

MINUTES--NEFCO GENERAL POLICY BOARD MEETING held Wednesday, March 19, 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 Ms. Christian-Bennett, 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 February 19, 2025

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

3. Financial Status Report - month of February

Mr. Hadley said that \$107,895.02 was received as income during February, receipts to date were \$455,372.58, disbursements to date were \$378,545.49, and cash on hand at the end of February was \$218,894.11.

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

4. Request for General Policy Board support consensus for State Issue 2, the renewal of the State Capital Improvement Program (SCIP), and permission to use NEFCO's name in pro Issue 2 materials

Mr. Hadley said that there was currently a major effort on gaining voter support for the State Capital Improvements Program (SCIP) to be known as Issue 2. He said that this item is straightforward, with a couple of minor edits from what was mailed out last week. He distributed the 2024 biennial report for board members to review. He said that the organization that is promoting this renewal has requested various entities' support, including the Ohio Association of Regional Councils (OARC), which includes NEFCO, AMATS, and the Stark County Regional Planning Commission. He said that the Strong Ohio Communities Coalition wanted to be able to list in its promotional materials the support of individual OARC members. He said that he discussed this matter with the Chair and is requesting consensus support from the Board, which he viewed as a little less formal than a formal resolution and vote. So, basically the consensus of the board would be that NEFCO is in favor of a renewal of the State Capital Improvements Program. He stated that the SCIP is scheduled to be voted on May 6, 2025.

Mr. Nau, Mr. Bennett and Ms. Christian-Bennett stated that their agencies/organizations are in support of SCIP.

A motion was made by Ms. Christian-Bennett, seconded by Mr. Nau, to approve the Board's consensus for State Issue 2, the renewal of the State Capital Improvement Program (SCIP), and the board's permission for the Strong Ohio Communities Coalition to use NEFCO's name in its pro Issue 2 materials. The motion carried.

5. NEFCO FY2025 Work Program – status

a. Economic Development

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that staff submitted the Partnership Planning Grant (PPG) application to the EDA last month. He said that he is still waiting to hear if this grant will be funded. This grant is a three-year grant which runs from April 1, 2025 through March 31, 2028. He stated that NEFCO requested \$210,000 over the three-year period to be matched with \$140,000 of local funds for the EDA PPG grant. There was some uncertainty of the approval of this grant because it is contingent upon funds being appropriated for EDA and the other Department of Commerce programs. With the passage of the continuing resolution, it's expected that the funding levels will be similar to FY2024. However, Mr. Lautzenheiser said that he spoke with Lee Shirey, EDA Representative for Ohio and Michigan, who indicated that he is confident that the EDA grant will be approved; it is just a matter of when. Mr. Lautzenheiser said that he will keep everyone updated on these details.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that staff provided the City of Cuyahoga Falls with a letter of support for its grant application to the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) for an active transportation plan development assistance grant. He said that the City of Cuyahoga Falls is looking to do a plan for the entire city, with a focus area being in the northwest portion of the city. The plan will help the connectivity of the pedestrian and bicycle network in the city. The letter of support was requested March 5th with a quick turn-around time of March 7th, which was before the March Board meeting. He noted that the letter of support is attached to the status report.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the EDA continues to accept applications but is not awarding any grants at this point. He stated that currently the EDA can only approve reimbursement requests.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that The University of Akron was awarded a \$660,000 National Science Foundation grant for its polymer research project, "Crystallization and Reorganization Pathway of Semicrystalline Polymers." He said that this project compliments the work that is happening with the Tech Hub and Polymer Industry cluster.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that there were some concerns over comments that President Trump made in his address to Congress earlier this month. The President made strong statements concerning a repeal of the CHIPS and Science Act, which is what is used to fund the Tech Hub program, as well as a number of other programs for semiconductors. As of this time there hasn't been any impact to the Tech Hub funding. He stated that the only change, so far, has been removing any language that speaks of diversity, equity and inclusion. This language has been removed from the seven projects that were awarded as part of the Sustainable Polymers Tech Hub project.

Mr. Lautzenheiser congratulated the City of Wooster on its recent ranking by Site Selection magazine. The city tied for third place among the 2024 top micropolitan areas. He said that micropolitan areas are communities of 10,000 to under 50,000.

Mr. Lautzenheiser discussed some upcoming funding opportunities of interest. He said that if anyone has any questions or requests, to please contact him.

b. Environmental Planning

Mr. LaPlante said that staff had announced the beginning of the FY2026 201/208 facilities planning areas (FPA) update. He said that a webinar was held on March 6th with the interested wastewater management agencies (MAs) for the FY2026 update. He stated that the meeting discussed the revised update guidelines, and some questions were answered. He noted the three important submittal deadlines: April 18, June 20, and July 18. He listed the management agencies representatives that attended the March 6th meeting: Portage, Stark, and Wayne Counties, and the cities of Canton and Ravenna, as well as the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District. He said that since the March 6th meeting Wayne County has notified staff that they will not be submitting any updates for this cycle. He noted that the Summit County Department of Sanitary Sewer Services will be providing updates for the FY2026 FPA update.

Mr. LaPlante said that a link has been provided to the most recent 208 Plan amendments, Chapter 3 Appendices, and updated interactive online 201/208 FPA map.

