Everyone who buys SASCO bags in the City of Austin is invited to attend the meeting of the Austin City Council at 7 p.m. on Thursday, October 30.

The Council moved its business meeting to Thursday night and will hold it at the Jennings Township Volunteer Fire Department to ensure everyone concerned about the trash bag program will be able to attend.

The firehouse is located directly west of City Hall, where meetings are normally held.

Prior to this meeting, a Board of Works and Public Safety meeting will be held starting at 6 p.m.

City Councilmen debated the feasibility of dropping out of the SASCO program at several recent meetings, including the special session held on Tuesday night, October 21.

Three options have been considered. They include:

•No. 1: Drop the bags and charge every one of the 1,350 households $10 a month to pick up all trash, regardless of size.

•No. 2: Increase the cost of SASCO bags to $1.50 a bag. Based on the number of customers, that would raise nearly as much money as charging the flat fee.

•No. 3: Keep the bags and add a flat monthly fee that could be lower than $10.

The City needs to make additional revenue to cover rising sanitation costs

Not only are both of the City's packers failing, but tipping fees have increased several times at the Scott County Transfer Station south of Scottsburg. From there, all trash is taken to a landfill near Paoli.

Also, the cost of buying SASCO bags has increased over the years. But the cost to consumers, people residing in Scottsburg, Austin and Scott County, what SASCO stands for, has remained 75 cents a bag.

That means, year after year, the "profit" made by Austin over the sale of bags has dwindled until there's a slim margin between actual costs and what is realized from sales and sale of residents' recycled materials.

The local recycling program is also aging, noted Mayor Doug Campbell. "Few people recycle and that's too bad because they could actually save themselves money by keeping as much as they can out of those SASCO bags," he remarked. "We need to re-energize that program, too."

According to the Southeast Indiana Solid Waste District (SISWD), the entity to which Scottsburg, Austin and Scott County belong, Scott Countians are among the few still participating in a pay-by-bag program like SASCO. When SISWD was first established, nearly all the nine counties which are members had similar programs. One by one, they've dropped out. Now, only Scott County and its two cities and Rising Sun participate. Rising Sun, advised Mayor Campbell, is planning to drop its bag program in the near future.

It could truly be said that none of Austin's Councilmen really support the SASCO program, but Austin's problems may only be starting if the city drops out - and is the only entity in Scott County to do so. Fears of outside trash being dumped curbside in the city and the large bills such trash would create to remove it have caused some hesitation on the part of the Council to simply drop out of the program.

Anyone who will be affected by the changes being anticipated by the City Council will be welcome to talk on Thursday. Comments should be kept brief and to the point to allow as many as wish to talk.