

MINUTES--NEFCO GENERAL POLICY BOARD MEETING held Wednesday, July 19, 2023, at the City of Green Council Chambers

1a. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Regula at 8:30 a.m. in the presence of a quorum.

1b. Approval of the Agenda

A motion was made by Ms. Petsko, seconded by Ms. Kiper, 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 June 21, 2023

A motion was made by Mr. Marion, seconded by Mr. Eckenrode, to accept the June meeting minutes. The motion carried.

3. Financial Status Report - month of June

Mr. Hadley said that \$1.57 was received as income during June, receipts to date were \$425,300.12, disbursements to date were \$572,831.03, and cash on hand at the end of June was \$209,526.32.

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

3a. June Bank Reconciliations

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

A motion was made by Mr. Marion, seconded by Mr. Eckenrode, to accept the June bank reconciliations. The motion carried.

4. Request for the NEFCO General Policy Board to accept the Portage Lakes Management Plan

Ms. Peck welcomed to the Board meeting Bill Zawiski, Ohio EPA-NEDO; and Stephanie Deibel, Summit SWCD. She thanked the Board members and ERTAC for its support of the Portage Lakes project. She said that the Portage Lakes are a chain of lakes and reservoirs; some of which are controlled by dams. These lakes are in the communities of Green, New Franklin, and Coventry; south of Akron. The Portage Lakes are within a portion of the Upper Tuscarawas watershed in the headwaters section, which extends all the way to Hartville. A 74-square mile watershed drains to the Portage Lakes. Long Lake is the lowest in elevation. The watershed is immediately south of the Ohio River/Lake Erie Basin divide. The lakes began as kettle lakes. Eventually the Portage Lakes were modified and impounded to create canal feeder lakes during the canal era. A lot of the lakes are still controlled by dams, most of which have been upgraded recently. The Portage Lakes are still connected to the Ohio and Erie Canal by Long Lake. Ms. Peck said that the Portage Lakes provide many opportunities for outdoor recreation. A lot of visitors visit the State Park which helps support the local and regional economy. The Portage Lakes are the center of a thriving community and provide quality of life benefits to thousands of people within a short distance. She stated that it

is important to take care of the water quality and habitats of the lakes because of the natural value. The Portage Lakes flow downstream and affect other communities.

Ms. Peck said that the dams provide other very important functions that may not be typical of all lakes. First is flood control: the lakes are maintained as to where the lakes go down sort of stepwise and the levels are maintained at a near constant level. She said that when storms are approaching or are in progress, a small canal lands crew makes sure all the gates are functioning and that there is enough storage volume within each successive lake. This helps prevent the water from overflowing and inundating the roads. She said that another important function of the dams is to manage flow between the two drainage basins. She stated that under the Governors' Accord of the Great Lakes, entities can transfer water outside of the Great Lakes basin for public water supply or for wastewater treatment, only if an equal volume of water is returned to the Great Lakes basin. She said that this happens at Long Lake near the Portage Lakes statue. Most of the Portage Lakes' water discharges to the Tuscarawas River at Confluence Park on Manchester Road. She said that north of Manchester Road some of the water continues to the towpath trailhead and is discharged to the Ohio & Erie Canal. If the water flows to the east, it flows to Akron into the Cuyahoga River. If the water flows to the west, it enters Barberton at the Tuscarawas River. This happens every day and is a mandated transfer. The Portage Lakes are known and loved for their natural beauty and natural habitats, but the lakes are considered to be urban lakes because of the large, developed watershed being altered, and the intense use of the lakes. Ms. Peck stated that NEFCO got involved seven years ago because of the impacts on the lakes. Most of the areas and lakes are great for swimming, boating, and recreation. But in some of the shallow areas, there is dense vegetation that impedes the uses. She said that it is frustrating for the homeowners and the boaters. She stated that chemicals should not be just thrown on the water to kill the weeds, without understanding the effects of those chemicals on the whole system. She said that the Ohio EPA Northeast District requested that NEFCO complete some studies to help safely address the so-called weeds. She said that the first three years, staff characterized the watershed, the vegetation, and held some public outreach events. She said that the plan was written in years four and five. Follow-up years were used to provide additional data for the Portage Lakes partners and to do outreach events. The entire process was shaped by the collaboration with a diverse technical advisory committee representing local communities, several county and state agencies, the Portage Lakes Advisory Council, limnologists, boaters, anglers, and other interested individuals. She said that this group will continue to share information and learn from each other about the importance of the Portage Lakes.

