

MINUTES--NEFCO GENERAL POLICY BOARD MEETING held Wednesday, January 15, 2025, at the City of Green Community Hall at Central Park.

1a. Call to Order

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

1b. Approval of the Agenda

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

1c. Pledge of Allegiance

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

Mr. Marion said that since there are a few new members attending today's meeting; he asked everyone to introduce themselves.

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 December 18, 2024

A motion was made by Ms. Christian-Bennett, seconded by Ms. Kiper, to accept the December meeting minutes. The motion carried.

3. Financial Status Report - month of December

Mr. Hadley said that \$65,354.29 was received as income during December, receipts to date were \$347,476.41, disbursements to date were \$291,296.26, and cash on hand at the end of December was \$198,247.17.

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

Mr. Hadley said that staff received a notice stating that NEFCO's FY2023-2024 has been accepted and has been posted on the Ohio Auditor of State's website.

3a. December Bank Reconciliations

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

Mr. Hadley mentioned that the NEFCO Board's new secretary is David Maley. He said that the bank reconciliations form will be corrected to reflect Mr. Maley's name.

A motion was made by Mr. Bennett, seconded by Ms. Kiper, to accept the December bank reconciliations. The motion carried.

4. City of Canton requests a letter of support for its EDA Public Works/Economic Adjustment Assistance grant application

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the City of Canton has requested a letter of support from the Board for its EDA grant project; the Canton Workforce Hub. He said that Canton is working in partnership with the Stark Economic Development Board (SEDB) to assemble the application. The City of Canton is proposing a 2,500 square foot expansion to the Southeast Community Center to establish a workforce development and training center. He said that this was one of the component

projects of the Stark Economic Development Board's EDA Recompete grant application, which was submitted last year. He stated that the Recompete grant was unsuccessful in receiving Phase 2 Implementation funding. He said that the SEDB was successful for the Phase 1 Recompete grant. He said that in addition to providing workforce and training opportunities, the project will focus on the historically underserved neighborhoods of southeast Canton. He said that Canton and the SEDB are partnering with Stark State College to offer specialized training programs in health care, information technology, and manufacturing. He said that Canton is applying for an EDA Public Works/Economic Adjustment Assistance grant to construct the training center. The estimated total project cost is \$2,750,000, which includes \$2.5 million for construction and \$250,000 for equipment. The City of Canton is requesting 70 to 80 percent of the total project costs; depending on EDA's determination of the level of distress. The City will provide the required local match. He mentioned that the project advances two goals of the NEFCO Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). He said attached is a copy of the draft letter of support and an executive summary. He asked for the Board's approval to submit the attached letter of support.

Mr. Regula asked if any of these hubs are built in northeast Ohio? Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the workforce hub is just the name of the grant being submitted. He said that essentially the grant money would provide training and workforce development offerings to community members. Mr. Regula asked if this was a construction project? Mr. Lautzenheiser said yes, but he doesn't know of any similar buildings based in the NEFCO Region. Ms. Christian-Bennett asked how will this grant be different from what the Ohio Means Jobs program provides? She said this sounds like the efforts are being duplicated. Mr. Lautzenheiser stated that the partners are trying to capitalize on the services that are already offered at this Community Center. He said that he will gather additional details and report on it next month.

A motion was made by Mr. Regula, seconded by Mr. Nau, to approve the City of Canton's letter of support for its EDA Public Works/Economic Adjustment Assistance grant application. The motion carried.

5. Appointment of CY2025 NEFCO Administrative and Functional Committees

Mr. Marion said that listed are the CY2025 NEFCO Administrative and Functional Committees. He asked for approval of the committees.

A motion was made by Ms. Christian-Bennett, seconded by Ms. Sumego, to adopt the CY2025 NEFCO Administrative and Functional Committees. The motion carried.

