



MEMORANDUM

TO: Asheville-Buncombe Air Quality Agency Board of Directors

FROM: Ashley Featherstone, Director

RE: Minutes for May 9, 2024

DATE: July 3, 2024

Enclosed, please find the Minutes for the Asheville-Buncombe Air Quality Agency Board meeting held on **Thursday May 9, 2024, at 4:00pm**. The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, July 11, 2024, at 4:30 pm** in the meeting room located at the Buncombe County Permit Office at 30 Valley Street, Asheville, NC 28801.

Please note that the meeting will start later than the usual time of 4pm. A reception to honor Kevin Lance's retirement and the Clean Air Excellence Award recipient will be held at 4:30 pm in the meeting room prior to the meeting.

This meeting will be live streamed on Engage Buncombe which can be accessed at <https://engage.buncombecounty.org/s8486>. The board meeting documents will also be available on the Engage Buncombe site. The meeting will be recorded and can be viewed later.

The Asheville-Buncombe Air Quality Agency Board of Directors met on Thursday, May 9, 2024, in the meeting room at the Buncombe County Permit Office located at 30 Valley Street, Asheville, N.C.

The attendance of the Board members was as follows:

Members Present:

Karl Koon

Evan Couzo

Garry Whisnant

Ned Guttman

Members Absent:

Joel Storrow

Staff Present: *Ashley Featherstone, Director; Kevin Lance, Field Services Program Manager; James Raiford, Permitting Program Manager; Mike Matthews, Senior Air Quality Specialist; Betsy Brown, Air Quality Coordinator; Alex Latta, Senior Air Quality Specialist*

Others Present: *Patti Beaver, CIBO*

Mr. Koon called the meeting of the Asheville-Buncombe Air Quality Agency Board of Directors to order on May 9, 2024, at 4:00 pm. Mr. Storrow was out of town and Mr. Koon chaired the meeting.

The order of business was as follows:

1. Public Comment Protocol Announcement

Mr. Koon read the public comment protocol.

2. Adjustment and Approval of Agenda

Dr. Guttman made the motion to move Item A under Director's Report in the Agenda, FY 25 Budget Discussion, to under 4. Unfinished Business. Dr. Couzo seconded the motion.

All present – yes.

The motion passed 4-0.

3. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of minutes from March 14, 2024

Mr. Whisnant made a motion to approve the minutes. Dr. Couzo seconded the motion.

All present – yes.

The motion passed 4-0.

4. Unfinished Business:

A. FY25 Budget Discussion

There are always a few changes in the budget from the first draft budget presented to the board in March. The changes are highlighted in the spreadsheet included in the board packet. Changes included some revenue for investment earnings, and changes in expenses. These included increases in travel and training, non-discretionary telephone, and a substantial

increase in the proposed indirect costs. The county has contracted with a new company to calculate the indirect costs for departments. In 2024 the indirect costs were \$91,764; Finance has given Air Quality the figure of \$147,787 for BCFY2025. Indirect covers General Services, Finance, Budget, HR, IT, county management, Legal, building depreciation, and other services we use from other county departments. The total budget is \$1,349,960. This includes capital outlay for an electric vehicle, a \$15,000 contingency, and funding the currently unfilled 7th Air Quality Specialist position. The estimated net impact to the fund balance is \$117,260. This is a conservative number, and we expect the fund balance draw will be less.

B. Consideration of FY 2025 Budget

Mr. Whisnant made a motion to approve the budget and authorize Mr. Storrow to sign the proposed BCFY 2025 Budget Ordinance. Dr. Guttman seconded the motion.

All present – yes.

The motion passed 4-0.

5. Director's Report:

A. Nondiscrimination policy – update

The updated version with the Spanish translation is in the board packet and that is the only action item from last time. The board had previously approved the policy with the addition of the Spanish version as suggested by Ms. Broughton, our county attorney. We have it posted physically in the office, but we need to post it on our website. We plan to make some updates to the website, and we need to decide where on our website to post it. Hopefully it will be up the next few weeks as there is a backlog with website updates right now.

