

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

1a. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Marion at 8:31 a.m. in the presence of a quorum.

1b. Approval of the Agenda

A motion was made by Mr. Bennett, seconded by Ms. Sumego, 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 February 21, 2024

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

3. Financial Status Report - month of February

Mr. Hadley said that \$54,772.87 was received as income during February, receipts to date were \$395,310.09, disbursements to date were \$363,160.92, and cash on hand at the end of February was \$241,675.49.

A motion was made by Ms. Sumego, seconded by Mr. Troike, to approve the financial status report subject to audit. The motion carried.

3a. February Bank Reconciliations

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

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

4. Authorization for NEFCO's Chair and Executive Director to sign a lease agreement extension to provide space for NEFCO's offices for a period from August 1, 2024 through July 31, 2029

Mr. Hadley said that he has been working with County of Summit Executive Shapiro's administration, specifically Craig Stanley, who is one of the County of Summit Executive's alternates. Mr. Hadley mentioned that Mr. Stanley has been working with the administration to secure, for NEFCO, an extension of its current lease for the next five years beginning August 1, 2024. He said that NEFCO enjoys all the benefits of having that space, including the County's information technology department. He stated that the agency is responsible for the phone and internet charges. The Summit County administration is interested in preparing the necessary legislation to bring this lease through County Council, as Summit County had done in the past. He said that he is in discussion regarding any updates that are relevant to the details of the lease. He asked if there were any questions regarding the lease agreement extension.

A motion was made by Mr. Moeglin, seconded by Ms. Kiper, to authorize NEFCO's Chair and Executive Director to sign a lease agreement extension to provide space for NEFCO's offices for a period from August 1, 2024 through July 31, 2029. The motion carried.

5. Consideration of submitting a letter to Senators Brown and Vance requesting support for Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that this request is in consideration for submitting a letter of support to Senators Brown and Vance requesting their support for the Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024. He said that early last week, the US Senate Environment and Public Works Committee had voted to advance the Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024; Senate Bill 3891. He said that NEFCO, along with the other economic development districts (EDDs) across the country, have been asked by the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) and the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC), to contact their respective Senators to seek support for this legislation. He said that this legislation would have a significant impact on the EDDs. He said that currently, there isn't any companion legislation in the House of Representatives. The next step is for a full Senate vote. He stated that this is a bipartisan bill which would authorize the EDA for five years from FY2025 to FY2029. He pointed out some of the provisions that are currently written in the bill. He stated that the NEFCO region has received forty-five EDA grants since 1980, which total \$40 million in investments across the region. He said that NEFCO has received Partnership Planning Grants totaling more than \$2 million. He said that these grants have helped make it possible for staff to facilitate the EDA-mandated local planning process of the CEDS, to help ensure the success of subsequent EDA project investments; to provide technical assistance to applicants throughout the region and to help guide them through the EDA grant process. He requested that the NEFCO General Policy Board authorize the Board Chair to sign the attached letter of support to Senators Brown and Vance requesting support for the Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024.

Mr. Hadley said that right now the current law provides for \$27 million for economic development districts which is significant when each appropriations year, the Department of Commerce and the EDA must have funding provided to the EDA. He said that over the years when there have been leaner budgets, the requirement in the law is that \$27 million, right off the top, goes to the EDDs. This has provided the EDDs with continuity and taken the expected level of funding out of the uncertainty column. He said that it's recognized that funding needs to increase since funding levels haven't been changed in roughly 20 years. He stated that this bill has strong bipartisan support. Mr. Hadley explained that for the newer members/alternates to the NEFCO board, that in years past, it wasn't unusual for EDA funding to be zeroed out in a Republican President's budget, only to be added back in via bipartisan support in Congress. He strongly urged the Board to allow staff to send that letter to Senators Brown and Vance. He said that staff will keep the Board posted on the bill's evolution.

A motion was made by Mr. Conrad, seconded by Mr. Moeglin, to approve a letter of support for Senators Brown and Vance requesting support for Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024. The motion carried.