6. Consideration of a renewal of the 3-year agreement for the County of Summit Health Insurance Regionalization Program

Mr. Hadley said that this item has been presented to the Board in the past. He said that since NEFCO started in 1974-75, the agency's health insurance has been aligned with the County of Summit's program. He said that some years ago the county began a regionalization program which allowed for other entities, within or outside of the county, to join the program for one or all types of insurance in the program. He said that normally this request is presented to the Board at the end of the year. He said that NEFCO, at most, would have four employees eligible for the insurance program. He cautioned the board that if members wanted the agency to consider an alternative insurance administrator, it would be challenging to find a health insurance company or entity that would take on a small number of employees and be as competitive or convenient as has been the County of Summit. He said that he didn't want to agree with the renewal without the Board's consideration. He mentioned that the agency's legal counsel reviewed the agreement and compared it to the previous three-year agreement and noted that there were some differences. He said that he discussed the concerns from the legal counsel with his contact at the County of Summit's Department of Human Resources (DHR), who checked with its consultant. He said that

the DHR's consultant had no objection or disagreement with the differences identified by NEFCO's legal counsel. Mr. Hadley requested the Board's authorization for him to sign the 3-year agreement on behalf of NEFCO. He said that the agencies that are not Summit County departments do pay a surcharge or slightly higher fees than the county departments.

Ms. Christian-Bennett asked if staff shares any of the costs of the insurance? Mr. Hadley said yes, the NEFCO employees contribute 10 percent.

A motion was made by Ms. Christian-Bennett, seconded by Mr. Eckenrode, to accept the renewal of the 3-year agreement for the County of Summit Health Insurance Regionalization Program. The motion carried.

7. Consideration of making permanent, a policy for the NEFCO Board Chair or the Executive Director to provide, without the board's prior approval, requested letters of support for projects and grant applications that are consistent with NEFCO's work program, or past board actions or positions

Mr. Hadley said that this policy was introduced about three Board chairs ago. He said that in the past when NEFCO would be asked for a letter of support from an affiliated agency or government, staff had no way expressing NEFCO's support. He said that staff felt that there were certain situations where the Board members should be able to voice their support. It was suggested to the staff to seek board approval of some parameters for guiding when NEFCO could issue a letter of support, signed by either the Board chair or Executive Director, so that the letter of support could be submitted in a timely manner. He stated that if the letter of support is something the board had approved in the recent past, or if it were for a watershed that staff had closely worked in, and local entities were asking for support for a grant that was similar and consistent with NEFCO's work programs, then staff would submit a letter of support. The letter of support would then be attached to the staff's Board status report at the next meeting. If it was a new request, then the letter of support would be approved by the Board before submitting the letter. He stated that since this policy has been in place for a few years, he thought maybe the Board would want to approve the policy to become permanent rather than having staff request approval annually. He said that if the letter of support involves a controversy, even if it were a new or normal watershed type project, staff would still have the ability to bring it through the board. He noted that if the deadline were sooner than the when the Board met, staff would explain that to the requestor. He asked for the Board's support of Resolution No. FY2025-003.

Ms. Sumego asked questions related to the staff's knowledge of a grant's requirements, or other considerations, before expressing the Board's support for a grant or project. Mr. Hadley said that for typical letters of support requests, staff often don't have all the details of a grant, or the understanding of all the grant's terms and conditions. He said that perhaps in future letters of support, staff could add some type of a caveat or limitation that acknowledges the staff is unaware of all of the referenced grant's requirements, issues, or conditions.

A motion was made by Mr. Bennett, seconded by Mr. Messner, to accept making permanent, a policy for the NEFCO Board Chair or the Executive Director to provide, without the board's prior approval, requested letters of support for projects and grant applications that are consistent with NEFCO's work program, or past board actions or positions. The motion carried.

