

**MINUTES--NEFCO GENERAL POLICY BOARD MEETING held Wednesday, December 18, 2024, at the City of Green Community Hall at Central Park.**

**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 Ms. Christian-Bennett, seconded by Mr. Hofstetter, to approve the agenda. The motion carried.

**1c. Pledge of Allegiance**

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

**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 November 20, 2024**

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

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

Mr. Hadley said that \$172,323.72 was received as income during November, receipts to date were \$282,121.52, disbursements to date were \$241,435.10, and cash on hand at the end of November was \$182,753.44.

A motion was made by Ms. Christian-Bennett, seconded by Ms. Kiper, to approve the financial status report subject to audit. The motion carried.

**3a. November Bank Reconciliations**

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

A motion was made by Ms. Kiper, seconded by Ms. Christian-Bennett, to accept the November bank reconciliations. The motion carried.

**4. Consideration to approve the FY2025 Clean Water (208) Plan Facilities Planning Area (FPA) update**

Mr. LaPlante said that the FY2025 Clean Water (208) Plan Facilities Planning Area (FPA) update consists of approximately 32 to 34 facilities planning areas (FPA) in the NEFCO region. He stated that the final draft 32 FPA update maps were transmitted to the Board last week. Within those update maps there are 55 proposed update areas with clusters of parcels or a combination of parcels that include wastewater treatment prescriptions with boundary changes. There is also one minor text change to Chapter 3 Appendix 3-33 Springfield No. 91 FPA. He said that all the products that are being presented for approval by the board have had coordination between the management agency requesting the update and any management agency with jurisdiction in the FPA being updated. He described what an FPA update is. He said that the update process began in February and the wastewater management agencies completed their submittal of these updates in July. NEFCO staff completed incorporating all the updates in the online map. He said that the Board approved the 30-day public review at the September Board meeting. The public review began at the end of September and ran through to the end of October. There were no substantive comments received.

Mr. Regula asked if all the Stark County \$35 million sewer projects will be added to this online interactive map? Mr. LaPlante said that the map is not a map of sewer lines. He said that the update areas are proposed to enable future permit-to-install (PTI) requests to be compliant with the 208 Plan. Ms. Rutledge said that making these changes with the parcel splits is an ongoing job. She explained that doing an annual update saves time and doesn't hold up developers. Mr. LaPlante said that this is an ongoing process that enables NEFCO to keep the Plan current. Ms. Rutledge said that this will save time and this process will simplify the permitting process. She stated that having an annual update helps the developer. She said that projecting out 20 years is a long time, and that if a project is known, then it is easier to arrange for the update to plan for that project.

Mr. LaPlante asked for approval of the FY2025 Clean Water (208) Plan Facilities Planning Area (FPA) update, Resolution No. FY2025-002.

A motion was made by Ms. Kiper, seconded by Ms. Christian-Bennett to approve the FY2025 Clean Water (208) Plan Facilities Planning Area (FPA) update, Resolution No. FY2025-002. The motion carried.

Mr. Hadley said that 208 wastewater management planning is a core function of the organization, and the Board's authority to control wastewater management planning within the four counties is an advantage. He said that this is something that a non-areawide county such as Ashtabula or Ashland does not have, and they rely on the state when they want to make a change to the state 208 Plan for their county. He said that this process allows the Board to guide growth through the availability of sewers and under the permit approval process of Ohio EPA. He stated that Ohio EPA is strict about making sure that a permit or a loan is not issued if it is in conflict with the NEFCO Board's approved plan.

##### **5. Election of CY2025 General Policy Board officers: Recommendation from the Nominating Committee**

Mr. Marion said that the Nominating Committee met on December 10<sup>th</sup> and recommended the following slate of CY2025 General Policy Board officers:

**Chair:** Vincent A. Marion, Manager, Planning and Zoning, City of Wooster

**First Vice-Chair:** Todd Peetz, Director, Portage County Regional Planning Commission

**Second Vice-Chair:** David Messner, Development Manager, City of Akron

**Secretary:** David Maley, Director, Planning and Economic Development, City of Louisville

**Treasurer:** Joseph Eckenrode, Deputy Director of Administrative Services, Summit County

**Immediate Past Chair:** Richard Regula, Commissioner, Stark County

A motion was made by Mr. Wilder, seconded by Mr. Hofstetter, to accept the CY2025 General Policy Board officers. The motion carried.

