

MINUTES--NEFCO GENERAL POLICY BOARD MEETING held Wednesday, July 17, 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. Conrad, seconded by Ms. Kiper, 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 June 19, 2024

A motion was made by Mr. Vinay, seconded by Ms. Kiper, to accept the June meeting minutes. The motion carried.

3. Financial Status Report - month of June

Mr. Hadley said that \$1.02 was received as income during June, receipts to date were \$473,818.02, disbursements to date were \$541,277.32, and cash on hand at the end of June was \$142,067.02.

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

3a. June Bank Reconciliations

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

A motion was made by Mr. Conrad, seconded by Mr. Peetz, to accept the June bank reconciliations. The motion carried.

4. SPEAKER: "Sustainable Polymers Tech Hub"; Brian Anderson, Vice President, Polymer Industry Cluster (PIC), Greater Akron Chamber

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that on July 2, 2024, the Greater Akron Chamber (GAC) led consortium was awarded a \$51 million Economic Development Administration (EDA) Tech Hubs Phase 2 grant. He said that Brian Anderson, Vice President, Polymer Industry Cluster, Greater Akron Chamber is arguably the most responsible for this grant award and for organizing this coalition. He said that this is the largest award that the NEFCO region has received from EDA since NEFCO has been an economic development district (EDD). NEFCO was designated in 1978 as an EDD. Mr. Lautzenheiser said that Mr. Anderson leads the Polymer Industry Cluster (PIC) Initiative in Northeast Ohio, as well as the data and regional economic analysis functions of the organization. Prior to the Chamber, Mr. Anderson worked as Chief Financial Officer of a wearable technology start-up, and at a Fortune 500 company. Mr. Anderson received his bachelor's degree in mathematics at Emmanuel College in Boston where he was also a three-sport collegiate athlete. Mr. Anderson attended The University of Akron for his MBA, and University of Texas – San Antonio for his master's degree in finance. Mr. Anderson and his wife Casey like to travel, cook, and are dedicated fans and season ticket holders of the nationally ranked University of Akron men's soccer team. Mr. Lautzenheiser welcomed to the Board meeting Brian Anderson.

Mr. Anderson said that he was raised in the Akron area, traveled back and forth through Boston and Texas and has been back in the Akron area since 2016. He said that he has been increasingly involved in the PIC work over the past about three and a half years. He mentioned that the rubber and tire industry started over 150 years ago when, essentially, Akron attracted Benjamin Franklin Goodrich from the New York area to start BF Goodrich Tire and Rubber Company in Akron. He said that other tire and rubber companies formed and followed suit. He said that BF Goodrich became the rubber capital of the world and developed this elite expertise in both innovation and production in 1939. The United States lost its supply of natural rubber coming from Southeast Asia, and that threatened our national economic security, and our ability to participate in World War II. The federal government invested in a consortium of tire and rubber companies and researchers in the Akron area, almost overnight, to develop a synthetic rubber to augment the loss of supply of natural rubber. Over the following decades, the area's expertise in rubber evolved and expanded into not just rubber, but also plastics and other polymers. Mr. Anderson said that today there is a robust variety of engine, rubber, plastic, chemicals and related products. He said that today the economy is in a similar situation as it was in the 1930s, where before the grand challenge, there was the need to develop a synthetic rubber. Now the need is to achieve sustainability and to be able to develop and produce products from rubber, plastic and other polymers without having adverse effects on the environment. In Northeast Ohio and the 18-county Northeast Ohio region, there are over 500 manufacturing companies of rubber, plastic and chemical goods. He stated that The University of Akron is often ranked number one in the Americas for polymer science and plastics engineering. He said that the other universities and colleges, Kent State University, Case Western and others are strong research universities in that place as well in that field. Mr. Anderson described who and what the PIC will do with the Sustainable Polymer Tech Hub grant. The PIC started with about a dozen partners in April of 2021, now there are 70+ partners. Committees were created to design specific key work streams in that overall effort of identifying common challenges. He described the committees and the roles these committees have in the PIC. He said that the PIC has a small but strong staff that resides at the GAC, but it is dedicated to the polymer industry cluster work. He said that the PIC staff engages in marketing, communications and policy advocacy. He provided a partial list of the partners that are most involved. He also noted that there are additional stakeholders that participate in some of the PIC events. He said that networking is a big part of the strength of the cluster. He stated that out of these sixty or seventy partners, probably forty are companies, with at least ten of them being Fortune 500 companies. Mr. Anderson described the structure of the Polymer Industry Cluster. He said that each committee meets monthly along with the Polymer Industry Advisory Council. He stated that the PIC council partners are geographically dispersed and meet virtually. He said that following the Tech Hub implementation grant award, a project execution team will be created which will sit under the newly established Polymer Industry Cluster Leadership Committee which is a standing leadership committee of the Greater Akron Chamber Board. He said that sustainability is a top focus which means different things to different stakeholders. In some cases, it means designing new feedstock that has a carbon footprint, or it has fewer toxic properties. He noted that some states throughout the country are starting to signal an inclination to ban the use of certain substances. He described that a polymer is a broad set of materials which if something isn't metal or glass, it's probably a polymer. A couple examples are rubber, plastic, nylon, and clothes are polymers. He stated that the economy is increasingly relying on synthetic and natural polymers to replace glass and metals all around us.

