

**MINUTES--NEFCO GENERAL POLICY BOARD MEETING held Wednesday, June 21, 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. Bennett, seconded by Mr. Marion, 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.

Mr. Regula asked the new alternates to introduce themselves: Kurt Mulhauser, Planner, Akron Planning Department alternate for Helen Tomic; and David Messner, Development Manager, City of Akron alternate for Chris Ludle.

**2. Consideration of the draft minutes of the regular meeting of the NEFCO General Policy Board on May 17, 2023**

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

**3. Financial Status Report - month of May**

Mr. Hadley said that \$54,158.22 was received as income during May, receipts to date were \$425,298.55, disbursements to date were \$525,112.67, and cash on hand at the end of May was \$257,243.11.

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

**3a. May Bank Reconciliations**

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

A motion was made by Ms. Sumego, seconded by Ms. Kiper, to accept the May bank reconciliations. The motion carried.

**4. Adoption of the FY2024 Appropriations and Expenditures Budget, and Work Program; Recommendation of the Budget and Work Program Committee**

Mr. Hadley said that this is a request for adopting the FY2024 appropriations and expenditures budget as well as the work program. He said that this is unchanged from what was emailed last week. He stated that it reflects a stable budget and consists of NEFCO's two major grantors, the Economic Development Administration (EDA), and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA), as well as the dues-paying members. He said that in terms of the EDA funding, this is the second year of the three-year grant. He said that the only difference from what was reported at the May meeting, was that a request for funds reimbursement from EDA wasn't made in time to be reflected in the FY2023 budget. He stated that the funding will be deferred to the next fiscal year. This resulted in a larger grant carryover, which is shown in Table 1. The Ohio EPA funding is the same as what was reported last month. NEFCO is very fortunate to receive line item funding in the

Governor's budget request. He said that this was included in the House and Senate proposed budgets and consists of \$450,000 per biennium which will be divided by the six Areawide agencies, \$75,000 per year/per agency. He said that as reported last month from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, NEFCO will receive additional pass-through funding from USEPA through Ohio EPA in the amount of \$98,457 for FY2024. He noted that the dues were recommended at the current rate of \$0.18 per capita based on the 2020 decennial census. He said that the cash carryover amount was reduced from \$275,000 to \$240,000, resulting in a budget total of \$744,773. He pointed out a typo in the memo on the top of page 2: the total expected revenues should be \$744,773; not \$764,773. He mentioned that Table 3 shows the total budget divided among various expense categories with no real changes from what was reported last month. He said that attached is the draft work program. He stated that the attached budget was recommended by the members of the Budget Committee, which gave him some flexibility to make minor adjustments to either the revenues or expenditures. He said that there was no need for the committee to meet in June to discuss the FY2024 budget, since the changes were minor. He stated that the budget information was sent to the Budget Committee members for their review prior to the Board meeting. He asked for approval of the FY2024 Appropriations and Expenditures Budget, and Work Program.

A motion was made by Mr. Bennett, seconded by Mr. Eckenrode, to adopt the FY2024 Appropriations and Expenditures Budget, and Work Program. The motion carried.

#### **5. Consideration of the continuation of the part-time employment position for: Watershed Planner/Geographic Information System Specialist**

Mr. Hadley said that this is a continuation of a request that is presented annually for part time employment positions. He said that an employment contract is used for what in essence, is a person(s) who are NEFCO employees. These employee(s) pay into PERS retirement and NEFCO pays its part as a PERS employer. These employees are considered contract employees in terms of a set payroll amount with limited benefits. The individuals that have been hired and employed under this framework have been satisfied with the structure. He said that under the Affordable Care Act there were some challenges because the employees weren't able to work the hours needed depending on the workload. NEFCO employees are permitted to work under 30 hours per week and be within or under the requirements for the Affordable Care Act. He said that if an employee worked over those hours, the person would then need to be provided with sick or healthcare benefits under Summit County's health insurance. The County has a requirement on the minimum number of hours worked to be considered full-time. He said that specifically this position has been filled by Maia Peck, Watershed Planner/GIS Specialist, who splits her time between doing 208 work that requires GIS mapping, and she also has had a very important role in NEFCO's seven-year Portage Lakes nutrient study. He mentioned that this contract would run from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024.

A motion was made by Ms. Sumego, seconded by Mr. Peetz, to continue the part-time employment position for: Watershed Planner/Geographic Information System Specialist. The motion carried.

