

# NORTH SCHUYLKILL LANDFILL ASSOCIATION & TRANSFER STATION

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Union Township

West Mahanoy Township

McAdoo

Ashland

Gordon

Butler Township

To: Rush Township Supervisors

From: Patricia Purcell

Date: November 27, 2019

Re: Meeting Attendance

On Tuesday, December 17, 2019, the North Schuylkill Landfill Association will meet at 7 p.m. at American Legion Post 74, 110 East Centre Street, Mahanoy City, to adopt the 2020 budget and elect officers for the coming year. Please have your delegate attend this meeting as it will be a very important one for the future of the landfill association. This will be the last meeting for our current president Frank R. Fetter, who has served on the landfill board for 42 years, 20 of them as president.

Fetter was elected to the Ryan Township Board of Supervisors in 1978 and was named a delegate to NSLA shortly thereafter. He attended every board meeting since that time as well as meetings with representatives of Girard Estates, the state Department of Environmental Resources and numerous banking facilities to ensure NSLA money was invested wisely and getting the best interest rates. His position as president will be difficult to fill not only because of his years of dedicated service but because he is a storehouse of knowledge on the workings of the landfill association and is only one of a few representatives who takes his membership seriously and attends meetings faithfully. It will also be the last meeting of our vice president Julian Milewski and secretary Faith Ward, who will no longer be serving as township supervisors. The by-laws of the organization have been changed several times to lower the quorum requirement and it sometimes is even difficult to get the three members needed to conduct a meeting.

Meeting dates for 2020 will be April 28, September 29, November 24, and December 29. Special meetings will be called as needed.

### NSLA History

Most of the current elected officials in member municipalities are not aware of when and why the association was formed and I would like to take this opportunity to explain it. Prior to the formation of the North Schuylkill Landfill Association, garbage from municipalities in northern Schuylkill County was taken to the Dixon Landfill near Gilberton for many years. However, when that landfill closed at 12:01 January 1, 1971, municipal officials were in a dither as garbage lined borough streets and township roads with nowhere to take it. Fortunately, Fred Schumacher, a retired Army Lieutenant Colonel and former Mahanoy City resident, was serving as Mahanoy City's borough manager, and took the initiative in looking for an alternate dumping spot. He negotiated with Girard Estate to obtain a dumping site and secured four other municipalities to join an association. The original five members soon grew to eight members, then 13 and finally the current 17 members, of which you are one.

All went well for many years with the Turkey Run site that was going "to last for hundreds of years" because of its huge capacity until the Department of Environmental Protection issued Act 101 calling for all landfills in the commonwealth to have a double liner to encapsulate any toxic leachate. Because the Turkey Run site consisted of deep strip mining pits with irregular edges, NSLA could not adhere to the new regulations.

Within a month's time after getting the directive and with shifts working around the clock and weekends, a transfer station was built on property leased from the Rich Corporation in the vicinity of the former landfill site. Municipalities dropped their garbage off at the site and it was trucked to various disposal sites throughout the years. This worked well for 20 years until it was time to renew the association's lease with the Rich Corporation and they refused to renew the lease. Eventually, the Richs purchased the transfer site and are still operating it. As years passed, several municipalities stopped using the NSLA landfill and transfer station for various reasons.

Although NSLA no longer has any working facilities, it is still a viable organization recognized by the commonwealth. Even though the landfill was closed at the time the transfer station was built, it is not recognized as "officially" closed by DER and members of the association are responsible for any debt that may be incurred for 30 years after the landfill's formal closing. Likewise, any profits that remain after the closing are to be proportionally split among 14 of the 17 members (due to the stipulations in those four contracts). Currently, the landfill site looks like a clear tract of land with no indication it was ever the site of a landfill. The association is currently waiting for DER to issue a formal closing notice and until then, the association is in limbo. The association has \$2.8 million in escrow for the closing. To the best of our knowledge, there are 14 other landfills in the state that must also be closed but we understand they do not have the required funds for closing.

Until the formal landfill closing order is received, the association is required to hold meetings, maintain the landfill site, take water quality and methane gas samples and continue to pay rental fees to Girard Estate. Even though our quarterly meetings are very brief, we still need the participation of all member municipalities. We anticipate the start of 2020 will be a little difficult without the three current officers, but we will get through this difficult period. Please have a representative of your governing body attend the December 17, 2019 meeting. Should you have any questions, I can be reached at 570-668-6707.