



July 1, 2021

City of Port St. Lucie, Florida
Attn: Russ Blackburn, City Manager
121 S.W. Port St Lucie Blvd.
Port St. Lucie, FL 34984

Mr. Blackburn,

In response to your letter dated June 23, 2021, I would like to request an initial review that meets the seven (7) day response provision of the letter, but also commit that the appropriate remedy is a continued effort which I intend to be personally involved.

As all municipalities are aware, nationwide, there is a shortage of labor in many industries including Solid Waste and Recycling. Waste Pro has been adversely affected by COVID-19 and the residual impacts on everything from primary labor availability to supply chain breakdowns of essential goods and services to run our business effectively and meet the needs of our franchised agreements. Stemming from our senior leadership to the local level, I can assure you that our staff has not hidden behind those challenges and has remained dedicated to performing all services required in the agreement timely and as prescribed by our agreement. Unfortunately, unforeseen circumstances challenged our operations and led to some delays in collection. We understand the essential nature of the service we provide and the frustration that it causes when services are delayed or missed.

Waste Pro has expended a large amount of unbudgeted capital expense in an attempt to meet the needs of our franchised agreement. Upon noticing initial labor shortages that led to service delays, we made immediate plans to reduce shortfalls and improve our customer experience. The basic changes made were as follows:

- Employ subcontractor trucks to assist in the reduction of delays. We have and continue to employ five (5) to six (6) subcontractor trucks in the city. This has been in place for the past five (5) months to allow us to recruit, hire and train new workers. This unbudgeted expense far exceeds our normal operating cost and we have expended approximately \$785,000 to date.
- Implementation of the "call em all" system to notify residents to expect delays in an attempt to avoid unnecessary phone and email dialogue at the City and local office level.
- Increased employee sign-on (retention) bonuses that range from \$1,200 to \$5,000.
- Increased driver and helper wages by over \$600,000 annually to attract prospective and qualified employees.
- Hired a Full-Time Employee recruiter focused on sourcing and cultivating candidates for hire and placement.
- Added an additional four (4) rear load trucks to aid in allowing the shop maintenance team to repair the existing fleet vehicles.

Although the above items have not cured or remedied the situation, they have dramatically assisted in improving the customer experience and reducing complaint levels.



The issue at hand is simply the recruitment and employment of qualified drivers and helpers for our solid waste and recycling collection routes. In contrast to your letter, I have reviewed and found that our issue is a lack of these garbage and recycling route drivers. We have pulled necessary resources from yard waste routes to cover the shortages in our garbage and recycling routes as we do not want to leave those routes curbside for an extended period. In turn, our committed subcontractor trucks are filling the yard waste route needs at this time.

I have spent a day this week touring the City of Port St. Lucie and have found that we have basic level items that need to be improved upon at the local level. In general, the items I had found were easily correctible with qualified drivers, helpers, and trucks. In addition, our focus will need to be heightened regarding employee recruitment and training. As I stated in our virtual meeting, Waste Pro has the necessary means and financial wherewithal to meet the needs of the franchised agreement. I will immediately commit additional recruiting and maintenance efforts from the Corporate level to insure a remedy is in place and the local team gets the additional support that it needs during this time.

I request of the City, the allowance of time until July 16, 2021, to prepare a comprehensive review of the fleet and staff to better give you a response. Please understand that I am engaged and involved with the local office by phone and email during this time and on-site as I am available. Immediately, we will employ a 3rd Party Recruiter to make necessary inroads to explore and find potential and qualified applicants.

Waste Pro has always appreciated our relationship with the City of Port St. Lucie and we intend to restore services to the levels that we have had and improve our customer experience. I would ask my staff as well as yours to continue with an open mind as we navigate through this difficult period, knowing that we intend to rectify the situation as soon as possible. I am confident that by working together, we will achieve an excellent level of service for our residents.

Kind regards,

Keith Banasiak
SVP/Chief Operating Officer
Waste Pro USA, Inc.
(239) 229-7500
kbanasiak@wasteprousa.com