

**Agenda Item:** 2.a

**Meeting Date:** December 2, 2025

## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** City Commission

**Through:** Jennifer K. Bramley, City Manager

**From:** Sue Bartlett

**Date:** 2025-11-25

**Subject:** Solid Waste & Recycling Rate Study Results and Discussion

**Presenter(s):** Suzanne "Sue" Bartlett, Public Works Director; and Michelle Montecarlo, Assistant Public Works Director.

**Staff Recommendation:** Staff requests the Commission review and discuss the results of the Solid Waste Utility Revenue Sufficiency Study, and provide consensus direction prior to finalization of the rate recommendations.

**Strategic Themes:** Good Governance, City Services, Environmental Resiliency and Sustainability

**Boards & Committees:** Board of Finance (October 15 & November 19, 2025)

**Budget Impact:** The details are contained within the presentation; the budget impact / revenue will be determined following Commission discussion and consensus direction.

**Past Action:** None

**Next Action:** Commission direction to proceed with Ordinance development and Public Hearings.

**Attachments:** [Exhibit A. Solid Waste Rate Study Presentation to BOF \(11-19-25\) - Raftelis.pdf](#)  
[Exhibit B. Board of Finance \(BOF\) Support Email \(11-20-25\).pdf](#)

**Background:** In 2020, the City hired Stantec Consulting Services, Inc., (Stantec) to conduct a thorough solid waste utility rate study, which subsequently established (Ordinance 21-02) the Solid Waste Rates from FY20 through FY25. An updated rate study was planned, however delayed in order to allow for the completion of the 2024 Public Works Efficiency Evaluation.

Public Works presented the cost saving efficiencies

recommended by LA Consulting, Inc., (LAC), which included reducing service to 1,175 enclave customers in the unincorporated County (not City of Dunedin residents / parcels). The Commission agreed with this level of service change, and service has since been discontinued to these unincorporated County parcels. As a result, improved and more efficient routing cycles for City parcels will begin on December 1, 2025. As will be discussed during this presentation, it is difficult to estimate the exact savings to be realized, however, estimated savings impacts have been incorporated into the rate model, and the implementation changes and efficiencies will be tracked and reported on regularly.

Public Works continues to implement additional efficiencies; at this time, six (6) Solid Waste vehicles have been auctioned with a return to the fund of \$71,292. Savings also include avoidance of the associated annual maintenance costs, estimated at \$132,000 yearly. In addition, two (2) 'Sanitation Associate' positions will not be filled in FY26, and will be recommended for elimination in FY27.

Additional assets that have been serving as "Back-up" units will be auctioned off, with proceeds returning to the Solid Waste fund, and the corresponding avoidance of those annual maintenance costs realized. These trucks have been replaced in the past, so there will not be a change to the vehicle replacement plan as result of these actions. Staff will continue to analyze equipment needs, utilization, and conditions for timely replacement and cost effective surplus.

As previously mentioned, an updated Rate Study was previously planned, however, it was delayed at the Commission's request, in order to allow for the completion of the aforementioned Public Works efficiency study, which included Solid Waste. As such, in 2025, the City engaged Raftelis Consulting Services, Inc., (Raftelis) to develop a ten-year Solid Waste fiscal sustainability plan. Raftelis reviewed the current financial management plan and proposed a future rate adjustment plan to meet the System's updated financial needs. These adjustments are crucial in order to address the impacts of variables that have arisen since 2020, such as the ongoing 8% annual tipping fee increase from Pinellas County for solid waste disposal costs; the effect of high inflation, particularly on wages and benefits; and the rising costs of steel, which affects the costs for new trucks and containers.

A summary of the findings and recommendations is included in the attached presentation. Raftelis presented the Solid Waste Rate plan to the Board of Finance (BOF) during their October 15th, and November 19th meetings. Both presentations included all of the information provided herein. The BOF discussed all

aspects affecting the plan and reached consensus in support of Raftelis' recommendations. Raftelis included some analysis regarding the impact of the efficiencies gained by withdrawing services from the unincorporated County areas as previously detailed; resulting in a reduction in the overall rate increases as demonstrated in these presentation materials.

The plan, as presented, identifies the level of annual revenue (and rate adjustments) required over the near-term planning period, FY26 (starting on April 1, 2026) through FY30; and provides recommendations for the long-term forecast period (FY26 through FY30) to meet all identified financial requirements.

Staff appreciates the BOF's thorough review of the proposed Solid Waste Rate Analysis, and concurs with their recommendations. Therefore, staff hereby requests the Commission consider this information and provide consensus direction to proceed with ordinance development and rate recommendations, as detailed herein.