

**MINUTES--NEFCO GENERAL POLICY BOARD MEETING held Wednesday, November 20, 2024, at the City of Green Council Chambers.**

**1a. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Marion at 8:30 a.m. in the presence of a quorum.

**1b. Approval of the Agenda**

A motion was made by Mr. Bennett, seconded by Mr. Eckenrode, to approve the agenda. The motion carried.

**1c. Pledge of Allegiance**

Mr. Marion led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Marion welcomed to the Board meeting Ted Herncane, Economic Development Director, City of Massillon. He noted that the Stark County Commissioners will be appointing Mr. Herncane to the Board.

**1d. Audience Participation (members of the public)**

Mr. Marion asked if there was anyone from the audience who had any comments.

**2. Consideration of the draft minutes of the regular meeting of the NEFCO General Policy Board on October 16, 2024**

A motion was made by Mr. Regula, seconded by Mr. Vinay, to accept the October meeting minutes. The motion carried.

**3. Financial Status Report - month of October**

Mr. Hadley said that \$34,996.16 was received as income during October, receipts to date were \$109,797.80, disbursements to date were \$185,267.86, and cash on hand at the end of October was \$66,596.96.

A motion was made by Mr. Bennett, seconded by Mr. Peetz, to approve the financial status report subject to audit. The motion carried.

Mr. Hadley mentioned that NEFCO is going through the final draft of its FY2023/2024 audit which will then be sent to the State Auditor's office in the near future.

**3a. October Bank Reconciliations**

Mr. Hadley asked for acceptance of the October bank reconciliations.

A motion was made by Mr. Vinay, seconded by Mr. Eckenrode, to accept the October bank reconciliations. The motion carried.

**4. Nominating Committee to meet to prepare a slate of CY2025 General Policy Board officers**

Mr. Marion said that the Nominating Committee meeting is in the process of being scheduled.

**5. CY2025 NEFCO General Policy Board meeting schedule and location**

Mr. Marion said that the City of Green has agreed to host the NEFCO Board in 2025. He stated that the 2025 dates are listed in the memo. He thanked the City of Green for allowing NEFCO to continue to hold its Board meetings in these nice facilities.

A motion was made by Mr. Wilder, seconded by Mr. Scaffide, to accept the 2025 Board meeting schedule. The motion carried.

## **6. NEFCO FY2025 Work Program – status**

### **a. Environmental Planning**

Mr. LaPlante said that there were no substantive comments on NEFCO's 30 day comment period for the FY2025 FPA update. He said that the comment period ended on November 29<sup>th</sup>. The immediate next step is for the update to be presented at the December 4<sup>th</sup> ERTAC meeting, where members will be asked for a recommendation to the board to approve the update at the Board's December meeting. The updates are available on NEFCO's website. There are 55 update areas, and the total amount of update areas consists of about 721 map parcels. He suggested reviewing the updates on the interactive online map, to be able to zoom into a specific area of interest.

Mr. LaPlante said that the 208 plan updates that were submitted last year are very close to being certified by the Ohio Governor. Hopefully by the end of November or early December.

Mr. LaPlante said that staff reported in 2020 NEFCO's involvement with the removal of the Cuyahoga River Canal Diversion Dam. He stated that the Friends of the Crooked River (FOCR), a local non-profit organization, dedicated to preserving and restoring the benefits of the Cuyahoga River since 1990, presented NEFCO and the other partners with a 'Dam Buster' award. He presented the award to the Board. The award is made from actual pieces of the concrete dam and mounted on a wooden base. He said that part of the project also included removing the Pinery Dam which was constructed out of wooden timbers.

Mr. LaPlante said that he provided a link to the rule sections for the proposed stormwater rules. He noted that comments are due December 5, 2024.

Mr. LaPlante said that a link was provided for the Early Stakeholder Outreach for Nutrient Assessment Protocol Implementation and Definitions. He said that comments are due December 6, 2024. If anyone would like a PDF of the report, please contact the NEFCO staff.

Mr. LaPlante said that the Ohio EPA Division of Drinking and Ground Waters announced four mini grants that are available. He stated that the Ohio community public water systems serving a population less than 10,000 that do not have an emergency generator to power their water treatment plant or critical distribution infrastructure are eligible to apply. These grants are available through December 20, 2024. The four grants listed are emergency generator installation (up to \$50,000 per systems); source water protection strategies (up to \$20,000 for strategy implementation); well abandonment (up to \$15,000 reimbursement per properly sealed well); and water audit and water loss control program (up to \$20,000 per system).

Mr. LaPlante said that Governor Mike DeWine and Ohio EPA Director Anne Vogel announced on November 18<sup>th</sup>, that \$16.7 million was awarded for H2Ohio water infrastructure projects. He stated that Portage County is one the grant recipients within the NEFCO region. The county will receive \$2,000,000 for its Chinn Regional Sewer Improvements project. The project will install a new wastewater collection system that will address water quality violations. The new sewers and pump stations will also provide regional improvements to the project and surrounding area.

