Maryland Green Purchasing Committee Meeting

Thursday Nov 10, 2022, 10:00 A.M.
Virtually Held

Purpose: Quarterly Meeting of the Maryland Green Purchasing Committee (GPC)
Attendees:

Emily Soontornsaratool, DGS*
Kshirajaa Ramesh, DGS**
Sam Linton, DGS**
Nicole Copeland, DPSCS
Keisha Clarke, DoIT
Cora Lee Gilbert, UMGC
Hilal Efe, DGS
Chanel Franze, Towson University
Monica Hariri, MDH
Thomas Hickey, USM*
Amanda Hutchison, MDE*
Rod Johnson, DGS
Joselyn Johnson, Towson University
Timothy Kerr, MDE
Joanna Kille, STO*
Shannon McDonald, MDE
Victoria Nellis, MDEC
Cindy Osorto, MDE
Marsha Rowe, STO
Xylina Sanders, DPSCS
Martha Shrader, University of Maryland
Candace Ward, DoIT
Yolanda Waugh, DHS
Akia Wheeler, MDH
Carol Wilson, MDH
Richard Keller, Baltimore County
Debbie Groat, Baltimore County
Arhea Lazzelle, BISM
Paul Mouser, RGH
Gerard Robinson, RGH
Glenn Roscoe, Morgan State University
Jake Swenson, Staples
Patricia Watson, Towson University

* Designee

** Staff

Minutes:

I. Welcome and Introductions

- Emily Soontornsaratool welcomed Committee members and attendees and reviewed virtual meeting logistics. Emily asked permission to record the meeting. There were no objections, and the recording was approved.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Monica Hariri motioned to approve the meeting minutes from August 11, 2022. Victoria Nellis seconded the motion. August meeting minutes were approved.

III. Member Announcements

- Thomas Hickey thanked the Green Purchasing staff for attending and presenting at the Business Opportunity Summit on October 31, 2022.

IV. Presentation: Sustainability and Green Products at RGH – provided by Gerard Robinson of RGH, and Paul Mouser and Jake Swenson of Staples.

- Gerard shared a video giving a brief overview of RGH and their products. They specialize in remanufacturing toner cartridges and servicing printers. RGH has expanded their products and services after partnering with the Staples Diversity Alliance.

- Jake Swenson shared Staples' green purchasing efforts. Staples developed new green-only product lists for several featured categories including imaging equipment, hand soap, toners, writing utensils, etc. These lists can be accessed by all state employees. Jake also provided an overview of Staples's eco-ID mark that is used on the RGH/Staples e-commerce platform. These eco-ID marks are based on several third-party environmental certifications and are used to clearly identify products that have been verified as green according to Staples.

    - Also mentioned is an update of environmental filters to better search for a specific certification or products with recycled content. The top product

categories are copy paper, ink and toner, writing instruments, paper and office supplies, and printers.

- Rod Johnson asked if there are core items in those product categories, and if they are able to block items that do not meet the environmental criteria. Jake replied that the challenge is some customers have trouble finding specific products needed outside of the environmental criteria. He recommended leveraging the list through other mechanisms like spotlighting the green products.
- Emily added that having those labels and shopping lists will be useful because finding green products through catalogs that do not highlight them can also create challenges. Kshirajaa asked purchasers to let them know if there is anything that can be implemented in the shopping lists to help better find green products.

V. Presentation: UMGC Green Initiatives – provided by Cora Lee Gilbert, Director of UMGC Sustainability and Contract Services

Cora Lee presented an overview of UMGC's sustainability initiatives:

- The UMGC campus building environmental features. A majority of buildings around the campus are either LEED certified gold or platinum.
- In 2008, UMGC established a recycling program. It was then refined in 2015 by first adopting new bins and signs for recycling and trash. These proved to be more clear and convenient for UMGC staff, and the same system is still being used. UMGC has achieved a 73% recycling rate, exceeding the minimum requirement of 30%.
- The recycling program pursued a number of successful actions:

- In 2018 and 2019, a recycling committee was established. It consisted of staff members interested in recycling and taking action towards improving engagement and recycling rates at UMGC.
- To engage staff and test their recycling knowledge, a hands-on-activity was developed. This activity asked participants to sort common recyclable and non-recyclable items on tables in order to educate them in determining the proper bin to use.
- Plastic bag collection activity for one month. The bags were then donated to a Weis grocery store and shipped to make plastic deckings and railings from the recycled bags. This educated the staff about the alternative methods for disposing of plastic bags.
- For reuse, UMGC turned a previously unoccupied room in the building into an office supply room to better utilize their space. This room was communal to all UMGC staff.
- A virtual flier with a link to their website was used to reduce the use of paper while allowing staff members to access information about the university's efforts towards environmental sustainability.
- For America Recycles Day, Cora-Lee created a survey for UMGC employees available on social media and received feedback on the challenges and opportunities of recycling. The responses were then posted to the UMGC website.