#### **6. NEFCO FY2023 Work Program – status**

##### **a. Economic Development**

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the EDA released a fact sheet on the Recompete Pilot Program. He stated that this program is investing in distressed communities that have unemployment or underemployment in a particular community that is above the national average. He said that it is regarding workforce development strategies and getting the prime age of unemployment (25 to 54 years) back into the workforce. He said that this is a two-phase program with funding up to \$200

million dollars. He said that all of the details about this program are not available. He stated that what he knows is that the program is going to be super competitive and that not all geographic areas are eligible. He stated that there will be a community or two (or portions of a community) that will be eligible in the NEFCO region. As soon as he gets additional details, he will forward the information to the Board and other contacts. He said that the first phase is strategy development, and there will be \$6 to \$12 million in grants available nationwide. To be able to go forward to the second phase of the program the applicant must have the recompute plan approved from the phase I portion of the program. He stated that those applicants that don't have a recompute plan approved from phase I will not be eligible to apply for phase II. Mr. Regula asked if this grant would help educate the schools and students on all the different employment opportunities? Mr. Lautzenheiser said yes, this is a workforce development strategy to increase employment; particularly for young adults who are starting to enter the workforce. Mr. Regula asked if the higher paying salaries would help get people to apply for jobs? Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the salaries portion would fall in the implementation portion of the program.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the Economic Recovery Corps (ERC) program is the product of the 2022 EDA CARES Act grant that was awarded to the International Economic Development Council (IEDC). He said that the IEDC and partners have developed this program to essentially place 65 ERC Fellows across the country in different regions to assist with developing and implementing economic development strategies, projects and plans around in their respective host organization. He stated that the host organization would not have any financial obligation because it would be paid for by the IEDC. He said that the deadline to apply for this program is June 30, 2023.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the EDA published the Build to Scale program which has two parts: the Venture Challenge and the Capital Challenge. He said that these programs are about increasing capital for innovation, entrepreneurs, and startups. He stated that the Venture Challenge supports programs that enable high growth technological entrepreneurs. The Capital Challenge increases access to capital in those communities where risk capital is in short supply. The submittal deadline is July 28, 2023.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the Regional Technology and Innovation Hub Program (Tech Hubs) is a \$500 million dollar program with two phases. He said that this is about establishing tech hubs around the country. The regions or geographies that are being used as a tech hub are either a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) or could be a combination of micropolitan areas. He said that phase I is about strategy development and is similar to the recompute program. There is an opportunity for the phase I to be used to pursue strategy of dollars up to \$500,000 to further develop that idea. He stated that an applicant must be designated as a tech hub in order to apply for the second phase of this program. The deadline for phase I is August 15, 2023, with a 20 percent local match.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the Portage Area Regional Transit Authority (PARTA) approached NEFCO and requested a letter of support for a grant application that they are submitting to ODOT's Transit Partnership Program. He stated that this support letter will be for SFY2024 funding in support of PARTA's application which is requesting funding for automatic passenger counters, equipment, facility, rehab, and replacement vehicles. He noted that the support letter is attached.

Mr. Lautzenheiser announced that he was accepted to serve on the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Research Foundation Advisory Committee.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that AMATS approved its four-year Transportation Improvement Program. He said that the Stark County Regional Planning Commission asked NEFCO staff to provide a link, to the Board, for a survey seeking input from residents or Stark County employees input on community development goals, objectives, and outcomes. He stated that Broadband Ohio has updated its Ohio Broadband Strategy and completed a draft of its Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program Five Year Action Plan.

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

#### **b. Environmental Planning**

Mr. LaPlante said that the ongoing Clean Water Plan annual facilities planning area update is going well. He said that there are about eight wastewater management agencies (MAs) participating this year and about half of those MAs have submitted complete update applications to NEFCO. A few MAs have requested that the deadline be extended until the end of June to complete the application package. The new deadline is June 30, 2023.

Mr. LaPlante said that the draft Portage Lakes Management Plan (PLMP) has been completed. He said that the last Portage Lakes partners meeting, for FY2023, will be held on June 29<sup>th</sup> at the Portage Lakes branch of the Akron-Summit County Public Library on Manchester Road. He listed some topics that will be discussed at the meeting. Mr. LaPlante said that staff will present the PLMP at the July 5<sup>th</sup> Environmental Resources Technical Advisory Committee (ERTAC) meeting. He said that the ERTAC will be asked for a recommendation to accept the draft Plan.