Ms. Peck noted that a small drop of water contains countless microorganisms called plankton, which are the basis of the lake's ecosystem. The plankton and vegetation provide food, forage, habitat, and a place for animals to lay eggs; and is very important for the ecology. But the plankton and vegetation also affect the physical and chemical characteristics of the lake itself. When the microorganisms and vegetation get too many nutrients it causes too many problems in the lakes. She said that the reason that there is dense growth in the shallow areas is largely because there are a lot of nutrients that have come in from the watershed which don't leave, they recycle. The nutrients build up over time which causes the dense growth. In order to manage the vegetation, one must understand the lakes' watershed system context and address the causes of the eutrophication. One must also grasp the lakes' processes and interactions, the role vegetation plays in the functioning of the lakes, and employ monitoring to understand the effects of treatment (if used). She said that in the Portage Lakes, until recently, there was no inventory, no study that told the managers what kind of vegetation was in the lakes. There was very limited monitoring of the lakes' conditions. Without this data there is no way to know if there is a problem and what is the appropriate way to treat the problem. She stated that the people that were tasked with doing this

work in the past had full-time jobs, including managing park facilities, managing the dams and the flow and the floods. These individuals' expertise was not looking at lake systems or vegetation. She said that the Portage Lakes Management Plan (PLMP) recommends developing a lakes management program; which is a widely accepted practice that is a well-developed discipline, with many examples elsewhere. The PLMP integrates the different elements into a lakes system context and relies on collaboration. The PLMP is informed by data, by limnological lake system expertise, and by participants of lake communities with adequate support staff, funding, resources and partners. The PLMP was written to be consistent with the North American Lake Management Society guidelines, and it is a general guiding framework for this new approach. All these programs have evolved over a series of years as iterative efforts. The PLMP also provides a guidebook to the lakes, for the individuals who will manage the lakes. It describes the processes, aggregates the information, and compiles the insights, ideas, and considerations that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and others have provided over the years. She said that the goals are listed in the attached summary. The recommendations are summarized in the attached table. Many of the recommendations are already in use in the region. She asked, "How does something so general provide any kind of direction for people to do something?". She said that the partners are already doing something other than attending meetings. The partners are making concrete investments in this program and in the future of the lakes. In 2022, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) commissioned a lakes-wide aquatic plant inventory. Portage Lakes was chosen because one of the partners, Josh Garretson-ODNR, advocated that this lake-wide aquatic plant inventory was necessary to manage the lakes in a systematic way. Ms. Peck mentioned that the Summit Soil and Water Conservation District established for the upper Tuscarawas River watershed a watershed coordinator position, which will focus a lot on the lakes. She said that the Portage Lakes partners have a display at the Portage Lakes library about the Portage Lakes activities and events. She said that the ODNR has committed to a multimillion-dollar visitor center on the lake in the State Park with a focus on education and hands on activities related to the lakes. These are long term investments in a management program and in the future of the lakes. She said that the finalized edits to the PLMP were posted on NEFCO's website as a draft. The Portage Lakes Technical Advisory Committee determined that it was appropriate to seek community support on the final document. Ms. Peck asked for a motion to accept the Portage Lakes Management Plan.

Mr. Diorio asked how many lakes make up the Portage Lakes? Ms. Peck said there are ten lakes in the Portage Lakes area. Mr. Potter asked if there was anywhere on Long Lake to install a boat ramp? Ms. Peck said that boat access for Long Lake was discussed at the PLTAC meeting, but it was never addressed. She said that it is hard to navigate the roads around Long Lake. Mr. Diorio asked if there were a quantifiable number of septic systems in Summit County around Portage Lakes. Ms. Peck said that the partners met to discuss areas with a lot of small unsewered lots where there might be septic system discharge, which can harm the lakes and uses. She said that at the "30,000-foot" general guidance of this plan, this is a concern, and the plan does identify some of the concerns and potential approaches. She stated that it wasn't the partners' place to delve into that or make specific recommendations because there is a process that must be followed. Mr. Diorio asked if there are any plans for future sanitary sewer lines? Ms. Peck said that there were some sanitary sewer lines installed many years ago which has helped. She said that some sanitary sewer lines are in different phases of design and feasibility. Again, there are processes for installing sanitary sewer lines and the health department needs to make sure that the funding will be available. Mr. Diorio asked if there was a quantifiable number of combine sewer overflows (CSO). Mr. Zawiski said there are zero CSOs. Ms. Sumego asked what does "accept" mean? She also asked if there will be any follow-up resources or funding needed from NEFCO? Ms. Peck said that she is asking the Board to accept the PLMP as it is NEFCO's response to Ohio EPA-NEDO's request for a management plan. She said that accepting the PLMP only means that

