

50-271

3/17/94.

TO DIRECTOR
US NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON DC 20555.

FROM: Nat Hendrichy
PO BOX 738
PUTNEY VT 05346-0738

Re: VT YANKEE BOX IN DUMP? FOI
Request.
Dear DIRECTOR. A FOI Request
WAS THE BOX FROM VT YANKEE?
I am enclosing a 3/17/94
Reformer article.

Was sewage sludge from
VT Yankee dumped into the
Brattleboro DUMP (VT)
Did it contain Radioactivity?
HOW MUCH, WHEN?

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PDR ADDOCK 05000271
P PDR

April
10

BRATTLEBORO, V.T. REFORMER

Landfill panel 3/17/94 airs unsettling tales of trash

By JOYCE MARCEL
Reformer Staff

BRATTLEBORO - Amid accusations and recriminations, stories of hazardous, medical and just plain unusual trash buried at the landfill surfaced during a Windham Solid Waste Management District Operations Committee meeting Wednesday evening.

The most unusual story concerned a box approximately the size of a refrigerator, with padlocks on it, which landfill supervisor Gary Knapp said he buried in "early summer 1990."

Knapp said the incident happened during the time Partyka Resources Management was managing the landfill.

According to Knapp, the landfill's men-gatehouse keeper, Nan Kirschbaum, radioed to landfill employee Will MacDonald and told him that a box was coming into the landfill, and he and Knapp should dig a hole and bury it without disturbing it.

"I vaguely remember it was supposed to have come from Vermont Yankee," Knapp said. "I'm not saying it was metal. Three guys in a pickup truck brought it in. It took the three to push it out of the truck."

Interim Executive Director David Hannum said he "was not knowledgeable" about the incident.

"I have heard about the box, but

I heard the details here tonight for the first time," Hannum said after the meeting.

When contacted after the meeting, MacDonald, who is now the gatehouse keeper, said he remembered the incident.

"I can confirm that a box from Vermont Yankee was buried there, and we were told to bury it, and make sure it did not get run

**'See that you don't
put into the landfill
things you know
shouldn't be put in
there'**

over by the compactor, and not to open it ourselves," MacDonald said. "It came in on a pickup truck. The instructions were from (former executive director) Steve Johnson."

Recycling and Hazardous Waste Coordinator Jan Ameen said she would research the incident.

"I need to dig - literally - and see what the regulations were then," Ameen said.

Another recent problem was a load of construction trash that had an unpleasant odor.

The landfill operators said they experienced dizziness, headaches

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Trash

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and nausea when they started working with the trash.

Hannum said he, engineer Edward Huntley and Ameen went down to the landfill to inspect.

"We found a five-gallon container of degreaser in the load," Hannum said. "It was broken, and it still had a top on it."

The workers were told to take a break while the material "volatilized" or evaporated, Ameen said.

"There was not much else we could do," Ameen said.

Ned Childs of Dummerston said the material could have been treated as hazardous waste.

"Dave instructed Gary to cover it immediately," Ameen said. "In our professional opinion it was not a liquid. It was probably no more toxic than what happens at a gas pump."

Medical waste seems to be another problem area for the landfill.

Federal standards require all medical waste generators, such as hospitals, to separate and "red-bag" all hazardous medical wastes, and then have them disposed of by certified handlers, said Operations Committee Chairman Tony Gordon.

Examples of hazardous medical waste are: needles, items with blood on or in them, and old medicines.

Medical waste is a "very major thing," Gordon said, and should not be buried in the landfill.

However, there have been several occasions when syringes, IV bags, rubber gloves and other medical wastes have been buried at the landfill, Knapp said.

"I handed you a handful of hypodermic needles the other day," Knapp told Ameen.

In an incident Tuesday, landfill workers found what they thought was medical waste in a load of trash and called Ameen over to the landfill.

"I was told they had waste brought from a hospital or medical center," Ameen said. "It was latex gloves, swabs, and needles with plastic sheaths. I figured out who they were from. They were used by a local manufacturer. The syringes contained epoxy. They were used for gluing."

Knapp said Ameen should not assume that "every needle that hits the ground comes from Omega Optical."

Gordon said the sale of needles was not controlled in Vermont.

Gordon also said that the district found syringes a year ago which came from "a nurse doing insurance tests. The sharps were removed."

Ameen said that IV bags are not considered medical waste.

Knapp said it was difficult to find all the different hazardous materials in the trash loads.

"Yesterday morning, around a quarter to seven, they buried some stuff from the hospital," Knapp said. "There were IV bags,

lines, and needles. It was stuff that had been buried before, dug up, and recovered. I'm not picking up a handful of hypodermics when I don't know where they come from."

Gordon said that IV bags were the same as plastic "bread bags" when they did not have needles attached.

When asked about medical waste, MacDonald confirmed that "there have been numerous times that medical waste has been buried, that comes in all different types of trucks."

"As far as it goes, there have been incidents where medical waste has been buried," MacDonald said. "To my way of thinking, you cannot get people involved in picking through medical waste once it happens. There was an incident last year that involved (hauler) Wood Enterprises, from Massachusetts. The medical waste came from Franklin Medical Center. It was run over by a compactor before we realized it was medical waste. It was more or less unretrievable and mixed in the trash. I do remember there was blood involved. The second incident we had with them, the waste was retrieved. Wood Enterprises was told not to bring Franklin Medical waste here again."

At the meeting, Ameen said she should be told every time medical items are found in the trash.

"The staff should know better than to bury medical waste."

Knapp said he did not want to be blamed for burying hazardous materials.

"Everything is coming down on me and my staff," Knapp said. "When there are 13 rubbish trucks waiting, I don't have enough time to look for a couple of hearing aid batteries or a handful of needles. You want more rubbish to fill the hole to make money, but at the same time you want me to take all the nasty stuff out of there."

Gordon said that while it was true the district wanted the revenue, it also did not want to pay later on for violations committed now. He blamed Knapp for burying things illegally.

"See that you don't put into the landfill things you know shouldn't be put in there," Gordon said. "You are responsible. If you do chose to bury it, it's your fault."

Knapp asked what he should do when he was "told to" bury things.

"Should I let them set?" Knapp said.

Gordon said he should pull hazardous material out of the landfill.

The district is planning to instigate a series of random load inspections, engineer Huntley said.

Ameen said that she would start today to write an "operating procedure for handling medical waste," for the staff.

"I'm trying to get trash on the ground, compacted, and covered," Knapp said. "Every single truck coming into the landfill has hazardous waste."

Gordon told a story about ammonia being released from a refrigerator at the landfill.

"There was a refrigerator buried in a box that was dumped in September," Gordon said. "The (workers) didn't know it was there until they rolled over it and split a line. Then they had to back off and wait for the gas to clear."

After the meeting, Hannum said the district tried to take all the hazardous waste out of the landfill.

"We try to get all the tires, metals, small cans of paint, a bottle of nail polish," Hannum said. "There is an issue if you can't tell a needle from a hospital from one with glue."

Ameen said sometimes the landfill operators think they have medical waste when they do not.

"The stuff we found yesterday looked like medical waste, gloves, syringes, swabs," Ameen said. "What the guys think is medical waste may be something else."

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