Mr. Anderson provided the different types of projects that will be funded in these proposals: infrastructure (hard-pilot plant or soft-leadership and coordination); R&D (mobility, healthcare, energy etc. and the early-, mid- or late-stages of technology); commercialization (startup and entrepreneur support); and workforce (recruitment and support of underrepresented populations and both skilled and innovation positions).

Mr. Anderson said that the EDA Tech Hubs program started about 15 months ago. The consortium partners applied for Phase I of the Tech Hubs program in August 2023. Out of hundreds of applicants, the GAC was one of thirty-one regions designated as a federal Tech Hub. He said that the thirty-one Tech Hubs were designated in a different industry or technology focus. He noted that the GAC is THE sustainable Polymers Tech Hub in the entire United States. He said that, that designation carries into the future and there will be new benefits and opportunities that come from becoming a Polymer Tech Hub. Immediately after becoming a Polymer Tech Hub the GAC was provided with an exclusive invitation to apply for Phase 2 of this grant, which is an implementation grant under the Tech Hubs program. This gave the GAC an opportunity to request up to \$70 million of funding to execute the PIC's first round of projects. He stated that a proposal was submitted at the end of February 2024 for eight projects seeking the maximum allowed of \$70 million of federal funding, which would add about another ten percent from local matches. He noted that the GAC received \$51 million, this amount was tied for the highest award. He said that seven of the eight projects were funded. He said that the GAC was absolutely thrilled with the outcome. This is what is being considered as a down payment on the investments to secure for the region in this area of focus. When this work was started, the GAC thought that it would need about \$200 million or so investment over a decade or two to get from A to B. He said that the GAC wanted to elevate this to being the undisputed global hub of polymer innovation and production in the world. He listed each project along with a description: Commercializing Recycling of End-of-Life Tires (Full Circle Technologies); Sustainable Polymer Composites via Liquid Phase Mixing (the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company); Bio-Based Butadiene Feedstock (BioVerde Inc.); Carbon Black & Nanotube from Methane Source (Huntsman); Safer Anti-Degradant for Tires and Plastics (Flexsys); Workforce Initiative for a Sustainable Environment (WISE) (The University of Akron); and Regional Office of Innovation Governance (Greater Akron Chamber). He said that the first five projects listed are all private sector companies. Over the next five years, these five projects' companies and partners will advance each project's technologies to become fully commercialized, and at that point will look for opportunities to build full scale production facilities in the region. For example, when it's time to build a full-scale production facility for one of these projects it will be a \$400 million investment. He said that the sixth project is workforce related, focused from certificate level up to PhD. This project will be led by The University of Akron in collaboration with Kent State University, Stark State College, Case Western, and Central State University. The seventh and smallest project will be a soft governance that the Greater Akron Chamber is leading: a central capacity to help coordinate and accelerate each of the projects and provide project management. He said that the economic impact expectations of these seven projects alone are over about a 10-year period. These projects will help create over 4,000 direct jobs, catalyze over a billion dollars of private investment and reduce about four million tons of CO2 annually.

