

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

1a. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by First Vice-Chair Peetz at 8:34 a.m. in the presence of a quorum.

1b. Approval of the Agenda

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

1c. Pledge of Allegiance

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

1d. Audience Participation (members of the public)

Mr. Peetz 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 September 17, 2025

A motion was made by Ms. Cyrus, seconded by Mr. Nau, to accept the September meeting minutes. The motion carried.

3. Financial Status Report - month of September

Mr. Hadley said that \$26,915.11 was received as income during September, fiscal year receipts to date were \$177,867.78, disbursements to date were \$135,524.48, and cash on hand at the end of September was \$96,712.17.

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

3a. September Bank Reconciliations

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

A motion was made by Mr. Highman, seconded by Mr. Nau, to accept the September bank reconciliations. The motion carried.

4. Adoption of the 2025 Annual Performance Progress Report

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that staff is requesting adoption of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2025 Annual Performance Progress Report (APPR). He stated that the APPR is a required document from the EDA; a deliverable of NEFCO's Partnership Planning Grant. He said that this report maintains NEFCO's status as an EDA designated economic development district. Every five years staff is required to create the CEDS plan. The APPR will be submitted to the EDA by October 30th. He noted included in the Board packet are excerpts from the APPR document. The document can also be viewed on NEFCO's website. He discussed the eight goals that will remain in the CEDS for the next twelve months. He asked for approval of Resolution No. FY2026-002 to adopt the 2025 Annual Performance Progress Report.

A motion was made by Mr. Regula, seconded by Mr. Bennett, to approve Resolution No. FY2026-002 to adopt the 2025 Annual Performance Progress Report. The motion carried.

Mr. Regula asked if the APPR is done every year. Mr. Lautzenheiser said that every five years staff prepares a full CEDS plan and the other four years staff prepares the APPR. Mr. Regula asked if

Mr. Lautzenheiser sees any progress from year to year? Mr. Lautzenheiser said yes, he thinks staff is making progress with the economic development program.

5. 2025 Regional Benchmarking Report

Mr. Lautzenheiser distributed a couple of copies of the 2025 Regional Benchmarking Report to the board to review. He said that the seventh goal listed in the CEDS plan states that staff publish a Regional Benchmarking Report. He said that in 2024, the Regional CEDS Committee requested that the Benchmarking Report be added to the CEDS plan as an important step in evaluating the region's competitiveness, not only within the NEFCO region, but in comparison with other regions around the country. He stated that he is excited to share this report with the Board. He noted that an Executive Summary has been included in the Board packet.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the importance of this report is to establish a baseline; where NEFCO is at as a region without knowing some of the baseline data. It is challenging to evaluate NEFCO's competitiveness, how the NEFCO region is doing; where there are weaknesses and strengths; and where there are opportunities needed to capitalize. He said that it is important to assess the NEFCO region and compare NEFCO with other regions. He said that staff reasoned that some regions were doing better than NEFCO, were there other strategies that NEFCO could adopt that other regions are doing? That would make NEFCO more competitive. He said that it was hard identifying peer regions to compare with the NEFCO Region. He said that he reached out to the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) for help in finding comparable regions as far as population and a principal city that were similar to Akron and Canton. He stated that NADO provided many regions for NEFCO to use for comparison. He said that staff decided to use the regions in the Midwest, which includes places like Rochester, New York; Scranton, Pennsylvania; Lexington, Kentucky; Knoxville, Tennessee; Springfield, Missouri; Tulsa, Oklahoma; Des Moines, Iowa; Sioux Falls, Nebraska; Grand Rapids, Michigan; Green Bay, Wisconsin; South Bend, Indiana; and Rockford, Illinois. All of these regions had similar populations and also a principal city that was about the size of Akron or slightly larger. He said that staff chose to use this economic development district as the unit of comparison. He said that staff came up with seven categories of data metrics which were called performance indicators. The data was compiled from the Census Bureau American Community Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Ohio Department of Development, and Stats America.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that when staff were preparing this study, trends and patterns popped out immediately and there were a number of weaknesses in comparison to the other regions. Some strengths were also recognized. He described some of the other regions in comparison with the NEFCO region. He noted that NEFCO is the fourth lowest in population among the fifteen regions being compared. Of those fifteen regions NEFCO is one of only two to lose population since 2010. NEFCO has the third highest unemployment rate among the fifteen regions. NEFCO has the third lowest amount of housing that was built after 2010, which shows a lack of growth for new developments in the region. NEFCO has a high owner occupancy rate which shows investment in the region and generally higher property tax revenues. NEFCO has a low vacancy rate, which shows that there are no vacant homes burdening the cities. He said that the NEFCO region is in the top third of earned bachelor's degrees and higher.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the NEFCO region did well in the human capital of knowledge creation sub index. This index grades the region's ability for the population and workforce to gauge in innovative activity which combines the educational attainments, patterns and technology, university-based knowledge, STEM degrees, tech-based occupation clusters, high tech industry employment, and the average prime age population growth. The other sub index is a business profile which incorporates local business conditions and resources that are available to entrepreneurs and businesses. Mr. Lautzenheiser noted that the two big opportunities that this region should embrace are addressing population and housing. He said that the next steps in the

report showed that staff needs to look deeper into some of the higher performing regions. There were four regions that overperformed; outperformed NEFCO in nearly every data category. He said that this Benchmarking Report is meant to be a periodic publication.