8. NEFCO FY2025 Work Program – status

a. Economic Development

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that yesterday staff learned that the Greater Akron Chamber (GAC) was awarded an EDA grant in the amount of \$3.08 million for its Good Jobs Challenge grant. The GAC applied for the grant in partnership with ConxusNEO, Manufacturing Works, MAGNET, Stark State College, The University of Akron, community-based organizations, and some other regional

employers for GAC's Advanced Polymer and Manufacturing Experience (APEX) project. He noted that this project is one of only eight Good Jobs Challenge grants awarded nationwide. He said that this project will create accessible career pathways in the polymer sector, educational institutions, industry labs, community and labor organizations. He said that this workforce development strategy project will be able to recruit up to 550 individuals and help 450 individuals complete entry-level or upskilling, and place at least 320 individuals in polymer and advanced manufacturing jobs.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the EDA Reauthorization was signed into law by President Biden on January 4th and was attached to the Water Resources Development Act of 2024. He noted that this is the first time the EDA has been reauthorized in 20 years. He said that, subject to appropriations by Congress, this will increase the funding levels for the EDA and triple the amount of funding that goes to the partnership planning grants, and awarded to organizations such as NEFCO and other economic development districts across the country.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that NEFCO's partnership planning grant helps fund the agency's economic development work plan. He said that the current grant is set to expire at the end of March. Staff is completing the closeout documents and reports that are required by EDA. He said that staff is also preparing the application for the next three-year partnership planning grant application. He mentioned that NEFCO has not yet received, from the EDA, the invitation to apply for the EDA grant. These applications are required to be submitted every three years.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that staff provided a letter of support to the City of Wooster for its U.S. Department of Transportation's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant. The City of Wooster is seeking \$475,000 in funding through the RAISE grant program. This grant will be for the Downtown Wooster Streetscape project. He noted that the letter of support is attached.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that this past December, both the Bridgestone and The University of Akron received grants from the Department of Energy to help with the local polymer industry cluster and Tech Hub. He said that Bridgestone was awarded \$9.3 million to help with the construction of a pilot program. This project will research innovative ways to produce butadiene, the largest component of synthetic rubber, and is manufactured with ethanol rather than fossil fuel-based substances. He stated that The University of Akron received \$2 million to promote electric vehicle component recycling. He said that the grant monies will be used to make sure that plastics and polymers that are used in electric vehicle batteries are not ending up in landfills.

Mr. Lautzenheiser discussed some upcoming funding opportunities with fast approaching deadlines. He said if anyone has any questions or requests, to please contact him.

b. Environmental Planning

Mr. LaPlante said that staff submitted the CY2024 FPA amendments on January 14th to Ohio EPA for state certification. He said that attached is the submitted list of FPAs. He mentioned that a public notification by Ohio EPA is expected to occur in March 2025.

Mr. LaPlante said that the Ohio EPA Division of Surface Water (DSW) staff recently indicated that on January 6th, DSW Chief Johnson had a conference call with the Governor's staff to discuss state certification of the Areawides' submitted 208 Plan updates from 2023. He said that the Ohio EPA DSW staff were told that the 2023 Plan update materials are now being prepared for the Governor's signature. Once the 2023 Plan updates have been certified by the Governor, Ohio EPA will send the updates to U.S. EPA Region 5 to be considered for approval. He said that once the U.S. EPA approves the certified updates, the updates will be incorporated into the state's water quality management plan.

Mr. LaPlante said that staff will be providing the wastewater management agencies with another opportunity in FY2026 to voluntarily modify the 208 FPA boundaries and wastewater treatment prescriptions. He said that staff will start this update process in February. He noted that a timeline will be made after staff meets internally to discuss any needed changes to the guidelines.

Mr. LaPlante said that the Ohio EPA Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance (DEFA) announced that the 2025 Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) Program Management Plan is available for public review. He said that a hearing will be held at 10:30 a.m. on January 21st.

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

Mr. Hadley said that the government is transitioning and the incoming president's nominees for the various cabinet posts are being reviewed and providing testimony. Many of the programs that staff and members work with are in a holding pattern right now. He said that right before Christmas, the government shutdown was avoided, which pushed the big decision off until March 14, 2025. There will be some time for various cabinet secretaries to be approved. He noted that there is a lot that isn't known right now; which is common with the change of administration.

