

http://www.athensmessenger.com/news/nelsonville-awards-trash-and-recycling-contract-to-rumpke/article_664e2312-a36d-529a-977d-321ca0a53cd9.html

Nelsonville awards trash and recycling contract to Rumpke

By Larry Di Giovanni Messenger Staff Journalist Mar 1, 2017

NELSONVILLE — Based upon a recommendation from Gary Edwards in one of his last official acts as city manager, City Council voted unanimously Monday to award its three-year trash-and-recycling contract to Rumpke Waste and Recycling Services.

Rumpke, which has a local office and landfill in Wellston and is based near Cincinnati, beat out the smaller, Logan-based Southern Ohio Disposal for the city's new three-year residential and commercial contract that will go into effect April 1.

Unlike two years ago, when Southern Ohio was awarded the contract based on its lowest overall bid — a move that caused controversy based on then-City Manager Mark Davis recommending Rumpke — there was no controversy this time. None of the council members spoke, there were no public comments from the audience, and representatives from each company did not speak during the meeting.

The ordinance was passed under a suspension of rules on first reading to give Rumpke a full month to bring in its own trash containers. It was short in wording with just one “whereas” section.

“Whereas, Rumpke submitted the lowest and best bid for commercial and residential rubbish, refuse, and recycling collection in the city of Nelsonville.”

One area resident called the bid competition between Rumpke and Southern Ohio Disposal “the battle of the big company versus the smaller local outfit.”

“Well, Rumpke’s local too,” company municipal representative Nick Rupert said after the meeting. He added that Rumpke, while having a Wellston location, is a company serving a four-state area.

Ed Mash, who sits on council’s Utility Committee, said both companies have provided good service to Nelsonville residents, with Southern Ohio having a bit more of a challenge as two years ago, owner Brandon Ogg was only given six days to prepare to take over the contract. Rumpke — which offers a difficult-to-beat unlimited trash bags residential rate of \$13.75 monthly — will have more time.

Ogg and Rupert were congenial and spoke after the meeting, wishing each other well. But Ogg said Nelsonville was his biggest customer and that his customer base will now decrease from about 7,600 to 6,200 customers per month. His second-biggest customer consists of area state parks including Hocking Hills, Burr Oak and Lake Hope.

Ogg said that the Athens-Hocking Reclamation Center, where he takes his landfill-bound trash, and Athens-Hocking Recycling Centers, Inc., where he takes recyclable items, will see a decline in business from his company’s absence.

Ogg said he has served Nelsonville’s trash-and-recycling needs with just one truck, a driver, and two “haulers” who pick up trash and toss it in the truck. He added that they are a family and he cannot retain them as employees.

“The biggest part of all of this is, I hate letting people go,” he said.

Ogg added that he will likely submit a new bid in another three years, but that it is hard for a smaller company to come close to breaking even on non-mandatory recycling. Rumpke will charge customers \$3 per month for recycling for each of the three years — Southern Ohio's former rate — while Southern Ohio bid \$4.75 per month for the first year, which would increase \$1 each year. Ogg said he had about 270 recycling customers in Nelsonville out of a possible 1,500 accounts.

Ogg said the city may want to consider operating its own trash-and-recycling service in the future, which would require owning trash containers and purchasing a truck. Mash said the city might instead want to consider being the trash-and-recycling service provider and then subcontracting its services out.

"That would make the city more money," he said.

ldigiovanni@athensmessenger.com