Mr. Hadley asked about the cost-of-living index as a comparative factor. Mr. Cole, Village of Lakemore Mayor, said that it would be hard to compare the cost of living and the age of infrastructure with the other regions. Mr. Lautzenheiser said that in most of the regions those particular cities being compared are the prime city in the state. Ms. DiFiore asked if this kind of report had been done before. Mr. Hadley said in the past staff prepared a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis within the CEDS document. Mr. Regula said that Stark County has prepared a housing study. Ms. DiFiore asked how does NEFCO's Benchmarking report tie into the state's population projections? Mr. Hadley said that the Ohio Department of Development is very restrictive with its projections variables. He asked Mr. Lautzenheiser if he sees this study playing into future EDA projects from NEFCO's members. Mr. Lautzenheiser said that it will be helpful. He mentioned that Jonathan Milea (Wooster) stated that he intends to use this report as justification for an EDA grant. Mr. Lautzenheiser said that he hopes that NEFCO's members use this report and find it helpful. Mr. Nau said that the Stark County Commissioners funded a housing study, in which the Stark Economic Development Board hired a consultant and are in the process of implementing some of the recommendations of that housing study. He stated that there is a big group of stakeholders in the county looking at everything from infrastructure cost to economic development efficiency. He stated that if one doesn't have the workers, one won't have the jobs. Mr. Regula said that the housing study will also expand water and sewer to provide more housing. Mr. Balogh said that it would be neat to observe the data from the 1950s and compare them to today's data. Mr. Hadley encouraged the Board to reach out to Mr. Lautzenheiser for his technical assistance with any upcoming grant opportunities.

6. NEFCO FY2026 Work Program – status

a. Environmental Planning

Mr. LaPlante said that following last month's Board meeting staff prepared and distributed the press release on September 26, 2025. He said that in the press release noted that the 30-day comment period would run from September 26th to October 26, 2025. The press release was sent to Board members, the Environmental Resources Technical Advisory Committee (ERTAC), the Region's four major newspapers, and to the region's municipalities, cities, villages, and townships. The press release was also posted on NEFCO's website. He noted that no comments were received related to an FPA. He mentioned that staff received a request from the Tuscarawas Metropolitan Sewer District to update the Bolivar FPA which is located in Stark County. He stated that the next step for the update is to continue to monitor all the questions that are received. He said that staff anticipates requesting the ERTAC to consider, at its December 3rd meeting, a recommendation to the board to approve the FY2026 FPA update at the December 17th Board meeting. Board approval of the Plan update at its December meeting would allow staff to submit the update to Ohio EPA for state certification in late December/early January, thus completing the FY2026 FPA update.

Mr. LaPlante said that Ohio EPA set a January 16, 2026 deadline for NEFCO and the Areawides to submit for state certification the 208 Plan updates and amendments from CY2025.

Mr. LaPlante said that the submitted amendments from CY2024 were delayed mainly because Ohio EPA needed to concentrate on the counties in Central Ohio where Ohio EPA has jurisdiction for wastewater management. Ohio EPA notified staff that public notification should occur in October that will account for the CY2024 updates. The goal is to have the governor certify the CY2024 updates by December and then seek US EPA approval. Once US EPA approves the 208 plan updates and amendments, the updates will become part of the State's Water Quality Management Plan.

Mr. LaPlante said that a speaker will be presenting an update on the condition of the Portage Lakes. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources and Summit County Engineers Office will present to the Board in November and answer questions regarding the Portage Lakes Management Plan.

Members were asked to please contact Mr. LaPlante if they have any questions or requests.

b. Economic Development

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the Barberton Community Foundation was awarded an \$80,000 EDA Local Technical Assistance grant. He said that this was for a comprehensive feasibility study looking at advanced manufacturing workforce training opportunities. He noted that the Board provided a letter of support for the Polymer Workforce Center project. A feasibility study will be proposed in the near future for construction of a workforce training center.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that EDA's staff is currently furloughed with limited services. He stated that reimbursement requests are not happening during the government shut down. He stated that before the shutdown happened the FY2025 public works and economic adjustments assistance program notice of funding opportunity was released. He said that the next round of the tech hubs funding was released right before the government shut down. He said that this funding is only available to the nineteen designated tech hubs that didn't receive funding the first time around.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the City of Akron and the Summit Lake Community Development Corporation were awarded \$25,000 for a Community Connectors grant through Smart Growth America. The City of Canton was awarded \$248,000 for a Safe Streets and Roads for All grant to prepare a comprehensive Safety Action Plan.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the Ohio Conference of Community Development (OCCD) is hosting the 2025 Annual Community Development Training and Networking Conference on November 5-6 at the Nationwide Hotel and Conference Center in Lewis Center, Ohio.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that he provided information for the T-Mobile Hometown grant program.