NEFCO will remove DRAFT from the report. Staff will then physically and digitally turn over any materials to Ms. Diebel and to the partners on the PLTAC. She said that no further funding will be needed from NEFCO. Mr. Hadley said that Ms. Peck has become a great resource for this Portage Lakes effort. He said that he doesn't want to give the impression that NEFCO is walking away from this project. He said that Ms. Peck is part-time, so NEFCO must be careful with how she spends her hours, but she will continue to be a resource for the ongoing Plan. He acknowledged that this plan was suggested by Mr. Zawiski, Ohio EPA-NEDO as a potential NEFCO study. He said that Ms. Peck will still be involved but with limited hours. Mr. Regula thank Ms. Peck for all her work on the PLMP. He said that during COVID he purchased a boat and spent a lot of time on the lakes. He said that the lakes are a jewel for this community, which must be protected. He asked for a motion to accept the Portage Lakes Management Plan, Resolution No. FY2024-001.

A motion was made by Mr. Mazzola, seconded by Ms. Kiper, to accept the Portage Lakes Management Plan, Resolution No. FY2024-001. The motion carried.

Mr. Regula asked if Ms. Deibel could report back to the Board once a year for an update on the Portage Lakes. Ms. Deibel stated that she would like to return yearly with an update.

5. Greater Akron Chamber requests letter of support for EDA Tech Hubs grant application

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the Greater Akron Chamber (GAC) has requested a letter of support for its EDA Tech Hubs grant application. The GAC will be the lead applicant of a consortium for a Sustainable Polymers Tech Hub project. He said that the GAC is looking to establish the Akron Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) as a Sustainable Polymers Tech Hub. He said that Phase I allows applicants to apply for a strategy grant to do additional planning and development of the strategy for establishing this tech hub. The grant also allows for the applicant to apply for an EDA designation as a certified tech hub; or, the applicant and the consortium can apply for both (strategy and designation). He said that the Greater Akron Chamber is applying for both. He said that the GAC is looking to further refine the organization and development of the sustainable polymers cluster. The GAC is seeking \$400,000 of EDA funding with a 20 percent local match. The designation piece is unfunded, but it is a requirement to get to the Phase II application process. He said that the consortium will demonstrate that the region has a concentration of assets, resources, and capacity to become globally competitive in the technologies and industries of the future. He said that this application would meet two of those key technology focus areas: advanced energy and advanced material science. He stated that if the GAC is designated, the applicant would be able to apply for \$50 to \$75 million for the Phase II program. He said that the program summary has been included in the Board packet. He noted that this project is consistent with four goals of the NEFCO CEDS. He said that NEFCO provided significant technical assistance on this proposal and in past proposals. He said that NEFCO could be asked to provide additional technical assistance to the consortium, which wouldn't entail any sort of financial commitment or significant number of NEFCO staff hours. Mr. Lautzenheiser asked the Board for approval of the attached support letter.

A motion was made by Mr. Peetz, seconded by Mr. Marion, to approve the Greater Akron Chamber's letter of support for an EDA Tech Hubs grant application.

Mr. Malik suggested instead of staff waiting to be contacted for technical assistance, staff should ask to be on the consortium.

Mr. Peetz amended his motion, Mr. Marion amended his second, to accept the letter of support and to request consideration for NEFCO to be represented on the consortium, instead of waiting to be contacted for technical assistance. The motion carried,

6. Bounce Innovation and University of Akron Research Foundation request letter of support for EDA Build to Scale grant application

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the Bounce Innovation Hub (Bounce) and the University of Akron Research Foundation (UARF) are requesting a letter of support for an EDA Build to Scale (B2S) grant application. The Build to Scale program provides funding and support to those organizations that assist entrepreneurs and startups. NEFCO has supported and assisted Bounce and the City of Akron with past applications for entrepreneurs' support. These applicants will be requesting Venture Challenge funding, which will provide support and resources to those organizations that help startups and entrepreneurs. He noted that a project summary is attached. He said that the deadline for the Build of Scale program is July 28th. This proposal is a three-year project, and is seeking \$2 million, with a 50-50 percent match. This project is consistent with three goals of the NEFCO CEDS. He noted that since this request was not transmitted to the Board seven (7) days prior to the meeting, a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those members present is required for passage. Mr. Lautzenheiser asked the Board for approval of the attached support letter.

A motion was made by Mr. Malik, seconded by Mr. Eckenrode, to approve the Bounce Innovation and University of Akron Research Foundation's letter of support for an EDA Build to Scale grant application. The motion carried.