##### **6. Consideration of a recommendation from the Personnel Committee**

Mr. Marion said that the Personnel Committee met on December 10, 2024 to discuss a possible salary adjustment for the staff. He stated that the last salary adjustment was awarded by the Board effective January 1, 2025. He said that after Personnel Committee members shared what their county or municipality had given this year, the committee recommended for board action at today's meeting, a three (3) percent salary adjustment for staff, effective January 1, 2025.

Ms. Christian-Bennett noticed a typographical error in the memo. She said that the date in the first paragraph should say January 1, 2024, the memo states January 1, 2025. She suggested that this be changed to 2024.

A motion was made by Ms. Christian-Bennett, seconded by Mr. Messner, to accept the recommendation from the Personnel Committee with an amendment to the first paragraph which should read ...effective January 1, 2024. The motion carried.

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

### **a. Economic Development**

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the House of Representatives passed the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2024, attached to which was the reauthorization of the EDA. He said that the WRDA passed overwhelmingly 399 to 18 which shows that there is lots of bipartisan support for WRDA and for the EDA. He said that the last reauthorization of EDA was in 2004. He said that it has been 20 years and Congress still annually appropriated funding for EDA and its programs. He said that this update reauthorization includes a lot of important priorities that NEFCO supports and that the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) has advocated for this Act. He said that primarily the increased funding is for its grant programs, including the Partnership Planning Grants, which NEFCO receives to do economic development planning work. He said that this Act will triple through 2029, Partnerships Grants funding. He said that this also calls for increasing the grantees' federal share and reducing the local match. He said that this Act is expected to be passed by the Senate as early as this week and then signed by President Biden.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the EDA Public Works Economic Adjustment Assistance program is accepting applications for the next round of funding.

Mr. Lautzenheiser r said that the Planning and Local Technical Assistance program still has funding available. He said that if a member has a project that is a feasibility study or a smaller planning project to please contact him.

Mr. Lautzenheiser congratulated the Bounce Innovation Hub for unveiling its second-floor Generator Expansion project. He said that this will double the generator space. The expansion provides more flexible workspace and new meeting options for entrepreneurs and industry leaders to connect and collaborate with their teams and other leaders. A public unveiling will be held in January 2025.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the Census Bureau released its 2022 Economic Census, as well as its 2019 to 2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. He stated that NEFCO and the EDA use these two indicators for various programming.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the Brownfields and Land Revitalization Technical Assistance grant is an opportunity from the US EPA for eligible applicants to receive a small amount of funding to provide technical assistance to small communities. He said that the applicant is the state. He said that if members have a desire or a need to have technical assistance for brownfields planning in different areas e.g. to create an inventory, strategies for revitalization, or any other type of technical assistance, members should express this interest to the Ohio EPA.

### **b. Environmental Planning**

Mr. LaPlante said that NEFCO's FY2025 contracts with Ohio EPA include the initiation of an update to Chapter 5 of NEFCO's Clean Water Plan. He said that the scopes provide us with the flexibility of having a 'soft start' for this chapter update during this fiscal year. He said that wastewater management agencies need to actively monitor their sewer pipes for stormwater inflow and report the information to Ohio EPA. This is a new regulation that has been hard to meet and could possibly be an unfunded mandate. NEFCO is trying to use this chapter update as a mechanism to help the NEFCO region's stormwater programs meet their requirements. Staff has begun this update by discussing it with the counties and with Ohio EPA. He said that Ohio EPA

has provided a contact list of all the different stormwater entities in our region. He stated that Ohio EPA included a list of some of the challenges that the agency is seeing while it's doing its audits of the area's stormwater programs.

Mr. LaPlante said that NEFCO submitted 208 updates from 2023 still haven't been certified by the governor. He stated that the next step by Ohio EPA would be to submit these updates to USEPA for approval. He said that mid-January, the annual FPA update that the board approved today will be submitted to Ohio EPA for state certification. He said that Ohio EPA doesn't anticipate completion of this next round of submitted updates from the Areawides to take as long. He said that this update took additional time because the Ohio EPA filed a public notification of the Areawides submitted plan updates after Ohio EPA had done a public notification of its own update of the Big Darby Creek Watershed in central Ohio.

