNOD referred to above. No other changes in the status of the application for the Phase 4 expansion plan for the landfill.

**BOND ORDINANCES:** On April 21, 2020 the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders passed a Bond Ordinance providing \$8 million in capital funds for the following authorized projects: various improvements at the Reclamation Center including but not limited to a) rebuilding Flare C; b) leachate seep improvements on the West Slope of Phase 3; (c) installation of wells; (d) improvements to the leachate plant; (e) installation of high density caps; (f) acquisition of equipment; and (g) the replacement of scales and removal of underground storage tanks.

As is evident from the previous description of activities at the MCRC, this Bond Ordinance has provided funding for these major projects.

**OTHER ISSUES:** The County is pleased that it has been able to stop the odors that were emanating from the landfill in late 2018 until May of 2019. The initial cause of the odors was thought to be a combination of factors which included leachate seeps, the slope repair (which opened up almost 11 acres of the landfill in order to reshape the slope), excessive rainfall and uncollected landfill gas. The County drilled 50 wells between March 4, 2019 and May 17, 2019 and connected them to the vacuum system that was in place from the collection system operated by GSF/Montauk Energy. Within days, of the completion of this work, the odors disappeared. The drilling of the wells and connection to the vacuum reinforced the engineering opinion that there were excessive amounts of uncollected gas in the Phase 3 landfill.

After that connection was established, the number of odor complaints dropped significantly to the point that as of January, 2020, the complaints dropped to less than one per week. For the past eight months there have been virtually no complaints regarding odors or anything related to the MCRC.

There are other sources of odors within the borders of the Borough of Tinton Falls. One of those is the Benoit Solid Waste Landfill/Recycling facility, 615 Green Grove Road. That facility has recently received a letter from DEP in response to their application to renew their Class B Recycling Center General Approval. This caused a site visit from DEP and they found that the landfill closure and post closure plan had not been approved in 1989 when submitted. Therefore, the closure and post closure steps taken in compliance with that plan were not effective and resulted in several issues that concern DEP, including excessive emissions of methane gas from leaking well caps. This facility is located in the Wayside section of Tinton Falls, which has been the source of many complaints.

The County has been very effective in the remediation activities that it has taken over the last twenty-one (21) months. The MCRC has managed: the installation of an entirely new Landfill Gas Collection System (a multi-year project; that took only six (6) months to complete; the improvement in the process and effectiveness of applying daily cover as required; the grading of areas of the landfill designed to shed rainfall rather than allow it to sit and penetrate the landfill and overhauled Flare D to insure that it is operating properly while totally rebuilding Flare C for a backup.

The County is meeting all of the commitments that it made to the public, to DEP and to the Borough of Tinton Falls and the surrounding communities. It is the County's intention to continue to improve the operation of the landfill and return to the status as a good neighbor in Tinton Falls.

**September, 2020: No additional comments.**

**October, 2020: No additional comments.**

**November, 2020: No additional comments.**