7. NEFCO FY2023 Work Program – status

a. Economic Development

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the EDA released the notice of funding opportunity for the Recompete Pilot program on June 29th. He said that this program is about helping with workforce development strategies in communities that have been most impacted, especially in the prime-age employment gap (PAEG); years 25 to 54 age category. There is limited eligibility in the NEFCO Region and it's based on that PAEG percentage. Mr. Regula asked if Mr. Lautzenheiser could notify the eligible communities about the available grants. Mr. Lautzenheiser said that when he receives the notices of funding opportunity, he sends the notices to all the local government communities.

Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the Broadband Ohio Community Accelerator program is in its second round of funding. He said that the first round provided free training to communities and groups for education on how to expand broadband in their respective areas. He stated that the application is due August 4th. An informational online webinar will be held on July 27th, which will discuss additional details for this program.

Mr. Lautzenheiser discussed a couple of upcoming funding opportunities, with fast approaching deadlines.

b. Environmental Planning

Mr. LaPlante said that on July 14th, staff received the two fully executed contracts from the Ohio EPA totaling roughly \$173,000. He stated that the funding will be mostly used for 208 planning work.

Mr. LaPlante said that the voluntary FPA update is progressing very well. The update process is on target with the updated timeline. He said that there are seven interested management agencies

that submitted update packages by the extended June 30th deadline. Of those seven, only four are asking for 208 map changes.

Mr. LaPlante said that the Ohio EPA informed NEFCO on June 16th that the Board approved 208 Plan amendments have been submitted to USEPA for federal approval.

Mr. LaPlante stated that he included information on some Ohio EPA webinars. Please contact NEFCO for additional details.

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

Mr. Hadley said that there are significant differences between the House of Representatives and the Senate are emerging, regarding the FY2024 appropriations. He stated that the Republican-led House is setting FY2022 levels for several items within the appropriations which for most programs significantly is less than even FY2023 levels; and certainly less than what was desired for FY2024. So, that disparity between the House and Senate with the pending deadline of having all the appropriations approved by September 30th, is shaping up to be another major squabble. He said to please contact him if anyone has any comments or requests.


9. 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 encouraged everyone to review all the different funding opportunities that are available in the Board packet.

10. Other Business

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS, the meeting was adjourned at 9:33 a.m.

Submitted by Rebecca L. Morgan, Administrative Assistant



Todd Peetz, Secretary
NEFCO General Policy Board
August 16, 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	X	X	A					
Daniel Blakely (Tia Rutledge)	A	A	A	A		A	A					
Joseph Diorio	A	X		X	X	X	X					
Todd Peetz (Gail Gifford)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Susan Riehm (2-9-23)			X	X	X	X						
Amos Sarfo (Eric Long)		X	X	X	X	X	X					
CITY OF KENT												
Kathleen Petsko (Bridget Susel)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
STARK COUNTY												
Keith Bennett	X	X				X						
Alfredo Carranza	X	X										
Kirt Conrad			X	X	X							
David Maley	X	X	X		X		X					
Joe Mazzola		X		X		X	X					
Dan Moeglin				X	X							
Mike Naso (5-3-23)					X	X	X					
Bob Nau (Curtis Bungard)	X	X		X	X	X						
Richard Regula (Bill Smith)		X	X	X	X	X	X					
Jim Troike (Scott Ellsworth and Tom Davis)	A	A		X	X		X					
Vacant (Rachel Hosler)												
Vacant												
CITY OF CANTON												
Jim Benekos (John Highman Jr. and Chris Barnes)	X	X	X	A		X	X					
COUNTY OF SUMMIT												
Jim Balogh	X	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	X					
Ilene Shapiro (Craig Stanley & Joe Eckenrode)		A	A	A	A	A	A					
Dianne Sumego	X			X	X	X	X					
Michael Vinay (Matt Calcei)	X	X				X	X	A				
Elizabeth Walters (Mark Potter)		A	A	A	A		A					
CITY OF AKRON												
Ginger Baylor												
Daniel Horrigan (Sam DeShazor)												
Chris Ludle (Michelle DiFiore)	A	A	A	A	A	A	A					
Shammas Malik	X	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	A					
WAYNE COUNTY												
Jonathan Hofstetter (Sue Smail)	X	X	X	X	X		X					
Jenn Kiper (Rob Kastner)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Steven Wheeler (Kevin Givins)	A	A	A	A	A	A	A					
CITY OF WOOSTER												
Bob Breneman (Jonathan Millea, and Vince Marion)	A	A	A		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 July 19, 2023 meeting
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Meghan Adair, Summit/Medina Workforce Development Area
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Chuck Hauber, Summit County Engineer's Office

Stephanie Deibel, Summit SWCD

Doug Lane, Representative Sykes' Office

Bill Zawiski, Ohio EPA-NEDO