Mr. Hadley said that when a new Economic Development Administration (EDA) head is assigned, new program objectives are often created and economic development districts, like NEFCO, are expected to structure their work programs to achieve those objectives.

Mr. Hadley explained for the new members, that for several items in this memo, he can provide a link for additional information.

Mr. Hadley said that included in the list of legislation that has been signed by the Governor, is HB 257: Public Bodies to Meet Virtually. He said that this isn't something that NEFCO would necessarily pursue vigorously but some of the regional councils in Ohio, particularly southeast and southern Ohio that have ten or more counties in their region, could take advantage of this legislation. He said that an agency such as NEFCO would have to opt-in, requiring the NEFCO Board to structure and approve certain aspects of the bill in order for NEFCO to be able to meet virtually.

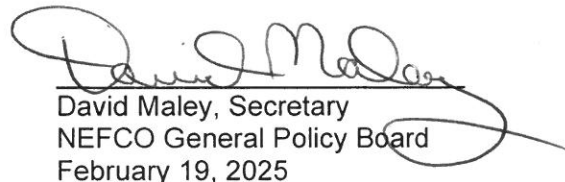
10. For the Good of the Order: an opportunity for members to share news about their community/county/agency/company, or to list a prominent issue affecting them

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

11. Other Business

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

Submitted by Rebecca L. Morgan, Administrative Assistant


David Maley, Secretary
NEFCO General Policy Board
February 19, 2025

NEFCO GENERAL POLICY BOARD 2025 ATTENDANCE SHEET

Member (alternate)	1/15	2/19	3/19	4/16	5/21	6/18	7/16	8/20	9/17	10/15	11/19	12/17
PORTAGE COUNTY												
Sabrina Christian-Bennett (Jill Crawford)	X											
Daniel Blakely (Tia Rutledge)												
Rochelle Hartigan												
Becky Lehman (Justin Rechichar)	X											
Todd Peetz (Amy Reichlin)												
Amos Sarfo (Eric Long)	X											
CITY OF KENT												
Kailyn Cyrus (Bridget Susel)	X											
STARK COUNTY												
Keith Bennett	X											
Alfredo Carranza												
Kirt Conrad												
Ted Herncane												
David Maley	X											
Dan Moeglin (Sarah Buell)												
Mike Naso (Helene Papczun)												
Bob Nau (Curtis Bungard)	X											
Richard Regula (Bill Smith)	X											
Jim Troike (Tom Davis and Jeff Lonzrick)	A											
Pete Wearstler												
Stephan Wilder (Jason Segedy & Ben Young)	X											
CITY OF CANTON												
Doug Harris (John Highman Jr. and Chris Barnes)	X											
COUNTY OF SUMMIT												
Jim Balogh	X											
Alan Brubaker (Stephanie Diebel and Chuck Hauber)												
Caitlin Elrad	X											
David Kohlmeier (Zak Kaczor)												
Sam Scaffide	X											
Ilene Shapiro (Joseph Eckenrode)	A											
Dianne Sumego	X											
James Taylor	X											
Michael Vinay (Matt Calcei)	A											
CITY OF AKRON^a												
Tina Boyes												
Kyle Julien (Dylan Garritano)												
Chris Ludle (Michelle DiFiore)	A											
Shammas Malik (David Messner)	A											
Margo Sommerville (Joan Williams & Sara Biviano)												
Helen Tomic (Kurt Mulhauser)	A											
Vacant												
WAYNE COUNTY												
Matt Martin (Dave McMillen)	X											
Jennifer Kiper (Rob Kastner) ^a	X											
Steven Wheeler (Kevin Givins) ^a	A											
CITY OF WOOSTER												
Robert Reynolds (Vince Marion & Joel Montgomery)	A											
OHIO EPA-NEDO^b												
David Emerman (Allen Tyler)												
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 January 15, 2025 meeting
Justin Rechichar, Environmental Health Director, Portage County Health District (alternate)
Jason Segedy, City of North Canton (alternate)
Julie Morris, City of Kent