Mr. LaPlante stated that staff and other partners met with the U.S. EPA Region 5 project officer from NEFCO's Canal Diversion Dam grant through the Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO) on June 7<sup>th</sup> to discuss the project, other removed Cuyahoga River dams, and progress on the Gorge Dam removal project. After visiting the sites of the three removed dams, the GLNPO project officer commented that it was great to see the Cuyahoga River flowing freely where the dams once impounded it.

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

Mr. Hadley said that he is trying to keep the Board up to date on various things going on at the federal and state levels. He said that Congress came to a solution regarding the debt and provided the legislation to President Biden for his signature. The President signed it on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. He said that the debt limit package sets forth some caps for moving forward with appropriations, also included some rescissions. He said that he had available, a summary table of the rescissions for funds that were related to the pandemic relief.

Mr. Hadley said that the debt agreement does play into the appropriations process. He said that both houses of Congress need to have their appropriation bills in place and passed by September 30<sup>th</sup>. In the House, the Committee Chair for House Appropriations has been aggressive in marking up the programs. He said that because the defense level funding is at its cap, any reductions in order to be consistent with the debt limit are going to impact more of the domestic side of funding. He said that Representative Granger is moving forward with some strict cuts and Mr. Hadley wondered if her strategy is to go low, then leave room for negotiating up to the caps, or where the limits actually are. He said that Representative Granger has been very aggressive in reducing funding levels to match the FY2022 funding levels, which could have some significant impacts on funding for domestic programs.

Mr. Hadley said that currently, Congress is working on various supply chain problems. He said that Congress is also continuing to focus on rail safety. He said that the National League of Cities produced a study on an interactive rail safety map, which is a GIS based map that plots derailments that have been compiled by the Federal Railroads Administration. Mr. Hadley said that there is still progress being made on the rail safety bill. He will keep an eye out for more details.

Mr. Hadley stated that he provided a PowerPoint link showing the APWA Public Works Report on the Benefits of Investing in American Communities.

Mr. Hadley mentioned that attached is information on bringing back advance refunding bonds. He stated that this program was suspended during the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act in 2017. He said that this bill would bring back the concept of advanced refunding bonds, which would restore tax exempt processes for those bonds for various improvements, and was an important infrastructure financing tool for counties. He noted that this was introduced on May 9<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Hadley said that he has details, not included in the packet, on the Ohio Senate Finance Committees markup of the biennium budget. Please contact staff if you would like additional details.

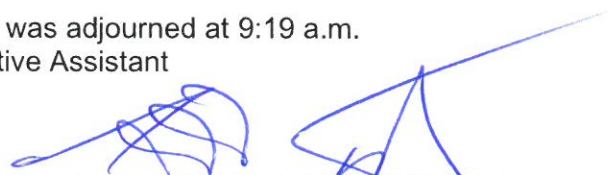
**8. For the Good of the Order: an opportunity for members to share news about their community/county/agency/company, or to list a prominent issue affecting them**

Mr. Regula said that there will be a ribbon cutting ceremony on June 24<sup>th</sup> for a 20-year birthday bash for the Lake Avenue trailhead in Massillon at Ernie's Bicycle Shop. He stated that the Lake Ave. trailhead was a \$22 million project that the Army Corps of Engineers and former Congressman Bob Gibbs helped instrument. He said that he visited Encino Energy in Carrollton with a group of county commissioners. He said that the group was shown how the new rigs operate. He stated that with the new technology, the rigs can go down 7,500 feet and build 18,000 foot laterals. He mentioned that the operator of the rig said that to drill the 7,500 foot holes with 18,000 foot laterals costs \$50 million, and takes about two weeks to drill. He mentioned that Encino Energy found one of the largest oil field in North America below the natural gas and the wet gases. The oil field is expanding west to 71 in Ohio and northwest to Osnaburg Township (Stark County). He stated that this oil field will take three to five years to produce oil.

**9. Other Business**

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS, the meeting was adjourned at 9:19 a.m.

Submitted by Rebecca L. Morgan, Administrative Assistant



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

X = member present    A = alternate present

<sup>a</sup>ex officio

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

<b>Guests in Attendance at the June 21, 2023 meeting</b>
--

Meghan Adair, Summit/Medina Workforce Development Area
--

Chuck Hauber, Summit County Engineer's Office
---