B. Asheville-Buncombe Sustainable Microbrewery Project Update

The Asheville-Buncombe Sustainable Microbrewery Project function is on May 21st. An email was sent informing the board of this event. There is a news story about it on the website. It will be at the Wicked Weed Funkatorium. It is being sponsored by several different parties. Big Mountain Impact is a consulting firm, and they are playing a lead role. They have joined the Asheville Brewers Alliance. They are also promoting energy efficiency at local breweries, along with the Blue Horizons Project. We have partnered with them, and we are going to have a recognition ceremony as part of the event where we give out certificates to the four breweries that participated.

At the same time, we are going to encourage other breweries to participate with our internship program this summer. We are going to have another partnership with UNCA similar to the one we worked on with Dr. Couzo and one of his students last year. Waste Reduction Partners has graciously agreed to assist us. One of their engineers, Marshall Goers, went out with the student to do energy efficiency treasure hunts (using the EPA Energy

Star checklist) in the breweries. We would like to find more breweries that will sign up for this year so we can keep this project going. Duke Energy will be at the recognition event. They have information about incentives for energy efficiency upgrades. We have information about tax credits. It is a free event. There will be one free beer offered per person and food. The RSVP date is May 12th.

The county internship program has been implemented this year. We have budgeted the internship which will pay \$15 an hour for a student to work 15 to 20 hours a week over the summer. We are required to post it since it is a county program. We hope to be posting the position and taking applications very soon.

C. Clean Air Excellence Awards-Recommendations

Details are listed below under advisory committee report.

D. Clean Air Compliance Recognition

We give out a certificate each year to the permitted facilities that are in compliance with their permit for the previous calendar year. We have 44 of those this year. There is a list of these facilities in the board packet. We plan to send out the certificates to those facilities later this month.

E. Air Quality Awareness Week: May 6-10

Special thanks to Mr. Whisnant. He accompanied Ms. Featherstone to the commissioner's meeting where the commissioners presented us with a proclamation signed by Commissioner Newman. We plan to get that framed. We also have a news story on our website about Air Quality Awareness Week. This is the first week of May every year. Tuesday was also World Asthma Day. We have been busy putting out social media posts. There is a news story on our website with information about Air Quality Awareness Week and air awareness and what residents can do to reduce pollution at home. We appreciate the Commissioners recognizing Air Quality Awareness Week and the work of the Agency and the Board.

F. Monitoring Update

Mr. Lance gave the monitoring update. The data completeness so far this year to date for PM_{2.5} is 95.3% and 95.6% for ozone. For the ozone AQI so far this year we have had seven yellow days. The rest of the days have been green. For PM_{2.5} there have been six yellow days. The rest have been green. Currently our annual average for PM_{2.5} is 5.4 micrograms per cubic meter. Mr. Raiford covered the new standard for PM_{2.5} at the last board meeting, which is set at 9 micrograms per cubic meter. So far, we are in good shape.

Staff from the Electronics and Calibrations Branch (ECB), of the State Division of Air Quality Ambient Monitoring Section (AMS), conducted an audit on April 24th at our Bent Creek ozone station. We passed the audit.

We had special visitors to the PM monitoring site. The state Air Director and Deputy Director came out to see the site when they were in town. Mr. Lance gave them a tour. They try to visit all the sites in the state. They had not yet been to our new PM site.

G. Facility Permit Renewals

Facility Name	Type of Facility	Facility Classification	Location	Changes from Existing Permit
Buncombe County Landfill I	Landfill Gas Collection, Control, and Distribution Facility	Small	Riverside Dr., Asheville	Update Agency name and general conditions
Cormark International, LLC	Wood Millwork Facility	Small	Reems Creek Road, Weaverville	Update Agency name, general conditions, and remove redundant permit condition

Mr. Whisnant made a motion to approve the permit renewals. Dr. Couzo seconded the motion.