6. NEFCO FY2024 Work Program – status

a. Economic Development

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that on February 29th, the Greater Akron Chamber (GAC) submitted its EDA Tech Hubs Phase 2 grant application for its Sustainable Polymers Tech Hub. He said that the GAC is applying for \$70 million in EDA grant dollars. The funding will be used to implement eight different projects that will support the development of this Tech Hub. He noted that the projects will target technology maturation, workforce development, entrepreneurial support, and Tech Hub governance. The EDA is expected to award five to ten grants across the country to the thirty-one applicants that were designated and invited to apply for this second round. The awards will be announced this coming summer.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that Ellen Heinz, Ohio's Economic Development Representative (EDR) has accepted another position and is leaving the EDA. He stated that Lee Shirey will be the interim EDR for Ohio, who is also the EDR for Michigan. He said that Mr. Shirey will serve both states until a replacement is found for Ohio. He stated that Mr. Shirey has been invited to attend a future NEFCO meeting.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the distressed area Recompete Pilot Program is Phase 2 of the Recompete Plan. He stated that this funding opportunity is only open to those applicants that have already received Phase 1 funding; and one of those designees was the Stark Economic Development Board's consortium. The deadline for the Phase 2 application is April 25th.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the Public Works/Economic Adjustments Assistance is open as long as there is funding available. He said that this program supports construction, non-construction, planning, technical assistance, and revolving loan fund projects.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that NEFCO provided a letter of support for the City of Canton's RAISE grant application. He said that this grant is provided through the Department of Transportation. He said that this application is for the Tuscarawas Street West Corridor Safety project which has been revised from the 2022 grant submittal. He noted that this project will help improve the Tuscarawas corridor around the Aultman Hospital area.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the Ohio Brownfields Conference will be held on May 7th in Dublin, hosted by the Greater Ohio Policy Center and Ohio EPA.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the NOACA/Vibrant NEO Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund program is a useful source for applicants that are looking for zero percent interest loans to help cleanup and remediate any brownfield site. He said that program is open to anyone in the Northeast Ohio region.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the Electronics Scrap Recycling Advancement Prize (E-SCRAP) program is a national competition. The prize is \$50,000 per award, up to ten winners nationally, for private for-profits and nonprofits, state and local governments, academic institutions, and even individuals that have a proposal that will help identify solutions to improve the electronic waste circularity and the reuse of those materials. The deadline is September 4th.

b. Environmental Planning

Mr. LaPlante said that staff has started updating the FY2025 208 facilities planning area (FPA) update. He said that staff has noticed an increase in participation for this upcoming update. He said that all four county (wastewater) management agencies are participating along with the cities of Canton, Aurora, and Twinsburg; as well as the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS). He stated that a meeting was held on Wednesday, March 13th to discuss the FPA guidelines and the geographic information system (GIS) format that should be used in submitting map changes. He noted that in order to avoid delays, staff will need to have received all of the shapefiles, in NEFCO's format, by June 26th. He stated that last year the management agencies were given ninety calendar days to submit any FPA changes. He noted that this year the timeline will be ninety business days, which doesn't include weekends or holidays. He said that having an annual update is good for the NEFCO region, both economically and environmentally, because it allows the management agencies to plan ahead. He said that these changes that are needed in the 208 Plan are to help keep areas on track with economic and infrastructure projects. He said that Ohio EPA will not issue a permit to install (PTI) or an infrastructure loan if the project is not consistent with the 208 plan.

Mr. LaPlante said that the 208 Plan Chapter 4 identifies the challenges or barriers associated with small, decentralized wastewater treatment systems that are largely under the jurisdiction of the local health districts. He said that Chapter 4 presents a series of recommendations that were developed in the early 2000s. Some of these recommendations have become part of the new sewage treatment system rules which went into effect on January 1, 2015. He stated that this chapter has been in the process of being updated since the new sewage rules went into effect, as well as some other recent changes that went into effect in 2021. He said that NEFCO's current contracts with Ohio EPA require that staff complete a Chapter 4 update. He said that staff completed a draft of Chapter 4 which is currently under internal review. Once staff finishes the review, the Chapter will be submitted to the local health districts for a final review.

Mr. LaPlante said that on March 14th, staff submitted draft scopes of services to Ohio EPA for review. He said that NEFCO will receive \$75,000 from the state biennium budget and an additional \$99,000 in federal 604(b) pass-through funds.

Mr. LaPlante said that there will be two presentations at the April 3rd ERTAC meeting: Bill Zawiski, Water Quality Supervisor, Ohio EPA's Northeast District Office, will give an update on the agency's most recent water quality survey work for the Tuscarawas River and Sugar Creek and select tributaries; and Stephanie Dyer, Environmental Program Manager, Eastgate Regional Council of Governments, will discuss their nonpoint source implementation strategy (NPS-IS) development for the Fish Creek-Mahoning River watershed in Mahoning and Columbiana Counties and a small area in northeast Stark County, including the City of Alliance. Please contact Mr. LaPlante for additional information.

Mr. LaPlante said that the federal judge denied the City of Akron's request for its Fourth Amendment to the consent decree to abate the combined sewer overflows. The NEFCO board and others, including Ohio EPA, recommended that the Fourth Amendment be approved. He stated that the federal judge denied approving the Fourth Amendment citing that Akron is upstream from the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Also, the judge indicated that the consent decree currently says zero overflows; even though across the country most combined sewer overflows areas are allowed to have two or three overflows per year. Mr. LaPlante asked Ms. DiFiore if she knew what the next steps would be for the Fourth Amendment? Ms. DiFiore said that she doesn't know what comes next. She said that there has only been one overflow in the tunnel within the last six hundred days.