Mr. LaPlante said that staff submitted on March 13th the draft scope of services for NEFCO's FY2026 water quality management planning contracts to Ohio EPA. He said that once the contracts are fully executed, NEFCO will receive from Ohio EPA \$75,000 from the state biennium budget, and an additional \$107,000 in federal 604(b) pass-through funds for FY2026. He said that Ohio EPA has assured NEFCO that the \$107,000 in federal funding, has already been allocated to Ohio EPA. He stated that staff will be attending an Ohio Association of Regional Councils (OARC) meeting with Ohio EPA staff and the other Areawides. He noted that the draft scopes of services for both contracts pertain to NEFCO's core 208 Plan maintenance work, including Ohio EPA permits-to-install (PTI) 208 Plan consistency reviews, 208 Plan amendments and updates, 208 Plan technical assistance, facilitating meetings of the ERTAC, and completion of an update to Chapter 5 of the 208 Plan: *Management of Nonpoint Source Pollution and Stormwater Runoff*. He said that the draft scope of services for the 604(b) contract also includes NEFCO's participation in the OARC water quality subcommittee quarterly meetings, and supplemental targeted water quality planning projects, including technical assistance to watershed groups, including *Akron Waterways Renewed!*, participation in the Cuyahoga River Area of Concern (AOC) Advisory Committee and AOC subcommittees, and a continuation of NEFCO's limited technical assistance to the Summit Soil and Water Conservation District's watershed coordinator and partners for the Portage Lakes watershed.

Mr. LaPlante said that he has included information on the following: The Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance (DEFA) has announced its Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) Program Year 2026 Call for Nominations – must be received by DEFA by March 21, 2025; the Division of Surface Water (DWS) has made its Draft Sewage Sludge/Biosolids Rules available for Interested Party Review; the deadline for comments is April 10, 2025; the Division of Drinking and Ground Waters (DDAGW) has made its Draft Records Maintenance Rule available for Interested Party Review until April 11, 2025.

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

Mr. Hadley said that on the federal side it has become more challenging in the last few months to have somewhat accurate and up to date information. He stated that a continuing resolution was passed by Congress, which extends government services through the fiscal year; through September 30, 2025. He said that part of the continuing resolution action was a \$13 billion cut to the non-defense programs and a \$6 billion increase to defense programs. He said that some of the information in this report is labeled as 'background' meaning that it's not up to date.

Mr. Hadley said that there was a rumor that all of US EPA's research programs will be eliminated. He said that the EPA Administrator Zeldin talked about his plans to roll back 31 of the Biden administration's actions related to the environment.

Mr. Hadley said that the EPA is taking another look at the Waters of the U.S. and further implementing this rule and narrowing it down what waters are considered of the U.S. based on a Supreme Court decision from last year. Mr. Hadley mentioned that the Senate approved Brooke Rollins as Secretary of Agriculture.

Mr. Hadley said that there is a new legislative proposal that has been introduced which is being referred to as the speed for BEAD (Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment) Act. He said that this program would feature less red tape and more emphasis on a broader use of various types of broadband technology. He noted that attached are some legislation for the Board's information.

Mr. Marion welcomed, to the Board meeting, Jill Crawford, Portage County Commissioner.

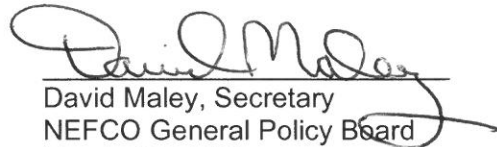
7. For the Good of the Order: an opportunity for members to share news about their community/county/agency/company, or to list a prominent issue affecting them

Mr. Regula gave a brief update on the Stark County Route 30 project.

8. Other Business

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS, the meeting was adjourned at 9:24 a.m.

Submitted by Rebecca L. Morgan, Administrative Assistant


David Maley, Secretary
NEFCO General Policy Board
March 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	X	X									
Daniel Blakely (Tia Rutledge)		A	A									
Rochelle Hartigan												
Becky Lehman (Justin Rechichar)	X	X	A									
Todd Peetz (Amy Reichlin)		X	X									
Amos Sarfo (Eric Long)	X	X	X									
CITY OF KENT												
Kailyn Cyrus (Bridget Susel)	X	X	X									
STARK COUNTY												
Keith Bennett	X	X	X									
Alfredo Carranza												
Kirt Conrad												
Ted Herncane		X	X									
David Maley	X	X	X									
Dan Moeglin (Sarah Buell)												
Mike Naso (Helene Papczun)		A	A									
Bob Nau (Curtis Bungard)	X	X	X									
Richard Regula (Bill Smith)	X	X	X									
Jim Troike (Tom Davis and Jeff Lonzrick)	A											
Pete Wearstler		X	X									
Stephan Wilder (Jason Segedy & Ben Young)	X	X	A									
CITY OF CANTON												
Doug Harris (John Highman Jr. and Chris Barnes)	X	X	X									
COUNTY OF SUMMIT												
Jim Balogh	X	X	X									
Alan Brubaker (Stephanie Diebel and Chuck Hauber)		A	A									
Caitlin Elrad	X		X									
David Kohlmeier (Zak Kaczor)		X	X									
Sam Scaffide	X		X									
Ilene Shapiro (Joseph Eckenrode)	A	A	A									
Dianne Sumego	X		X									
James Taylor	X	X	X									
Michael Vinay (Matt Calcei)	A		X									
CITY OF AKRON^a												
Tina Boyes		X	X									
Kyle Julien (Dylan Garritano)			A									
Chris Ludle (Michelle DiFiore)	A	A										
Shammas Malik (David Messner)	A	A	A									
Margo Sommerville (Joan Williams & Sara Biviano)												
Helen Tomic (Kurt Mulhauser)	A											
Vacant												
WAYNE COUNTY												
Matt Martin (Dave McMillen)	X	X										
Jennifer Kiper (Rob Kastner)	X	X	X									
Steven Wheeler (Kevin Givins)	A	A										
CITY OF WOOSTER												
Robert Reynolds (Vince Marion & Joel Montgomery)	A	A	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 March 19, 2025 meeting
Jill Crawford, Portage County Commissioner (Alternate)
Megan Pitman, Village of Lakemore