Mr. LaPlante said that the December 4<sup>th</sup> ERTAC meeting featured a presentation by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) Huntington District (Ohio River Basin portion of the NEFCO region) on its programs and authorities. The presentation included an overview of ACE's many funding programs for wastewater treatment, water supply storage and treatment, and stormwater infrastructure. Funding was discussed that's available through ACE for watershed planning, flood and erosion control, and logjam clearing in the region's rivers and headwater streams. Please contact staff if you would like the slides from this presentation.

Mr. LaPlante said as a reminder, that the Ohio EPA Division of Drinking and Ground Waters announced four mini grants that are available. These grants are available through December 20, 2024. The four grants listed are emergency generator installation (up to \$50,000 per system); 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).

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

Mr. Hadley said that the race is on for a continuing resolution which will keep the doors of the government open beyond the current December 20<sup>th</sup> deadline. He said that the push is now in the Senate to try to finalize the bill. In the House, speakers are trying to resolve a few outstanding questions. He said that there are several authorizations that are ending this month, and action is needed to extend these programs past December 31<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Hadley said that it is very likely that the Farm Bill will not pass this calendar year. He said that there is a lot of interest in reauthorizing the Farm Bill.

Mr. Hadley said that he hasn't heard much recently about a potential east coast port strike early next year. He said that the negotiated agreement is set to expire January 15, 2025. Hopefully, something can be worked out concerning modernization and how it will affect employment at these docks.

Mr. Hadley said that the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) has funded the removal of the Route 82 dam. NEFCO was the grant recipient for this project. He said that the GLRI Act is up for renewal and has been passed by the Senate. Hopefully, it will be acted upon by the House. He said that this is very important for all the areas that are draining into the Great Lakes and the Areas of Concern within those areas.

Mr. Hadley said that there is some detail from a Senate subcommittee meeting about the public health impacts from PFAS. He said that EPA has passed a framework for how to deal with plastics pollution in the future. He said if anyone would like additional information to please contact him.

## **9. Awards to Board members**

Mr. Hadley presented Mr. Marion, the current Board Chair, with a small gift for chairing the CY2024 Board meetings.

Mr. Regula stated that Commissioner Creighton retired, Stark County will be getting a new Auditor, new Probate Judge and new Sheriff. He also discussed the passing of Senator Kirk Schuring. Mr. Hadley asked how will Senator Schuring's replacement be selected? Mr. Regula said that he heard that Gene Waters and Scott Oelslager will be submitting applications, along with others, to apply for Senator Schuring's replacement will be selected through the Senate Caucus.

## **10. 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.

## **11. Other Business**

Mr. Marion stated that Doug Harris, City of Canton Assistant City Engineer, will be replacing Jim Benekos on the Board in 2025.

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS, the meeting was adjourned at 9:22 a.m.

Submitted by Rebecca L. Morgan, Administrative Assistant

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David Maley, Secretary  
NEFCO General Policy Board  
January 15, 2025

# 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		X
Daniel Blakely (Tia Rutledge)	A	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	A	A
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	X
<b>CITY OF KENT</b>												
Kailyn Cyrus (Bridget Susel)	X	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		
Ted Herncane (11-27-24)												
David Maley	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Dan Moeglin (Sarah Buell)		A	X		X			X				X
Mike Naso (Helene Papczun)		A	X		X	X	X	X			X	X
Bob Nau (Curtis Bungard)	X	X	X		X		X	X			X	X
Richard Regula (Bill Smith)	X				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	X
Stephan Wilder (Ben Young)	X			X		X		X	X	X	X	X
<b>CITY OF CANTON</b>												
Jim Benekos (John Highman Jr. and Chris Barnes)	X		X	A	X	X		X		X		X
<b>COUNTY OF SUMMIT</b>												
Jim Balogh	X	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	A
Caitlin Elrad	X	X		X			X		X	X		
David Kohlmeier (Zak Kaczor)		X	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	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		X
Chris Ludle (Michelle DiFiore)	A	A	A	A			A	A	A			
Shammas Malik (David Messner)				A	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	X
Jennifer Kiper (Rob Kastner)	X	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	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 December 18, 2024 meeting</b>
Sarah Buell, Stark Parks (alternate)
Christina Trompower, Congresswoman Sykes' office
Richie Harper, Congresswoman Sykes' office
Tameaka Taylor, Congresswoman Sykes' office
Thomas Tatum, Tatum Endeavor Group
Doug Harris, City of Canton