Mr. Anderson said that coincidentally, as the GAC is pursuing the federal Tech Hubs grant opportunity, the GAC will also be pursuing an Ohio Innovation Hubs grant opportunity. He said that last summer the State of Ohio created a \$125 million Innovation Hub award for technology and industry focused economic development initiatives that are being led from mid-size cities. The state has started to make award announcements one at a time. He said that about two weeks ago the City of Toledo received a \$31 million award from the Ohio Department of Development Innovation Hub program. He said that the GAC is competing for a similar award. Each of Ohio's mid-size cities was allowed to apply for up to \$35 billion each, to be matched by about \$10 or \$12 million of partner funds. He said that hopefully the GAC will hear from the Ohio Department of Development within the next month. He thanked the Board for inviting him to the meeting and asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Regula asked if the polymers cracker plant in Monaca, Pennsylvania is attracting plastic and chemical industry to the NEFCO region. Mr. Anderson said yes, he thinks that the financial and cost of emissions from transportation is a top concern for a lot of companies. He said that the Shell Oil Company has a lot of customers and buyers of polyethylene. He said that the ability to use

natural gas, cracker, and manufacturing in this region and localized activity is really attractive for the region. Mr. Balough said that regarding the seven companies that received a portion of the \$51 million; how was it decided how much funding each project received? Mr. Anderson said that it took about two and a half months of lots of conversations. He said that before this program opportunity materialized the existing Infrastructure, R&D Committee and other committees were meeting about these projects. When the funding amount was announced each project had specific criteria that had to fit within its project's specific ideas. The partners were invited to propose specific project ideas with project budget amounts. The partners who ultimately would be the customers of these new materials that are going to be developed were asked what's most important for their project. He said that the applicants went through a ranking process so that the funding would be distributed among the seven projects. He stated that \$55 of the \$70 million initial request was going towards the industry-led technology projects. Mr. Conrad asked about black carbon and a connection of polymers to pyrolysis and hydrogen production. He also expressed interest in talking with Mr. Anderson about how to get rid of the forever chemicals. Mr. Anderson agreed to contact Mr. Conrad to meet and discuss these chemicals. Ms. DiFiore asked if there is a commitment from these companies to keep these jobs in Ohio? Mr. Anderson said that in some cases the expectation is part of the grant award. In this case, the federal Tech Hub award, the intent is that from the language that is used, the substantial majority of the benefit of the investment will occur within the region of service. He said that technically for the Tech Hub, the region of service is the Akron MSA. Obviously, the PIC partners are not just in Akron (Summit County) and Portage County. The workforce will not just come from those two counties. He said that two of the five company led technology projects are not currently based in this area. Ms. DiFiore asked if the investment work will be done in Ohio? Mr. Anderson said yes, in some cases some of our larger companies might leverage existing plants throughout the globe, to continue to have manufacturing near their end markets. He said the intent is to have as much of the future investment that comes from this work to occur within the region. Mr. Regula asked about the tire recycling project. He said that Stark County has a large amount of old tires within the solid waste district. He asked if those tires could be recycled? Mr. Anderson said that a couple of companies are working on different aspects of tire recycling. Mr. Hadley asked if the GAC PIC has received a lot of good media coverage and if there is going to be a way to sustain that media coverage? He also asked if the EDA has an unusual new way of funding companies directly? Mr. Anderson said not exactly, the initial proposal was very detailed and robust and there's been at least a dozen iterations of follow up questions so that the engineers and lawyers at EDA understand what the grant's private companies are doing with these investments. He said that if the federal government is going to buy a piece of equipment that will go into a private company, who has access to that equipment, i.e. just this company or is it available to a broader group? He said that the PIC tried to convey to EDA is that, yes, the feds are buying a half million-dollar piece of equipment and that is going to benefit this private company. He said that the benefit to the region and to the industry overall that comes out of what the company is doing with the equipment far surpasses the value of that piece of equipment. He said that the PIC thinks that the work of each of these projects will have a significant impact in elevating the regional economy advancing the industry.

Ms. Rutledge asked if there would be patents with these companies. Mr. Anderson said that in this particular program the EDA has made it clear that the project work must start with the late-stage technology. On a scale of one to nine, where nine is the project is already commercialized, the PIC projects must start at six, which means that some things are already proven at the lab scale, each project is ready to scale up and then add on the finishing touches. He noted that in this industry, finishing touches could take a couple of years, but because the project is starting at the late-stage technology these are already patented technologies that live within companies. He said that the process of getting from a six to a nine will likely in each case result in new patents that the companies will own. Mr. Eckenrode asked about the time frame: will it take five years to get fully commercialized? Mr. Anderson said that some of the projects are a little further along than others. He said that the program of work for the Tech Hub award overall is five years. He said starting at

maybe three years, some of the projects might have most of their work done. He said so, probably between three and five years from now the five technology projects will go through the commercialization process.