Mr. Hadley said that Mr. Lautzenheiser can be a resource for local technical assistance grants. He said that there is funding available which could help push a project along. Mr. Lautzenheiser said that he is available to help with any grants. He said that the EDA is not receiving the volume of applications that they received previous years, so there is funding available. Please contact staff for additional information.

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

Mr. Hadley said that he included some government shutdown information for the Board; which includes shutdown details from some of the agencies that staff keeps in contact with. For additional information on the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Health and Human Services please contact staff for the link. He said that he included some other legislative work being done by Congress prior to the shutdown.

Please contact NEFCO for additional information on any of the items in this memo.

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

Mr. Peetz asked for a copy of the Stark County Housing report which Mr. Regula had referenced earlier in the meeting. Mr. Regula said that he will forward the report to the NEFCO staff to distribute to the Board.

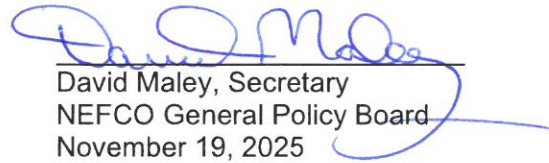
9. Other Business

a. NEFCO office's temporary location: update

Mr. Hadley said that the NEFCO office relocation will take place this week. He said that Summit County is redoing the Ohio building from floor to ceiling including HVAC. The office will temporary be located at the Pry Building, 1180 S Main St., Akron. He noted that the office phone numbers and mailing address will remain the same. Please contact the staff if you have any questions.

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 a.m.

Submitted by Rebecca L. Morgan, Administrative Assistant


David Maley, Secretary
NEFCO General Policy Board
November 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	X		A	A	X	X			
Daniel Blakely (Tia Rutledge)		A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A			
Rochelle Hartigan												
Becky Lehman (Justin Rechichar)	X	X	A	X	A	X	X	A	A	X		
Todd Peetz (Amy Reichlin)		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Amos Sarfo (Eric Long)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
CITY OF KENT												
Kailyn Cyrus (Bridget Susel)	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X		
STARK COUNTY												
Keith Bennett	X	X	X			X				X		
Alfredo Carranza				X	X		X		X			
Ted Herncane		X	X	X	X		X		X			
David Maley	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		
Dan Moeglin (Sarah Buell)									X			
Mike Naso (Helene Papczun)		A	A	A		A	A	X				
Bob Nau (Curtis Bungard)	X	X	X	X				X	X	X		
Joe Race (Emily Breeze) (September 10, 2025)									X			
Richard Regula (Bill Smith)	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		
Jim Troike (Tom Davis and Jeff Lonzrick)	A			A	X	A	X	A		X		
Pete Wearstler		X	X		X	X	X	X	X			
Vacant												
CITY OF CANTON												
Doug Harris (John Highman Jr. and Chris Barnes)	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	A		
COUNTY OF SUMMIT												
Jim Balogh	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		
Alan Brubaker (Stephanie Diebel and Chuck Hauber)		A	A		A	A	A	A	A			
Caitlin Elrad	X		X		X							
David Kohlmeier (Zak Kaczor)		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		
Sam Scaffide	X		X			X		X		X		
Ilene Shapiro (Joseph Eckenrode)	A	A	A	A	A							
Dianne Sumego	X		X	X		X			X			
James Taylor	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Michael Vinay (Matt Calcei)	A		X	X		X	X	X	A	A		
CITY OF AKRON												
Tina Boyes		X	X									
Jan Davis (May 5, 2025)												
Kyle Julien (Dylan Garritano)			A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A		
Chris Ludle (Michelle DiFiore)	A	A		A	A	A	A	A	A	A		
Shammas Malik	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A				
Margo Sommerville (Joan Williams & Sara Biviano)												
Helen Tomic (Kurt Mulhauser)	A			A	A	X	X	A	X	A		
WAYNE COUNTY												
Matt Martin (Dave McMillen)	X	X		X		X	X	X	X			
Jennifer Kiper (Rob Kastner)	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X			
Steven Wheeler (Kevin Givins)	A	A		A	A		A	A		A		
CITY OF WOOSTER												
Robert Reynolds (Vince Marion & Joel Montgomery)	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A			
OHIO EPA-NEDO^a												
David Emerman (Allen Tyler)												
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 October 15, 2025 meeting	
Richard Cole, Mayor, Village of Lakemore	
Julie Morris, City of Kent	
Christina Mambourg, Village of Doylestown	