Mr. LaPlante said that he has provided an Ohio EPA Outreach announcement: the Division of Drinking and Ground Waters is seeking comments on the agency's *PFAS Treatment Guidance*; comments are due March 21, 2024.

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

Mr. Hadley said that there apparently was an agreement for the remaining package of appropriations that have not been passed by Congress and signed by the President. He said that one of the holdups was that Congress is almost halfway through the federal fiscal year. It was determined that Homeland Security needs additional funds because they could not operate at the FY2023 funding levels, which was a big hold up in moving forward with this agreement. He said that the previous set of appropriations were approved on March 8th. Technically, the government was 'shut down', but the Federal agencies involved who were actually in control knew that the appropriations would be in place on the following business day, Monday. So, it was allowed that they didn't put the furlough into effect for those affected federal workers. The deadline for these appropriations is March 23rd, which is possible that the House and Senate may be working into the weekend. He stated that it looks like the government will not shut down.

Mr. Hadley said that some of the information that is provided on the next couple pages is related to putting those appropriations in place. The President released his FFY2025 budget, but the appropriations that are being reviewed are from FY2024. He said that to please contact him for additional information. He stated that he has included information regarding the reauthorization of the Economic Development Act; the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA); EPA, HUD and HHS have announced interagency commitments to more robust collaboration on the addressing risks of exposure to lead. There is also information regarding cybersecurity.

Mr. Marion welcomed to the Board meeting Tina Boyes, City of Akron Councilwoman.

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 9:20 a.m.

Submitted by Rebecca L. Morgan, Administrative Assistant



Todd Peetz, Secretary
NEFCO General Policy Board
April 17, 2024

NEFCO GENERAL POLICY BOARD 2024 ATTENDANCE SHEET

Member (alternate)	1/17	2/21	3/20	4/17	5/15	6/19	7/17	8/21	9/18	10/16	11/20	12/18
PORTAGE COUNTY^a												
Sabrina Christian-Bennett (Mike Tinlin)	X	X										
Daniel Blakely (Tia Rutledge)	A	A	A									
Joseph Diorio (Justin Rechichar)		X	X									
Todd Peetz (Gail Gifford)	X	X										
Amos Sarfo (Eric Long)	X	X	X									
Vacant												
CITY OF KENT												
Kailyn Cyrus (Bridget Susel)	X	X	X									
STARK COUNTY												
Keith Bennett	X	X	X									
Alfredo Carranza	X		X									
Kirt Conrad			X									
David Maley	X	X	X									
Dan Moeglin (Sarah Buell)		A	X									
Mike Naso (Helene Papczun)		A	X									
Bob Nau (Curtis Bungard)	X	X	X									
Richard Regula (Bill Smith)	X											
Jim Troike (Tom Davis and Jeff Lonzrick)	X	A	X									
Stephan Wilder (Ben Young)	X											
Vacant												
Vacant												
CITY OF CANTON												
Jim Benekos (John Highman Jr. and Chris Barnes)	X		X									
COUNTY OF SUMMIT												
Jim Balogh	X	X	X									
Alan Brubaker (Larry Fulton and Chuck Hauber)	A		A									
Caitlin Elrad	X	X										
David Kohlmeier (Zak Kaczor)		X	X									
David Lukas	X											
Sam Scaffide	X	X										
Ilene Shapiro (Craig Stanley & Joe Eckenrode)		A										
Dianne Sumego			X									
Michael Vinay (Matt Calcei)	X	X	X									
CITY OF AKRON^a												
Chris Ludle (Michelle DiFiore)	A	A	A									
Shammas Malik												
Linda F. R. Omobien												
Helen Tomic (Kurt Mulhauser)	A	A										
Vacant												
Vacant												
Vacant												
WAYNE COUNTY												
Jonathan Hofstetter (Sue Smail)	X	X										
Jennifer Kiper (Rob Kastner)	X	X	X									
Steven Wheeler (Kevin Givins)	A	A	A									
CITY OF WOOSTER												
Robert Reynolds (Vince Marion & Joel Montgomery)	A	A	A									
OHIO EPA-NEDO^b												
David Emerman (Allen Tyler)	A		A									
CITIZENS COUNCIL												
Vacant (2)												

X = member present A = alternate present

^aappointments pending

^bex officio

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

Guests in Attendance at the March 20, 2024 meeting

Meghan Adair, Summit/Medina Workforce Area
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Tina Boyes, City of Akron Councilwoman
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