All present – yes.

The motion passed 4-0.

H. Facility Permit Modifications

Facility Name	Type of Facility	Facility Classification	Location	Changes from Existing Permit
Tutco, Inc.	Manufacturer of custom electric heaters	Small	30 Legend Drive, Arden	Update facility name, Agency name, general conditions, and exempted activities

Dr. Guttman made a motion to approve the permit modification. Dr. Couzo seconded the motion.

All present – yes.

The motion passed 4-0.

I. New Facility Permit

Facility Name	Type of Facility	Facility Classification	Location	Proposed Equipment
A-1 Sandrock, Inc.	Portable Concrete, Stone, and Recycled Asphalt Pavement Crusher	Small	Various sites with local zoning	Crusher, screen, conveyor belts, generator

			authority approval	
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There was a discussion around the permitting of portable crushers. This facility had previously had a permit with us, and they chose to let it expire. They infrequently work in the county. This type of equipment is subject to NSPS regulations and opacity standards. They are required to use water to reduce emissions. The equipment is often on site only two weeks and is not tied to a single physical location.

Mr. Whisnant made a motion to approve the permit for A-1 Sandrocks. Dr. Guttman seconded the motion.

All present – yes.

The motion passed 4-0.

6. New Business:

None

7. Other Business:

A. Legal Counsel Report

No report

B. Advisory Committee Report

Dr. Couzo said the committee met April 18th. The main discussion was the nomination we received for the Clean Air Excellence Award. This is for the Appalachian Offsets Program of the Green Built Alliance. There was some discussion about which category they would qualify for, and we decided that the special award category applies to them. They use donations to install photo voltaic solar arrays on structures for non-profit organizations here in the county. The nomination included three recent examples: a 300-kilowatt array at Isaac Dixon School, an 8.2-kilowatt array at St. Paul's Missionary church, and a 30-kilowatt array at United Way. That would be a total of about just under 700 megawatt hours per year. Mr. Raiford did some calculations looking at the 25-year CO₂ offset which would be just over 7,000 tons. The offset would be about 17 or 18 tons of NO_x, and a negligible amount of sulfur dioxide, about 0.2 tons. That is because there have been less SO₂ emissions from the power plant since it stopped burning coal. The committee decided that we would recommend the Appalachian Offsets program from Green Built Alliance for a Clean Air Excellence Award.

Dr. Couzo made a motion to award Green Built Alliance's Appalachian Offsets Program a Clean Air Excellence Award.

Dr. Guttman seconded the motion.

All present – yes.

The motion passed 4-0.

Dr. Couzo also gave updates on the low-cost sensor project. Students are still putting together the data analysis for the Raspberry Pi PM_{2.5} sensors that they placed at the Asheville City School campuses. They made correction factors. They had a low bias; the sensors were measuring PM_{2.5} that was well below what the agency's monitor was measuring. We do see some evidence that there are heterogeneous concentrations across the city, and they do map somewhat to the old redlining maps. Parts of the city that were subject to racist housing discrimination a century ago do see higher air pollution levels or higher PM_{2.5} levels. The assumption was that this was due to underinvestment, and as a result of underinvestment in the residential properties, they were ripe for overdevelopment of industry and major highways and commercial activities. But when we see these differences, we are talking only about a couple of micrograms per cubic meters. This is because almost anywhere you go in the county air quality is very good.

We are skipping the June meeting because a lot of people will be out of town. We will reconvene in August in person at the East Asheville Library.

C. Calendar

Next meeting September 12, 2024

D. Announcements

Dr. Couzo announced that he is moving to accept a position at Grinnell College in Iowa in January, so his last board meeting will be this November. He noted that this has been a really good experience for him and, and his students at UNCA have really benefited from the closer connection with the agency

8. Public Comment

None

9. Adjournment

Dr. Guttman made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Whisnant seconded the motion.

All present – yes.

The motion passed 4-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:29 pm.