

MINUTES--NEFCO GENERAL POLICY BOARD MEETING held Wednesday, April 19, 2023, at the City of Green Community Hall at Central Park

1a. Call to Order

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

1b. Approval of the Agenda

A motion was made by Mr. Tatum, seconded by Ms. Sumego, to approve the agenda. The motion carried.

1c. Pledge of Allegiance

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

1d. Audience Participation (members of the public)

Mr. Regula 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 March 15, 2023

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

3. Financial Status Report - month of March

Mr. Hadley said that \$37,235.55 was received as income during March, receipts to date were \$371,138.47, disbursements to date were \$439,367.02, and cash on hand at the end of March was \$288,828.68.

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

3a. March Bank Reconciliations

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

A motion was made by Mr. Hofstetter, seconded by Mr. Troike, to accept the March bank reconciliations. The motion carried.

4. City of Akron requests letter of support for USEPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant application

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the City of Akron requested a letter of support for its U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) application. He said that the EPA is offering \$1 million in formula funds (grants) through the CPRG program to each of the 67 most populous metropolitan statistical areas (MSA). He stated that the Akron MSA (Summit and Portage Counties) is ranked the 83rd largest MSA and the Canton-Massillon MSA is ranked 137th. Even though Akron is not in the top 67 MSAs, the City of Akron believes it is worth submitting a letter of intent to participate, with the anticipation that other higher-ranked MSAs will decide not to apply for this grant. He noted that no local match is required. He said that this program would allow the City of Akron to develop and implement plans for reducing greenhouse gas and air pollution in the MSA. He said that these planning funds could be used to develop a Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) and Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP). The proposed plans would address transportation, waste management, energy, and water efficiency. The City would serve as the lead applicant and would partner with Summit County Public Health and the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS). He stated that the City has requested a letter of support from NEFCO and a commitment to serve as a coordinating agency to

participate in some compacity with the project, if funded. The proposed planning project is consistent with the mission of NEFCO, the Clean Water (208) Plan, and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs). The submittal deadline for the letter of intent to participate is April 28, 2023. He mentioned that it is expected that planning grants will be awarded in July or August 2023. He asked for approval of the attached draft letter of support. Mr. Lautzenheiser introduced Sam Rubens, Akron Regional Air Quality Management District, to give a summary of the project.

Mr. Rubens said that the \$1 million planning grant is only for planning. He said that if this project is funded, it will make the City of Akron eligible for a portion of the \$4.6 billion funds for implementation of the plan. He noted that four states didn't take advantage of this grant funding; which added additional cities to the list. Mr. Peetz asked how will Portage County be incorporated into this grant? Mr. Rubens said that the City of Kent and Kent State University are currently working on the process of joining the grant; as well as PARTA. Mr. Regula asked how will the funding be used? Mr. Rubens said that the funding would be used for modernization of transit fleets, charging stations, upgrading transfer facilities/bus stations to be more sustainable, etc. Mr. Hadley asked if the Akron MSA is awarded the grant, would NEFCO be eligible for some of the funding? Mr. Rubens said yes, with NEFCO being a coordinating agency, funding would be available with different perspectives. Mr. Hadley asked how quickly would U.S. EPA make the announcement? Mr. Rubens said that the U.S. EPA wants to distribute the funds as soon as the awards are announced.

A motion was made by Mr. Malik, seconded by Mr. Tatum, to approve the letter of support for the City of Akron's USEPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant application. The motion carried.

5. Appointment of CY2023 NEFCO Budget and Work Program Committee

Mr. Hadley said that listed are the recommended members of the CY2023 Budget and Work Program Committee. He said most of the individuals listed are long time committee members. Mr. Hadley stated that the members work with him as he supplies the information for the current budget and what the revenues and expenditures look like for the next fiscal year. He said that the Committee is in charge of developing a budget recommendation for the Board's approval at the June meeting. He noted that the Committee will meet once or twice before the June meeting. He asked for approval of the following Budget and Work Program Committee members:

Jim Benekos, Engineer, City of Canton
Andrei Dordea, Finance Director, City of Wooster
Jon Hofstetter, Commissioner, Wayne County
Dave Ruller, City Manager, City of Kent
Tia Rutledge, Planning Manager, Portage County Water Resources
Craig Stanley, Director of Administrative Services, County of Summit
Helen Tomic, Comprehensive Planning Administrator, City of Akron
James Troike, Sanitary Engineer, Stark County

A motion was made by Mr. Tatum, seconded by Mr. Eckenrode, to approve the CY2023 NEFCO Budget and Work Program Committee. The motion carried.