Mr. LaPlante said that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Huntington District (Ohio River Basin) will discuss the Corps' authorities for projects in the NEFCO region at the December 4<sup>th</sup> ERTAC meeting.

**b. Economic Development**

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that on October 28<sup>th</sup>, officials from the EDA, including the Tech Hubs Program Administrator, visited the Akron region as part of the National Tech Hubs tour to view the Sustainable Polymers Tech Hub project and some of the component projects. As members will recall, this was the Phase 2 Tech Hub award of \$51 million in early July to the Sustainable Polymers Project. The visit included members from the Greater Akron Chamber and representatives from the other six component projects: The University of Akron, Flexsys, Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, Bioverde, Full Circle Technologies, and Huntsman. He stated that Congresswoman Amelia Sykes and representatives from partnering organizations such as JobsOhio, Team NEO, City of Akron, County of Summit, Bridgestone Americas, Synthomer, Continental, and the Bounce Innovation Hub joined to provide the EDA team the opportunity to witness the facilities and progress on the Tech Hub projects. The visit was extremely successful; EDA representatives were impressed with the various facility tours throughout the day and expressed that the site visit validated the EDA's decision to fund the Sustainable Polymers Tech Hub.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the EDA reauthorization was included in the Senate National Defense Authorization Act as an amendment. This legislation includes the same language that was included in the March amendment. The priorities include increased grant funding for all of the grant programs of EDA, including additional funding for the economic development districts (EDDs) e.g. NEFCO and the other 400 EDDs across the country. He noted that because this amendment is in a lame duck session, there is a lot of uncertainty whether or not it will actually be passed before the end of the year.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that he had the opportunity to attend the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) annual training conference in New Orleans. He said there were roughly 600 plus individuals from across the country, representing regions and development organizations who attended this conference.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the FY2023 Public Works Economic Adjustment Assistance projects that are affiliated with an EDA Tech Hub, or an EDA approved Recompete Plan would receive priority scoring. He said that this could include the City of Canton, Stark County and its approved EDA Recompete Plan projects. He said that this could benefit a project that comes out of the NEFCO region. He stated that he notified the Stark Economic Development Board, and the Greater Akron Chamber to make them aware of the Tech Hubs piece. He mentioned that the EDA is still accepting applications with the anticipation that funding will be appropriated early next year. No funding is available currently for this program.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that there is still funding available for the FY2021-2023 Planning and Local Technical Assistance program for feasibility studies or planning studies that would further economic development. He said that the National Advanced Packaging Manufacturing Program is through the Department of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology. He said that this funding is for research and development that would establish and accelerate the domestic semiconductor advanced packaging market. Eligible applicants would be state and local governments, higher education, nonprofits and for profit organizations. He said that there is \$1.5 billion available with no local match requirement. The concept papers are due December 20<sup>th</sup>. He stated that the FY2024-2026 Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Program is through the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. He stated that this funding is to plan for and strengthen surface transportation to be more resilient to natural hazards. He said that eligible applicants are local governments, metropolitan planning organizations, special purpose districts, transportation authorities, and port authorities. He noted that there is \$876 million available for this program. There is no local match requirement, and the application deadline is February 24<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Hadley asked if the funded Tech Hubs projects' funding is locked in, and when there is change of administration if there is a concern about claw backs to the award. Mr. Lautzenheiser said that after speaking with Brian Anderson, Greater Akron Chamber and Eric Smith, Tech Hubs Administrator, he has been assured that the funding has been guaranteed for this project, so there is no risk of the \$51 million not coming to the region. Mr. Regula asked what cabinet position the EDA falls under? Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the EDA is under the Commerce Department.

#### **7. Federal and State legislation or information of importance to local governments**

Mr. Hadley said that President-elect Trump continues to name representatives for various cabinet positions. He said that Trump picked Lee Zeldin to lead the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Sean Duffy as Transportation Secretary and Howard Lutnick as Secretary of the Department of Commerce. He stated that progress is being made but there is still a budget that needs to be taken care of by Congress.

Mr. Hadley said that the special disaster aid bill is a program that allows FEMA to dip into next fiscal year's budget for some of FEMA's emergencies. About eight days into the new federal fiscal year, which started October 1<sup>st</sup>, FEMA had spent almost half of its budget. He stated that consequently, there will be a need for another disaster aid bill which President Biden has requested \$100 billion. He said that there is hope that the disaster aid bill will be part of an omnibus spending bill that could potentially be passed by the end of this calendar year.

Mr. Hadley said that as complex as the Farm Bill is, it will be interesting to see some significant movement on that bill. He stated that he doesn't see that happening before the end of the year, but that would certainly be a high priority for the next calendar year.

Mr. Hadley said that he has included information related to EPA. He said that the Biden-Harris Administration announced the issuance of a final rule requiring drinking water systems to identify and replace lead pipes within 10 years. He mentioned that the EPA finalized the rule on lead paint to protect people, especially children, from dust from lead paint in homes and daycare centers.

