

Jobs in jeopardy as collection service curbed

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Eight employees could find themselves out of work once the Mountain View Regional Waste Management Commission dissolves its collection fleet by next January, according to commission documents.

The commission is outsourcing collection for residential waste, organics, commercial recycling and waste, commercial organics as well as roll-off bin hauling services and rural waste collection.

Landfill operation, transfer sites and recycling will remain as services the commission provides.

"We have found that the fleet has not been as viable as we thought it should be," said commission board chair Mary

Anne Overwater, adding that workers were notified of the decision at a May 4 staff meeting.

"Of course there were some upset people but that's the direction we had to go in."

However, under the request-for-proposal (RFP) issued by the commission earlier this month, those workers could still be retained by the chosen contractor.

"Further, there are eight trained and competent operators that have been with the commission that the municipalities would like to see find employment with the successful proponent if possible. As such, the municipalities may weight proposals that are interested in these assets and staffing levels higher," the RFP states.

Additionally, the commission will sell

numerous assets including trucks, trailers and bins.

Overwater said it's unclear how much outsourcing will shave off its budget of more than \$4 million. That will depend on the appraisal of assets and what kind of offers they get.

The RFP closes on May 20 and all member municipalities want a provider that can deliver the same level of service — if not higher — at a lower cost.

"We certainly don't want the level of service to go down. If anything, we hope the level of service goes up and the cost for transportation and collection of waste in municipalities will go down," she said.

There are about 810 solid waste bins that the commission currently picks up in Mountain View County on either a four-, eight- or 12-week pickup cycle.

Overwater acknowledged it as being the most inefficient municipality to service, given the large geographic area, relatively few numbers of bins, plus the residents who are able to enter into contracts with their own provider of choice instead of the commission.

Mountain View County reeve Bruce Beattie uses the commission's collection service on an eight-week cycle, paying slightly more than \$55 per month.

"I've had no issues with that. It's just a matter of cost," Beattie said.

"As a county, we want to make sure there's waste collection available in the county because otherwise ... if they can't take it to their local transfer station or recycling area, then there's potential that (waste) ends up in our ditches."