6. NEFCO FY2023 Work Program – status

a. Economic Development

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that staff submitted the final performance progress and financial reports for the EDA CARES Act Supplemental Assistance Grant. He noted that the Economic Recovery and Resiliency (ER&R) plan is a product of this grant. He said that the Economic Recovery and

Resiliency Implementation Committee (ERRIC) is working to help implement some of the recommendations that were included in the ER&R plan. He said that staff distributed a follow-up survey to further refine some of the strategies that the ERRIC could help address for the region. He said that some of the results from the survey received were: working with economic development organizations (EDOs) to help better tell the story of manufactured products and how important the story is to the region; assisting EDOs with encouraging companies to better explain training and incentives in education benefits that are available to parents to help upcoming graduates; workforce strategies to include working with the business community and EDOs to identify relevant, vocational courses and certifications that could be expanded to high schools vocational courses; and working with community development organizations to partnership with opportunities between businesses and childcare facilities. He said that the results also suggested some transportation, entrepreneurship, and regional business strategies.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the EDA published on March 15th a notice of funding opportunity for the FY2023 Public Works/Economic Adjustment Assistance (PW/EAA) program. The PW/EAA program supports construction, non-construction, planning, technical assistance, and revolving loan fund projects. He stated that a non-federal match of 50-percent is required. He said that eligible applicants include political subdivisions, nonprofit organizations (acting in cooperation with a political subdivision), and institutions of higher education. He said that projects must be consistent with the NEFCO CEDS Plan and the EDA Investment Priorities. All EDA grant applications must be submitted through the new Economic Development Grants Experience (EDGE) portal.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the EDA released a 2023 STEM Talent Challenge funding opportunity on April 11th. This funding opportunity supports the creation and implementation of innovative science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) work-based learning models that complement the respective region's innovation economy. He noted that a non-federal match of 50-percent is required. He said that eligible applicants include local governments, nonprofit organizations, economic development organizations, and institutions of higher education. He stated that the application deadline is June 12, 2023. He said that there is \$4.5 million available for this grant for the entire country.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that on March 21st, the Portage Area Regional Transit Authority (PARTA) requested a letter of support from NEFCO to accompany its U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Federal Transit Administration Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities application. He said that the grant deadline was April 13th, which falls between Board meetings. He said that since the attached letter was similar to a letter provided to the City of Kent last year, staff submitted the letter of support to PARTA without prior Board approval. He stated that PARTA is requesting \$4.5 million in grant funding for improvements, which include crosswalks, bus pull-offs, shared-use paths, bus shelters, and other enhancements. He stated that the project will make significant multi-modal improvements to a congested, high-crash corridor, facilitating safe circulation and access to downtown Kent and Kent State University. He said that the project will significantly improve traffic flow for motorists and transit, while reducing speeds and making crossings safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the BroadbandOhio Director provided some updates and highlights of the testimony for broadband issues in Ohio. He noted that as part of its statewide stakeholder engagement efforts, BroadbandOhio launched an Internet Access Survey. He said that the survey was provided to Ohio residents, government entities, internet service providers, nonprofit/community organizations, and private businesses for its input. He said that the Internet Access Survey is part of a larger statewide outreach effort, which began in March.

Mr. Lautzenheiser discussed the availability of some upcoming funding opportunities, with fast approaching deadlines.

Mr. Balogh asked what are the long and short-term strategies? Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the long and short-term strategies will be discussed at the next ERRIC meeting.

b. Environmental Planning

Mr. LaPlante said that on March 17, 2023, with the Board's approval of the voluntary annual 201/208 FPA update guidelines, staff sent the guidelines to the Region's 38 primary wastewater management agencies (MAs). He stated that staff gave the MAs a deadline of June 19, 2023 to submit any proposed FPA updates. He said that it is important that the primary MAs' GIS specialists provide GIS shapefiles in the same format as NEFCO's shapefiles for any proposed FPA updates. He said that a virtual meeting will be held on April 21st for the interested MAs to meet with NEFCO's GIS specialist regarding the annual FPA update. He said that the county MAs have jurisdiction in all unincorporated areas within the county, both inside and outside of any established FPA. He noted that all the FPAs in a county do not have to be updated at once.

Mr. LaPlante said that the funding from the next state budget will remain at \$75,000/yr. The federal funding pass-through will increase to roughly \$98,000/yr. He stated that the ninety percent increase in federal funding is guaranteed for SFY2024, but not for SFY2025-2028 since the funding is subject to future congressional appropriations. Mr. LaPlante said that the Ohio EPA has emphasized that the Areawides use the increase in U.S. EPA pass-through funding and the funding that the agency provides from the state biennium budget primarily for core Section 208 Plan maintenance. He noted that this maintenance includes 208 Plan consistency reviews for draft Permits-to-Install (PTIs), Plan chapter updates, Plan amendments and updates, and technical assistance. He said that scopes of services for these contracts are being developed by staff for review by the Ohio EPA.

Mr. LaPlante provided an update of the Board-approved 208 Plan amendments from June 2020 through January 2023. He said that Ohio EPA published a public notice announcing that the agency's director is proposing to update water quality management plans, as required by Sections 303 and 208 of the Clean Water Act. He stated that the public comment period will run until May 17, 2023.

Mr. LaPlante mentioned that Ohio EPA will be holding a webinar on May 2, 2023 entitled *Troubleshooting Noncompliance at Small Wastewater Treatment Plants*. He noted that CEU credits will be available for participants.

