



MEMORANDUM

TO: Asheville-Buncombe Air Quality Agency Board of Directors

FROM: Ashley Featherstone, Director

RE: Minutes for March 14, 2024

DATE: May 2, 2024

Enclosed, please find the Minutes for the Asheville-Buncombe Air Quality Agency Board meeting held on **Thursday March 14, 2024, at 4:00pm**. The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, May 9, 2024, at 4:00 pm** in the meeting room located at the Buncombe County Permit Office at 30 Valley Street, Asheville, NC 28801.

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, March 14, 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:

Joel Storrow

Karl Koon

Evan Couzo

Garry Whisnant

Members Absent:

Ned Guttman

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

Others Present: *Johanna Cano, CAPE; Patti Beaver, CIBO*

Mr. Storrow called the meeting of the Asheville-Buncombe Air Quality Agency Board of Directors to order on March 14, 2024, at 4:00 pm.

The order of business was as follows:

1. Public Comment Protocol Announcement

Mr. Storrow read the public comment protocol.

2. Adjustment and Approval of Agenda

Mr. Koon made the motion to approve the agenda. Dr. Couzo seconded the motion.

All present – yes

The motion passed 4-0.

3. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of minutes from January 25, 2024

Mr. Koon made the motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Whisnant seconded the motion.

All present – yes

The motion passed 4-0.

4. Unfinished Business:

A. Nondiscrimination policy

During the previous board meeting there were questions about procedure and time frames related to a discrimination claim under the proposed Nondiscrimination Policy. Our Agency is not required to respond to a complaint within a specified time frame; however, the EPA does have to respond within a specified time frame. Anyone has the option to file a complaint with the EPA as well as with us. It was noted that an agency with

less than 15 people is not required to have procedures or list a coordinator, but we elected to do so.

Discrimination complaints related to employee hiring or practices are covered under HR and its policies, as staff are Buncombe County employees.

The Agency will request a Spanish translation when the board approves the policy. It will be posted with the English version at the office and online on our website.

It was suggested that the word “also” be added so that the line before the EPA address reads “Please note: Complainants *also* have the option to file a complaint with the appropriate federal agency no later than 180 calendar days after the alleged discrimination occurred.”

Ms. Broughton noted that was an acceptable change.

Dr. Couzo made a motion to approve the Nondiscrimination Policy as amended. Mr. Koon seconded the motion.

All present – yes

The motion passed 4-0.

5. Director’s Report:

A. FY25 Budget Power Point Presentation

A pdf of this PowerPoint presentation was provided with the board packet. Staff present a PowerPoint such as this one each year to county management and wanted to share it with the board. The County provides a template which we use as a guideline but use the Air Quality logo. This presentation is required by county management and must go before the county manager when expansion of programs, additional expenses, or additional staffing are requested. The slides include a high-level summary and information about the Agency’s activities, goals, strategic alignment, revenues, expenses, fee changes, and any expansion increase in the budget.

B. FY25 Budget Discussion

Our budget request includes increased salary and benefits to fill the vacant 7th position, an Air Quality Specialist position. This is an additional increase of just over \$100,000. We included additional funds to cover an internship, a part time position for the digitization project and a couple of extra projects. The Agency wants to replace an older diesel truck with an EV and that cost was included. Staff are hopeful that there will be additional EPA 103 Grant funds available to cover part of filling the vacant position costs and all of the electric truck. Funds were included to add signage to the Community Science Shelter, purchase radon kits to provide free to the public and begin work on the file digitalization project.

The proposed CPI increase is included in the salary and benefits increase. Title V fee revenue reflects a CPI increase effective January 1st per our rules. It also includes a \$3 per ton increase to the Title V tonnage fee which is effective July 1 by the approval of the proposed budget by the board. The fund balance is currently in good shape. With the recent additional EPA grant funds, our monitoring equipment has been updated and spare equipment obtained.

Mr. Storrow mentioned in reference to filling the 7th staff position that we would like to be at full staff if we transition under the county. That position is also factored into succession planning for the Agency.

- C. EPA Grant Updates-Inflation Reduction Act (one time monitoring funds, state Primary Climate Action Plan Released)
The one-time funds were covered in the budget PowerPoint presentation. The State's Primary Climate Action Plan was released and is out for public comment. We hope to be able to apply for funds for emissions reduction projects under that plan and are waiting to see if areas like ours can take advantage of that.
- D. Revised PM Standard Issued by EPA
This is covered under the monitoring report.
- E. EPA Power Plant greenhouse gas rule update
The EPA Clean Power Plan proposed by the Obama administration was thrown out by the courts. The Trump administration's plan was as well. Biden's plan was going to cover gas turbine units like the new plant here as well as coal fired power plants. The plan called for cofiring with hydrogen or carbon sequestration. The natural gas plants were removed from the plan and now the plan only applies to coal fired power plants. The plan is at the Office of Management and Budget. It should be out soon. The proposal for natural gas plants was sent back to the drawing board to determine how they are going to address greenhouse gases. The proposal will include other pollutants like NOx which affect ground level ozone and hazardous air pollutants.
- F. Asheville-Buncombe Sustainable Microbrewery Project Update
This is covered by Dr. Couzo in the Advisory Committee Report.
- G. Clean Air Excellence Awards-Taking Nominations
The Agency is accepting nominations and has not received any so far. We plan to do more outreach. Buncombe County sent out a press release.
- H. Air Quality Awareness Week: May 6-10
The agency promotes this on social media. The Agency would like to request that the County Commissioners do an Air Quality Awareness Proclamation. Generally, one has to submit it months in advance. Ms.

