


MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor England
Vice Mayor Kostka
Commissioner George
Commissioner Samora
Commissioner Rumrell

FROM: Max Royle, City Manager 

DATE: February 7, 2020

SUBJECT: Providing Drinking Water at City Events: Review of Options and Costs

BACKGROUND

Under Commissioner Comments at your February 3rd meeting, Commissioner George "explained what the City of Durham in North Carolina did regarding bottled water by taking a formal vote via resolution to prohibit the City or County from purchasing bottled water or single use plastics. She advised that the City [of St. Augustine Beach] should set a standard and if the City is asking the legislature to change the law on it, they should follow what the Commission is requested. She requested this item be placed on a future agenda to discuss" (from the minutes of the meeting).

RELATED INFORMATION

Following your meeting, we asked the Deputy City Clerk, Ms. Dariana Fitzgerald, to get information about Durham's prohibition and the cost of various options to provide drinking water at public events.

She found the following:

- a. Page 1, a newspaper article about Durham not using public money to buy drinking water in plastic bottles.
- b. Pages 2-3, the policies that Durham adopted to implement the prohibition against buying drinking water in plastic containers.
- c. Page 4, an e-mail from Ms. Fitzgerald, in which she compares the cost to purchase water in various types of containers.

CITY EVENTS

Yearly, the City sponsors three events: Arbor Day, Veterans Day and Beach Blast Off. It provides drinking water in plastic bottles at Arbor Day and Veterans Day at no cost to the attendees. At Beach Blast Off, the City doesn't give or sell water.

The Arbor Day event is held in the city hall and adjacent parking lot. There is a drinking fountain in the corridor near the kitchen. Attendees could use it for drinking water.

The City also provides carbonated beverages, usually in cans, in coolers with ice.

For the Veterans Day event, which is held in Lakeside Park, the City provides drinking water in plastic bottles and carbonated beverages in cans. There is no drinking fountain in the park.

If the Commission wants the City not to provide drinking water in plastic containers at the Veterans Day event, then the City could purchase boxed or canned water. You'll note from Ms. Fitzgerald's email that the 5-gallon Igloo containers are made from plastic.

ACTION REQUESTED

It's that you decide whether you want to adopt a resolution similar to Durham's to prohibit the City from providing bottled water and other types of beverages in plastic containers at City-sponsored events.

Durham 1st county in NC to stop buying plastic bottled water with taxpayer money

By Ashley Jean Reese

Here's how long it takes for the most common types of trash to decompose in the ocean

Trash is a major problem in our oceans, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Here's how long it takes for some of the most common types of trash to decompose — including straws, plastic bags and balloons.

Up Next

Hundreds take a dip in cold Atlantic Ocean for the Polar Plunge charity event

Trash is a major problem in our oceans, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Here's how long it takes for some of the most common types of trash to decompose — including straws, plastic bags and balloons. By [Ashley Jean Reese](#)
DURHAM

The Durham County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously Monday to ban the purchase of single-serve, plastic water bottles with county funds.

"I think we're all aware of the problems that plastics have in our environment and our health when they are either not recycled or they end up in our environment because they are not disposed of properly," said Tobin Freid, sustainability manager.

"They get in our water base. They cause all sorts of problems," she said. "And there's a really easy solution, which is to drink the wonderful tap water we have here."

The policy goes into effect July 1. There will be exceptions for public health emergencies.

Board Chairwoman Wendy Jacobs said the county moved quickly to enact the ban.

Jacobs said board member Heidi Carter was behind the change, speaking up about the problem late last year. Over the holidays, the county came up with a re-usable metal water bottle for all the staff.

The policy was on Monday night's consent agenda, reserved for items that don't require further discussion, but Jacobs believed it deserved attention and had Freid say a few words.

In a telephone interview after the meeting, Freid said no other governments in North Carolina, or even the Southeast, have enacted such a ban. Around the nation, a handful of cities have, including Austin, Texas; Brookline, Mass.; Seattle; San Francisco, Palo Alto, Calif.; and Salt Lake City. Also, in Canada, Montreal has a similar ban.

"So there are a few," Freid said. "There's not a ton."

Freid also said that when she reached out to other governments about the ban, a lot expressed interest and wanted to see how it goes in Durham. She said the city of Durham is working on a similar ban.

"It'll be a challenge," Freid said. "Definitely people are used to buying bottled water for meetings."

The county will provide coolers that can be loaned out for meetings. For larger events, such as festivals, the county will provide water trucks. They will probably use paper cups, which, although they are disposable, are at least biodegradable, unlike plastic bottles.

Freid said she like to see water fountains with a spout for filling cups or re-usable bottles.

"Bottled water has not been around forever," Freid said. "Before bottled water this is how we did things."



Prohibition of the Purchase of Bottled Water with Durham County Funds

I. Purpose

To establish a policy and implement procedures to eliminate the purchase and use of single-serve plastic water bottles with Durham County funds.

II. Policy

County funds may not be used to purchase bottled water, except under certain conditions as noted in section V below.

III. Definitions

Bottled Water – Non-sparkling, unflavored drinking water in a single serving container with a volume of 21 fluid ounces or less.

IV. Procedure

A. General

All County departments shall refrain from using County funds to purchase bottled water for any purpose. Employees shall discourage the use and distribution of bottled water by other entities at County facilities or events when other options for water distribution are available.

B. Support Measures

1. Departments are advised to purchase reusable cups, pitchers, urns, and other dispensers to meet their individual departmental needs.
2. Departments will provide reusable, paper, or biodegradable cups.
3. The Sustainability Department and General Services Department will design and manage a loaning program for a small inventory of dispensers that may be borrowed for use at events where such dispensers are needed.
4. Drinking fountains with reusable bottle filling capabilities shall be specified for all new and replacement drinking fountains located at County facilities.

V. Other

A. Exceptions

The County Manager and/or County General Managers can make exceptions to this policy where it is found that use of bottled water is necessary in a given situation to protect public health or for occupational health and safety.

B. Monitoring

The Finance Department, Purchasing Division shall develop and implement procedures and policies to reflect the intent of this policy, including monitoring purchases through SAP or the procurement card process.

VI. Effective Date

This policy will go into effect July 1, 2020.

Max Royle

From: Dariana Fitzgerald
Sent: Tuesday, February 4, 2020 10:52 AM
To: Max Royle
Subject: RE: Resolution re: Plastic Bottles

Bottled Water – 32 pack of 16.9 oz bottles is \$3.98 = **\$0.007 per oz** (Walmart)
Boxed Water – 24 pack of 16.9 oz cartons is \$39.76 = **\$0.10 per oz** (Amazon)
Canned Water – 12 pack of 16 oz cans is \$23.99 = **\$0.12 per oz** (Amazon)

Please note: the waxed cartons that boxed water comes in cannot be recycled. Plastic bottles and aluminum cans can be.

An Igloo 5-gallon orange plastic "Gatorade" water cooler with spout is \$22 with handles or \$30 with wheels (Walmart). That would likely be enough water for events like Arbor Day or Veteran's Day. A more decorative beverage dispenser would be \$11 to \$20 for 2 to 3 gallons.

If you have any additional questions, feel free to contact me.

Dariana A. Fitzgerald
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From: Max Royle <mroyle@cityofsab.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 4, 2020 10:23 AM
To: Dariana Fitzgerald <dfitzgerald@cityofsab.org>
Subject: Resolution re: Plastic Bottles

Pls. get it from the city or county of Durham, North Carolina.
Also, give me a memo that compares cost of boxed water vs. plastic bottled water.
Thanks.