- UMGC established a "Green Team". It consists of multiple departments at UMGC (procurement, facilities, and IT):
  - Facilities management staff began using green cleaning products and were trained on recycling
  - Procurement staff included green specifications and asked vendors to provide examples of the sustainable products they offer.

- Policies for green purchasing were adopted. The products targeted for this initiative are:
    - Energy Star products.
    - T-shirts with 100% recycled fabric.
    - Commencement gowns with 100% recycled material.
    - Janitorial supplies.
    - FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certified paper products.

- Shannon McDonald asked if the vendor picking up cable was recycled or repurposed, and if UMGC has utilized swap programs or gov deals. Cora Lee said the cables were recycled and disposed of because they were no longer reusable.
- Shannon asked to expand on their efforts towards food waste diversion in their recycling program. Cora Lee said their kitchen had set up containers for food scraps, and the containers were sent to a Maryland facility for composting.
- Paddy Watson asked what percent of their recycling rate was from single stream recycling. Cora Lee said the bulk of their data was from SS recycling with the exception of materials recycled from construction projects. Paddy followed up asking what the most common contaminant the UMGC campus has been experiencing in their single stream, and if single-use plastics are being collected in the recycling. Cora Lee said food waste left in a plastic container has been commonly found in the recycle bin. For reducing or eliminating single use plastics used at UMGC, they have relied mostly on their signs that state single use plastics belong in the trash bin.

VI. Quarterly Activities Update

- MRF (Material Recovery Facility) Tour – update provided by Sam Linton

- Seventeen people from state agencies attended a tour of Central Acceptance Facility, a MRF located in Cockeyville, Maryland. The attendees learned about the common acceptable and unacceptable materials allowed at the MRF and the internal process of sorting, baling, and shipping recyclable materials.
    - Thomas Hickey asked where those materials are currently being shipped, and if it gets recovered into a reusable product. Richard Keller responded saying recycling markets are subject to change frequently based on the demand for recycled materials. The paper used to be shipped to China and is now being sent to other offshore sites. Most of the aluminum, steel and plastics are sold domestically, and it's understood that those materials are being sold and used into making new products. The county receives more for offshore sales than domestic. Thomas followed up asking about the location of these offshore sites. Richard replied saying it varies on the monthly basis, however it is implied that it would not be disposed of at a landfill if the offsite company had purchased the material.
    - Shannon McDonald added domestic markets for paper are growing, and Richard said that HB164 passed in 2021 aims to develop those markets on a regional level, and are looking at opportunities at recycling commodities more locally. The goal is to create additional markets that can reuse these materials in Maryland.

- Maryland Drives Electric 9/29/2022 – update provided by Emily Soontornsaratool
    - The purpose of this event was to help state employees who are transitioning into driving EV's, because the future of the state fleet will be all electric. At the event, the attendees went on a test drive with chaperones, EV ambassadors, to help state employees become more

comfortable driving EV's. Emily invited people with EV knowledge and experience to reach out if they are interested in becoming an EV ambassador.

- Green Purchasing Specialist Graduation – update provided by Kshirajaa Ramesh
    - On October 11, 2022, nineteen procurement officers were officially certified with a green purchasing specialization.
    - Emily mentioned this is a significant step in increasing the purchasing of green products in Maryland. The addition of nineteen points of contact with knowledge in green purchasing requirements will provide more resources to further support the green purchasing program.
- Business Opportunities Summit – update provided by Kshirajaa Ramesh
    - Maryland held its seventh annual business opportunities and entrepreneurial training summit. The green purchasing team was there to table as well as present at the event. They presented a one hour training session intended for vendors to educate them on green purchasing priorities in Maryland, the criteria for verifying green products and services, and how to showcase their green products for statewide contracts.
        - Kshirajaa stated the people who listened to the presentation were very engaged, but there were few in attendance. She recommended the next annual summit be promoted more frequently. Emily added that the tabling was beneficial and many vendors stopped by to ask questions. The presentation slides will be added to the website as an additional resource for vendors. .
- eMMA Integration – update provided by Kshirajaa Ramesh
    - QRG (quick reference guide) codes now reference green purchasing specifications linked in eMMA, making it easier for procurement officers

to access. This is also available on the DGS procurement website. This integration into eMMA is a major step in developing the state's green purchasing program.