Featherstone hopes to complete a draft proclamation to submit in the next few days. If this is possible, we hope to have that announcement during AQ Awareness Week in May. The Agency will let the board know if the proclamation will be made.

I. Monitoring Update

Kevin Lance was out on a burning complaint. James Raiford gave the monitoring update. The PM2.5 annual standard has been reduced from 12 micrograms per cubic meter to 9 mcg/cm, which is a significant reduction. Our levels should stay well below that. Mr. Raiford showed a NC PM2.5 Preliminary Annual Design Value Map (2021-2023) which shows what those values might be at state monitoring sites, and what areas would be most concerned about the lower standard. The higher values were caused by Canadian wildfire smoke in 2023. Those values do not cause an issue for us, but for four monitors in the state, it is a problem. That data may be excluded as exceptional events by reporting it to the EPA. We had no control over that smoke, and it should not count against us for determining compliance with the standard.

The Air Quality Index, AQI, will be changing to reflect the new standard, adjusted to warn people at lower levels. This means that more days will be considered yellow that would have been green previously. There will be more code yellow forecasted days.

We are doing well with data completeness for the year. For PM2.5, data completeness is 98.8%. Ozone season just started, and we only have two weeks of data.

J. Facility Permit Modifications

Facility Name	Type of Facility	Facility Classification	Location	Changes from Existing Permit
Milkco, Inc.	Fluid Milk, Juice and Water Processing, Packaging & Distribution Facility	Synthetic Minor	Deaverview Road, Asheville	Update permit conditions to change generator to emergency use and reclassify as a small facility
RTX Corporation, Pratt and Whitney	Airplane Parts Manufacturer	Small	Biltmore Park West, Asheville	Update permit to reflect post construction details including number and size of emergency generators, changes in particulate matter source emission rates and associated exhaust points, updates to air pollution modeling parameters.

One of Milkco's emergency generators was being used as, and permitted as, a peak shaving unit. Duke gives financial incentive to facilities who will run otherwise emergency generators during times Duke needs extra power. Milkco is no longer participating in that program. Both generators are now used only as emergency generators. This changes the facility classification to small based on worst case emissions – 500 hours.

Mr. Koon made the motion to approve the Milkco, Inc. permit modification.

Mr. Whisnant seconded the motion.

All present – yes

The motion passed 4-0.

RTX Corporation's name changed at the last board meeting. It is pretty standard with a new facility to go in and update the equipment information in a construction permit to reflect the equipment that was actually installed. Changes to the construction permit included the installation of smaller generators, changes in venting and location of some equipment from preconstruction engineering plans. We encourage facilities to err on the conservative side (worst case emissions) in their equipment proposals, which makes the permits easier to modify after final construction takes place.

Mr. Koon made the motion to approve the RTX Corporation permit modification. Mr. Whisnant seconded the motion.

All present – yes

The motion passed 4-0.

6. New Business

None

7. Other Business

A. Legal Counsel Report

Ms. Broughton said there was nothing to report.

B. Advisory Committee Report

1. The committee met February 15, 2024.

Ava Ingle presented her sustainability brewery project to the committee and some EPA employees. They loved the project. Ms. Ingle's presentation and discussion was the whole meeting.

We have been talking to Mica Crouse of Big Mountain Impact about holding an event during Beer Week and it looks like it will happen.

There will be a panel with Dr. Couzo, Ms. Ingle, and some of the breweries Ms. Ingle worked with. The EPA is very interested in the project.

Ms. Ingle and Ms. Featherstone have been asked to present at the national Advance meeting which includes air quality agencies from all over the county. We can thank Dr. Couzo for the name of the event in May, Brewing Some Good for the Environment. Wicked Weed is going

to sponsor it at the Funkatorium, along with other partners and sponsors. We will give out some type of certificate of appreciation or recognition to the breweries that participated in the study at the event. The event is Tuesday May 21 from 6 to 8pm. Ms. Featherstone will be out of town at the Air Directors meeting. Staff will send out the announcement once it is final. Everyone is welcome to attend.

C. Calendar

1. Next meeting May 9, 2024

D. Announcements

Plan to attend the Brewing Some Good for the Environment event in May.

8. **Public Comment**

None

9. **Adjournment**

Mr. Koon made the motion to adjourn. Dr. Couzo seconded the motion.

All present – yes

The motion passed 4-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:07 pm.