Mr. Hadley said that the Office of the Inspector General felt that the basis for the lead service line funding distribution had some flaws because the US EPA hadn't field checked the data that was used, and it was based on a survey that was sent to each of the states. An investigation was done with the data collected for FY2023 for the state of Florida and Texas. He said that because of the overestimate primarily by the Houston water system, lead pipe data in Texas was significantly higher than it should have been, resulting in significantly more funds coming to Texas for that fiscal year. The Feds caught the oversight, so funding for Texas was cut back the next fiscal year. He said that the state of Florida over reported its lead service line needs by 133 percent, 33 percent higher than it should have been. He mentioned that the funding Florida received for lead service line replacements should have been similar to what Ohio received. He said there were questions of where some of the funding was going for the lead service line replacements because some of the funding was going to areas with new housing construction, which meant the lines wouldn't have lead in them.

Mr. Hadley said that months ago there was interest in looking at the formula that is used for distributing funding in the state revolving loan fund for wastewater, which is another complex formula. If anyone would like additional information, please contact the NEFCO staff.

#### **8. For the Good of the Order: an opportunity for members to share news about their community/county/agency/company, or to list a prominent issue affecting them**

No one at the Board meeting had anything to comment about for their community/county/agency.

## 9. Other Business

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS, the meeting was adjourned at 9:06 a.m.

Submitted by Rebecca L. Morgan, Administrative Assistant

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Todd Peetz', is written over a horizontal line.

Todd Peetz, Secretary  
NEFCO General Policy Board  
December 18, 2024

# NEFCO GENERAL POLICY BOARD 2024 ATTENDANCE SHEET

Member (alternate)	1/17	2/21	3/20	4/17	5/15	6/26	7/17	8/21	9/18	10/16	11/20	12/18
<b>PORTAGE COUNTY</b>												
Sabrina Christian-Bennett (Mike Tinlin)	X	X			X	X	X			X		
Daniel Blakely (Tia Rutledge)	A	A	A		A	A	A	A	A	A	A	
Becky Lehman (10/16/24) (Justin Rechichar)		X	X	X	X	A	X	X		X	X	
Rochelle Hartigan (2/1/2024)					X	X		X				
Todd Peetz	X	X			X	X	X	X			X	
Amos Sarfo (Eric Long)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
<b>CITY OF KENT</b>												
Kailyn Cyrus (Bridget Susel)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
<b>STARK COUNTY</b>												
Keith Bennett	X	X	X		X	X		X		X	X	
Alfredo Carranza	X		X					X	X		X	
Kirt Conrad			X	X			X			X		
David Maley	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Dan Moeglin (Sarah Buell)		A	X		X			X				
Mike Naso (Helene Papczun)		A	X		X	X	X	X			X	
Bob Nau (Curtis Bungard)	X	X	X		X		X	X			X	
Richard Regula (Bill Smith)	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Jim Troike (Tom Davis and Jeff Lonzrick)	X	A	X		X	X	A		X			
Pete Wearstler (7/24/2024)								X	X		X	
Stephan Wilder (Ben Young)	X			X		X		X	X	X	X	
Vacant												
<b>CITY OF CANTON</b>												
Jim Benekos (John Highman Jr. and Chris Barnes)	X		X	A	X	X		X		X		
<b>COUNTY OF SUMMIT</b>												
Jim Balogh	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	
Alan Brubaker (Larry Fulton and Chuck Hauber)	A		A		A	A	A	A	A	A	A	
Caitlin Elrad	X	X		X			X		X	X		
David Kohlmeier (Zak Kaczor)		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Sam Scaffide	X	X		X		X			X		X	
Ilene Shapiro (Craig Stanley & Joe Eckenrode)		A		A	A		A	A	A		A	
Dianne Sumego			X	X	X	X	X	X				
Michael Vinay (Matt Calcei)	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	A	X	
Vacant												
<b>CITY OF AKRON (3/25/2024)</b>												
Tina Boyes				X				X		X		
Kyle Julien (Dylan Garritano)				X	A	A	X	A	A	A		
Chris Ludle (Michelle DiFiore)	A	A	A	A			A	A	A			
Shammas Malik (David Messner)				A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	
Margo Sommerville (Joan Williams & Sara Biviano)					X							
Helen Tomic (Kurt Mulhauser)	A	A		X	X		A		A	A	A	
Vacant												
<b>WAYNE COUNTY</b>												
Jonathan Hofstetter (Dave McMillen)	X	X		X	X	X	X				X	
Jennifer Kiper (Rob Kastner)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Steven Wheeler (Kevin Givins)	A	A	A	A	A		A	A	A	A	A	
<b>CITY OF WOOSTER</b>												
Robert Reynolds (Vince Marion & Joel Montgomery)	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	
<b>OHIO EPA-NEDO<sup>a</sup></b>												
David Emerman (Allen Tyler)	A		A		A		A				A	
<b>CITIZENS COUNCIL</b>												
Vacant (2)												
X = member present      A = alternate present												

<sup>a</sup>ex officio

See reverse side for a list of guests who attended last month's Board meeting

<b>Guests in Attendance at the November 20, 2024 meeting</b>
Justin Rechichar, Environmental Health Director, Portage County Health District
Ted Herncane, Economic Development Director, City of Massillon
Julie Morris, City of Kent