Mr. Moeglin asked what will be done with the additional water quality management federal funding? Mr. Hadley said that the emphasis from Ohio EPA is to use the funding for 208 planning. He said that with the emphasis on 208 work he would like staff to try to position members better to receive wastewater funding. He provided some history on the water quality management federal funding and said he is still determining in what form this assistance might be to members.

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

Mr. Hadley said that according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), if the debt limit is not raised or suspended, the government's ability to issue new debt will be exhausted between July and September 2023.

Mr. Hadley said that the House passed HR1 to expedite the way the federal government regulates drilling and mining. He stated that the bill would waive some of the environmental review restrictions that currently exist.

Mr. Hadley said that there is still a lot going on behind the scenes and in front of the cameras regarding rail and hazmat safety. He said that he has learned a lot about how railroads structure these long trains, including where empty cars are put versus hazardous waste cars and locomotives. He stated that a lot of the emphasis, in terms of rail safety, has been on how are they doing that, does it make sense, is it challenging the laws of physics when the trains are traveling around bends? He said that Ohio Senators Vance and Brown introduced the Railway Safety Act, SB 576. He mentioned that Senators Fetterman, Casey, and Brown also introduced the Railway Accountability Act, SB 1044 which would build onto the safety provisions of SB 576.

Mr. Hadley said that the Senate Agriculture Committee is wrapping up its work on the Farm Bill act. He said that he has included some details on this act. He also provided information from the Senate on the impact of climate change on residential insurance. He stated that property insurance rates have gone through the roof because of the flooding in Florida.

Mr. Hadley said that he has included some information from the Ohio Association of Regional Councils' lobbyist, Government Advantage Group, regarding the Ohio House Finance Committee's budget substitute bill FY24/25. Please contact NEFCO staff if you would like additional information.


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. Regula mentioned that the Stark County Home and Garden show will be held at the Hall of Fame Village Dome on April 21st and 22nd.

9. Other Business

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS, the meeting was adjourned at 9:26 a.m.

Submitted by Rebecca L. Morgan, Administrative Assistant



Todd Peetz, Secretary
NEFCO General Policy Board
May 17, 2023

NEFCO GENERAL POLICY BOARD 2023 ATTENDANCE SHEET

Member (alternate)	1/18	2/15	3/15	4/19	5/17	6/21	7/19	8/16	9/20	10/18	11/15	12/20
PORTAGE COUNTY												
Sabrina Christian-Bennett (Mike Tinlin)			X	A								
Daniel Blakely (Tia Rutledge)	A	A	A	A								
Joseph Diorio	A	X		X								
Todd Peetz (Gail Gifford)	X	X	X	X								
Susan Riehm (2-9-23)			X	X								
Amos Sarfo (Eric Long)		X	X	X								
CITY OF KENT												
Kathleen Petsko (Bridget Susel)	X	X	X	X								
STARK COUNTY												
Keith Bennett	X	X										
Alfredo Carranza	X	X										
Kirt Conrad			X	X								
Athena Ebersole	X											
David Maley	X	X	X									
Joe Mazzola		X		X								
Dan Moeglin				X								
Bob Nau (Curtis Bungard)	X	X		X								
Richard Regula (Bill Smith)		X	X	X								
Jim Troike (Scott Ellsworth and Tom Davis)	A	A		X								
Vacant (Rachel Hosler)												
Vacant												
CITY OF CANTON												
Jim Benekos (John Highman Jr. and Chris Barnes)	X	X	X	A								
COUNTY OF SUMMIT												
Jim Balogh	X	X	X	X								
Alan Brubaker (Joe Paradise and Larry Fulton)	A											
David Kohlmeier (Zak Kaczor)	X	X	X	X								
David Lukas	A	X	X	X								
Sam Scaffide	X	X		X								
Ilene Shapiro (Craig Stanley & Joe Eckenrode)		A	A	A								
Dianne Sumego	X			X								
Michael Vinay (Matt Calcei)	X	X										
Elizabeth Walters (Mark Potter)		A	A	A								
CITY OF AKRON												
Ginger Baylor												
Daniel Horrigan (Sam DeShazor)												
Chris Ludle (Michelle DiFiore)	A	A	A	A								
Shammas Malik	X	X	X	X								
Linda F. R. Omobien												
Thomas A. Tatum (Jim Ashley)	X	X	X	X								
Helen Tomic (Kurt Mulhauser)												
WAYNE COUNTY												
Jonathan Hofstetter (Sue Smail)	X	X	X	X								
Jenn Kiper (Rob Kastner)	X	X	X	X								
Steven Wheeler (Kevin Givins)	A	A	A	A								
CITY OF WOOSTER												
Bob Breneman (Jonathan Millea, and Vince Marion)	A	A	A									
OHIO EPA-NEDO^a												
David Emerman (Patricia Vanah)	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 April 19, 2023 meeting

Doug Lane, Congresswoman Sykes' Office
--

Jack Riehm, Portage County Resident

Sam Rubens, Akron Regional Air Quality Management District
--

Emily Collins, City of Akron

Meghan Adair, Summit/Medina Workforce Area
--