

Lower Paxton loses manual collection trash pickup and bitterly welcomes Penn Waste

By: Lindsey Cook
Written: June 20, 2023



Photo by: Zack Lang, abc27 news

Taking out the trash – a weekly routine everyone knows but might not love – just became a whole new process for residents in Lower Paxton Township.

After partnering with Waste Management for several years, Lower Paxton’s hauler contract expired in 2023. The township expected to renew the contract, but things didn’t go as planned.

“The board was very adamant that we wanted to extend the contact. Waste management was not interested in that,” says Sam Miller, the Assistant Township Manager and Finance Director of Lower Paxton.

Waste Management rejected it for one main reason – it meant that Waste Management would continue trash pickups through manual collection. Manual collection means resident leave their trash in a garbage bag outside their homes, and haulers pick up the bags by hand. But with fuel and labor costs rising, waste companies are switching to an “automated collection” method.

The automated collection changes the process for both haulers and residents. Each home gets two wheeled carts with a metal bar on the front. When haulers arrive, the truck picks up the garbage with a side-mounted arm and tosses the trash into the back of the truck.

Although it seems like it makes the process much easier on both sides, the one thing that makes it less appealing – you guessed it – the price skyrocketed.

While residents previously paid \$67 per quarter with Waste Management and manual collection, they will pay \$108.25 with Penn Waste and automated collection.

Of three bidders, Waste Management, Penn Waste and Republic Services, Penn Waste had the lowest quarterly rate. Miller mentioned that this rate in Lower Paxton is cheaper than in some neighboring townships, which get up to \$112 - \$115 per quarter.

“Every one of the board members is a resident within the township. And this change is something that they don’t want to necessarily see as well . . . this is a big change for all of us. So, we’re all getting accustomed to that and trying to work with folks as best we can to make the transition as smooth as we can,” says Miller.

Residents can expect to see trash carts in front of their houses soon if they have not arrived. Residents with a disability who cannot physically wheel the trash carts are encouraged to contact Penn Waste for accommodation.