Mr. Lautzenheiser asked what the State funding will fund? Mr. Anderson said that for the federal funding each project was broken down into a very detailed narrative describing the project. He said that the PIC hasn't received any state funding. He said that the PIC is waiting to see how much State funding will be awarded. He said that in the state proposal it was mentioned what the PIC was interested in funding such as R&D and startup support and workforce development. He said that the new leadership committee will be going through a process of ranking, prioritizing, and selecting specific projects. He noted that the state level doesn't have as strict a technology readiness level as the federal program. Mr. Anderson said that the PIC has had an initial flood of requests from the media to understand the projects. Mr. Marion thanked Mr. Anderson for his presentation.

5. Barberton Community Foundation requests a letter of support for its EDA Planning/Local Technical Assistance grant application

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the Barberton Community Foundation (BCF) reached out to staff requesting assistance on the development of an EDA grant application. He said that the BCF met with EDA Representative Lee Shirey, who recommended that the BCF pursue an EDA local technical assistance grant to do a feasibility study on the project. Mr. Lautzenheiser said that this project is about looking at a property that the Barberton Community Foundation owns. He said that the property consists of 36 acres located on Newell St. in Barberton. He explained that the BCF is looking to provide a polymer workforce center, to provide training, education, and develop a workforce to create a pipeline of careers and jobs to help support the polymer industry. He said that the site is a vacant industrially zoned property. It is formerly the site of B&P Polishing in Barberton. He said that the property was acquired in November 2022. He said that Phase I and Phase 2 environmental assessments have been done. He stated that the BCF project's estimated cost would be about \$200,000. He said that with an EDA grant the BCF can request funding up to 50 percent. He noted that the BCF has requested a letter of support from NEFCO, which is attached. He stated that this project would advance four goals of NEFCO's CEDS. He said that staff continues to provide technical assistance. He said that attached is a draft letter of support and a two-page project description.

A motion was made by Mr. Messner, seconded by Mr. Peetz to approve the letter of support for the Barberton Community Foundation EDA Planning/Local Technical Assistance grant application. The motion carried.

6. NEFCO organizational survey – overview and purpose

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the strategic plan wasn't included in the approved budget last month. He said that staff still felt it was important to regularly assess itself as an organization, to make sure that staff is meeting the needs of the communities, the members, and the counties for the NEFCO region. He said that last week staff created and distributed a survey to the Board members and alternates. The survey takes less than five minutes with three questions to complete. He noted that the survey will be open until August 7th. He said that if anyone has any questions regarding the survey, please contact him. Ms. Sumego said that she didn't see the email with the survey attached. Mr. Lautzenheiser stated that he will resend the email with the survey attached. Mr. Marion said that the survey responses will be anonymous.

7. NEFCO FY2025 Work Program – status

a. Economic Development

Mr. Lautzenheiser congratulated SARTA on its \$17 million federal grant that was received through the US Department of Transportation Buses and Bus Facilities grant. Mr. Conrad said that this grant will help upgrade its clean transit infrastructure throughout Stark County. He said that this is SARTA's largest grant ever received. This grant will support a new roof on its bus garage, parking lot repaving, and allow the agency to produce green hydrogen on site from water and solar panels. Several of the buses will operate completely from renewable energy. He said that SARTA staff took every possible project and combined it all into this grant.

b. Environmental Planning

Mr. Marion stated that the environmental planning status report is for information only.

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

Mr. Hadley said that he included some information on where the Appropriations Committees are on the next federal budget. Please contact him if you need any information on any of these programs.

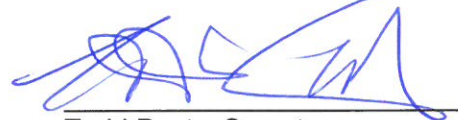
9. For the Good of the Order: an opportunity for members to share news about their community/county/agency/company, or to list a prominent issue affecting them

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

10. Other Business

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS, the meeting was adjourned at 9:29 a.m.

Submitted by Rebecca L. Morgan, Administrative Assistant



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

^aex officio

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

Guests in Attendance at the July 17, 2024 meeting	
Brian Anderson, Greater Akron Chamber	
Meghan Adair, Summit/Medina Workforce Area	
Tracy Sayers, Lakemore	