- Green Purchasing Annual Report – Kshirajaa Ramesh
    - The annual report is due Dec 31, 2022.
    - To showcase the GPC members and designees in the report, Kshirajaa invited them to send a headshot picture and a quote about why green purchasing matters to them.
    - Fourteen agencies sent green spend by line item. The number of agencies reporting green spend increased from the previous year.
- Eighteen out of twenty vendors have sent their data for reporting.

VII. Specifications: Vote to Approve – Kshirajaa Ramesh

- Office Supplies – This specification was a blend of two office supplies specifications created by the SPLC action team, with one meeting the minimum green requirements and other going above and beyond the standard.
    - Tom Hickey motioned to approve. ap Rod Johnson seconded the motion, and the specification was approved.
- Flooring & Adhesives – An addition of environmental certifications verified by the US EPA.
    - Tom Hickey motioned to approve. Matthew Smith seconded the motion, and the specification was approved..
- Electronics & IT – Includes a TCO certification as an eligible requirement for green purchasing. This keeps green standards high for statewide contracts.
    - Joanna Kille motioned to approve, and Matthew Smith seconded the motion and the specification was approved.
- Landscaping Plants – An addition of new plant prohibitions in response to the latest legislative session passing SB 007.

- Thomas Hickey questioned whether added there is an exemption for research. Kshirajaa confirmed that the exception is inclu
- Tom Hickey motioned to approve. Tim Kerr seconded the motion and the specification was approved.

- Upcoming Specifications – Safer Sealants, Integrated Pest Management, and Landscaping Supplies & Services.

VIII. Upcoming Events

- America Recycles Day – update provided by Sam Linton
  - On Tuesday, November 15 from 11:00-1:00, DGS will host an in-person event at 301 West Preston St. Baltimore, MD, 21201. This is an educational outreach event to raise awareness about why recycling matters to Maryland. There will be vendors and state agencies occupying tables to talk about their recycling services and initiatives. Prizes will be given to people who participate in recycling games at the event.
- ASBO Presentation on Green Purchasing – update provided by Emily Soontornsaratool
  - Emily will be presenting at this event on Wednesday, November 16 to schools to talk about Maryland's green purchasing program and how to develop their own program for green purchasing.
- Recycling Market Development Workshop December 6, 2022, 1:00-2:30 – provided by Shannon McDonald
  - The purpose is to have representatives involved in the recycling business to provide feedback on ways to catalyze this program in the state. To attend the workshop, pre-register here.
- Upcoming Webinars by NERC

  Access the webinars here.

- December 7, 11:30-1:00 eastern: Material Reuse Forum 2 - Impact of Building Materials Reuse on Climate Change:
- December 13, 2:00-3:30 eastern: Strategies for Residential Food Waste Reduction & Composting:
- December 14, 1:30-3:00 eastern: Ground Glass Pozzolans - A More Sustainable Solution for Recycles Glass & Concrete:

- Next GPC Meeting: Thursday February 9, 2022, 10:00 - 12:00.
  - The next working meeting is canceled. The following working meeting will be April 13, 2023.

IX. Open Discussion

- Paddy Watson asked if DGS reports their green purchasing off statewide contracts. Kshirajaa answered saying DGS can share these reports if requested. Paddy asked if there is any guidance in extended producer responsibility (EPR)for IT products. Kshirajaa replied that some states support leasing programs instead of outright buying, but the GPC currently has no further guidance on EPR.
- Paddy suggested to Emily for her upcoming presentation to schools, look at the Towson EduCycle Program that involves computer reconditioning as well as donate old electronics to Baltimore county and city public schools.
- Paddy is launching an online waste directory recollect on November 15th for America Recycles Day. This focuses on guiding students to handling products for recycling.
  - Shannon McDonald asked Paddy if the waste directory includes more items besides food service ware and waste. Paddy answered saying there's multiple services included, but are using it solely for their waste widget to provide students with more resources for sustainably handling food waste.

This tool provides metrics and shows what students are searching and asking when it comes to waste management.

X. Conclude

- Emily thanked all the attendees, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sam Linton,
Staff, MD Green Purchasing Committee

Kshirajaa Ramesh
Staff, MD Green Purchasing Committee

Emily Soontornsaratool
Designee, MD Green Purchasing Committee