

Council decides single-hauler trash service 'Bestway' to go

By Jeanne Davant

In August, the rumble of trash trucks on Manitou Springs residential streets should be considerably reduced as Bestway Disposal takes over as the city's sole residential trash and recycling collector.

City Council approved an ordinance authorizing the single-hauler program and a contract with Bestway on Tuesday by a 4-3 vote. Mayor Marc Snyder, Mayor Pro Tern Aimee Cox and Council members Michael Gerbig and Matt Carpenter voted for the program. Council members Ingrid Richter, Ed Klingman and Rick Barry voted against it.

In essence, Bestway will provide trash and recycling collection to single-family homes and multi-family residences with seven or fewer units. Households currently using another hauler will not be required to switch, but after Aug. 1, residents who elect not to participate in the program cannot contract with a trash collection company other than Bestway.

The goals of the program are to minimize wear and tear on the streets, decrease carbon emissions by encouraging recycling, decrease fuel waste and lower exhaust and noise pollution caused by multiple collection trucks. Bestway will pay the city a \$48,000 franchise fee.

The final vote on the trash hauling project came quietly, in a meeting that lacked the stormy disagreements that occurred during several previous public meetings. The proposal has drawn opposition from residents who said the city was taking away their right to choose a provider with whom to do business, were concerned about rates going up because of a lack of competition and wanted an opportunity to vote on the project.

Richter said she was voting against the project, although she personally supported it,

What you need to know about the trash program

Here are the basics of the city's single-hauler trash and recycling program and how it will affect you.

All residents of single-family homes and multifamily dwellings of up to seven units are eligible to receive trash and recycling services from Bestway Disposal.

Bestway will automatically switch current customers into the program, which will result in lower rates for most. Customers of other haulers who want to participate should contact Bestway.

Bestway will provide recycling containers for all customers who want to recycle. Customers may opt not to recycle, but their rates will not be reduced.

Bestway will provide trash containers upon request, but customers may provide their own trash containers.

Trash and recycling will be collected on Tuesdays between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Bestway will bill all customers for service. Bestway generally bills customers on a quarterly basis.

Complaints about service will be handled initially by Bestway and are to be addressed within one working day and resolved "within a mutually-agreeable timeframe," according to the city's contract with Bestway.

The contract sets out penalties up to \$1,000 for problems caused by the hauler.

Monthly rates, which include a recycle cart and service, are as follows:

For customer-provided waste containers:
One lawn and leaf (30 gallon) bag, \$16.25
Two lawn and leaf (30 gallon) bags, \$16.75
One 30-gallon can, \$17.00
Two 30-gallon cans, \$17.25

For Bestway-provided containers:
One 32-gallon wheeled trash cart, \$17.50
One 65-gallon wheeled trash cart, \$17.75
One 95-gallon wheeled trash cart, \$18.25;

For more information, to request service or to provide feedback to Bestway, visit www.bestwaydisposal.com and click on the Manitou Springs tab, or call 633-8709.

because of opposition to it in her district.

"I believe in representative government," Richter said. "The district I represent far outweighs me ... I wish I could vote my personal support, but I don't think it would be the right thing to do."

Barry said that while recycling "makes sense, I don't know that we need to go to a single provider to do it ... My proposal is to mandate that all the trash companies, if they want to do business in Manitou, provide single-stream recycling (and that) we take this contract and this ordinance and put it to a vote of the people."

Klingman said he supported Barry's proposal, citing the belief of opponents that "the city is entering into a complex business that is outside of its core competence."

Snyder said opponents "talk about individual rights, but what about the rights of the majority that say this is something we want to do? I don't believe we are elected to just represent people in our district, but to make good decisions. If we were to take a numbers counting approach, everything would go to a vote. I'm not opposed to taking it to a vote, but I honestly don't see this is so controversial or so divisive that we need to take it to a vote."

Council followed a process prescribed by state law after a citizens group led by Teri Christman proposed it, and Cox said she thought "it has been a very fair, transparent process. I think the solution is reasonable ... I understand people are upset and angry, but I've also been surprised by the support for this program."

Gerbig called the program "a citizens' initiative that has environmental plusses, costs not a whole lot to everybody individually, and creates revenue ... I think the benefits so far outweigh our costs."

"The people against it used a lot of words like me, my and I," said Carpenter, who was instrumental in negotiations with Bestway. "The people for it used words like our, we and community."

The contract is in effect for one year and will be up for renewal annually for the next five years. It allows Bestway to adjust rates based on increases in the Consumer Price Index, but also specifies that Council will review it each year.

"It's not irreversible," Snyder said. "There is a risk that we could find ourselves in a different situation down the road, but I think this is a good thing for our community. I really urge folks out there to give it a try."

[Return to Article Index](#)