

Southwest Clean Air Agency

Board of Directors Minutes

November 4, 2021

The regular meeting of the Southwest Clean Air Agency Board of Directors was held in the Southwest Clean Air Agency office, Vancouver, Washington on November 4, 2021.

Those present were: Bob Hamlin, Chair, Skamania County
Ryan Smith, Vice-Chair, Member at Large
Robert Stowe, Director, Town of Cathlamet
Dr. Alan Melnick, Director, Clark County
Ruth Kendall, Director, City of Longview
Lee Tischer, Director, Wahkiakum County
Ben Shumaker, Director, City of Stevenson
Sean Swope, Director, Lewis County
Erik Paulsen, Director, City of Vancouver

Excused: Max Vogt, Director, City of Centralia
Vacant, Director, Cowlitz County

Also Present: Staff: Uri Papish, Executive Director
Traci Arnold, Office Administrator

Guests: None

Call to Order

Mr. Hamlin called the meeting to order. A quorum was confirmed to exist.

Board of Directors Minutes

Mr. Hamlin asked for consideration of the October 7, 2021 minutes. Mr. Stowe moved and Mr. Smith seconded that the minutes for the October 7, 2021 Board meeting be approved. Motion passed.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Hamlin asked for approval of the Consent Agenda including voucher numbers 108 through 137 in the amount of \$19,900.93 which have been approved for payment by the Executive Director, September 2021 Salaries in the amount of \$168,689.95 and September 2021 Benefits in the amount of \$48,972.72. Mr. Shumaker moved and Mr. Paulsen seconded approval of the Consent Agenda. Motion passed.

Changes to Agenda

None

Info Items & Public Comment

None

Public Hearing

None

Unfinished Business/New Business

Mr. Hamilton opened discussion on adoption of SWCAA's Consolidated Fee Schedule and recognized Mr. Papish. Mr. Papish said SWCAA is proposing to add new fees in SWCAA's Consolidated Fee Schedule to align with the newly adopted fee categories in the SWCCA 400 Rules. The proposed Consolidated Fee Schedule also raises SWCAA's 2022 fees by last year's Western State's CPI which is equal to 1.3 percent and proposes to raise the per capita fee by one cent (from 54 to 55 cents). The one cent per capita fee increase is equal to 1.85 percent.

Mr. Papish said on August 2021, SWCAA's Board of Directors approved revisions to SWCAA 400 rules which included two new fee categories. SWCAA 400-109(2)(f) established a fee category for "Administrative Amendments" and SWCAA 400-109(2)(a) (viii) established a fee category for "Permit Extensions." SWCAA 400 rules establish fee authority for new fee categories, but the actual fees are adopted by the Board of Directors through the adoption of SWCAA's Consolidated Fee Schedule (SWCAA 400-098). SWCAA is proposing to add the following fees to the Consolidated Fee Schedule:

Fee Categories	Work* Hours	Fee	Fee Applicability
(xx) Administrative Amendment			
	4	\$360	Per Application
(xxi) Permit Extension			
1 st Extension	5	\$450	Per Application
2 nd Extension	10	\$900	Per Application

* If the staff time required exceeds the number of work hours associated with the applicable fee the applicant will be invoiced for each additional work hour at the rate specified for additional work hours.

Mr. Papish explained on May 4th, 2017, SWCAA's Board of Directors approved a 20% fee increase. Fees had not been previously raised since 2008. The Board recommended SWCAA consider revising fees on an annual basis equal to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to keep up with inflation. He said the purpose of incremental CPI fee increases is to avoid having to do larger (catch-up) fee increases every several years. Beginning in 2019, SWCAA's Board started adopting annual CPI fee increases to SWCAA's fees. Last year November 4, 2021

the Board adopted a 2.8 percent increase to SWCAA's fees and a one cent increase to the per capita fees paid by local governments. The Per Capita increase was rounded to the nearest cent and went from 53 to 54 cents, resulting in an increase equal to 1.89 percent instead of 2.8 percent.

At the September 2nd Board meeting SWCAA's board of directors authorized SWCAA to conduct a public notice and gather public comment on a revised Consolidated Fee Schedule that including the proposed new fees for Administrative Amendments and Permit Extensions authorized under SWCAA 400 rules along with the proposed CPI fee increases for 2022.

On September 21st, SWCAA posted the public notice on SWCAA's website and sent out public notification mailings to over 1,700 affected businesses and local governments. SWCAA also sent digital notifications to interested parties who have signed up on SWCAA's website to receive such notifications. SWCAA received two comments which are summarized in the Public Hearing Officer report. Mr. Papish reported no adverse comments were received regarding the proposed new fees nor the proposed fee increases.

SWCAA made one clarifying note to the proposed consolidated fee schedule after the public notice to clarify that the new fees do not require an additional filing fee.

Mr. Paulsen commented the current low inflationary environment could be misleading because the upcoming cost of living adjustment for social security is the highest in recent history. Mr. Papish clarified the Board reviews the fee increase each year which includes discussion on the proposed CPI.

Mr. Hamlin asked if in years past the agency received virtually no comments on the fee increase. Mr. Papish said the year the agency did the large fee increase the agency received multiple comments on the size of the increase more then the increase itself. Generally, when fee increases are in line with the cost of living increases it is easier for the public and industry to accept.

Mr. Shumaker asked for clarification around the per-capita increase since it does not match the overall fee increase. Mr. Papish said this year the per-capita is 1.8% which is slightly higher due to rounding to a full cent. Last year the per-capita increase was slightly lower, again due to rounding to a full cent.

Mr. Hamlin asked for a motion. Dr. Melnick moved to adopt SWCAA Resolution 2021-02 which adopts the proposed changes to SWCAA's Consolidated Fee Schedule. Ms. Kendall seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Executive Session

None

Control Officer Report

Mr. Papish summarized the information provided in the Control Officer Report and offered to answer any questions.

EPA Staff Preliminarily Conclude Tightening of PM NAAQS Is Warranted (October 8, 2021) – EPA staff’s preliminary conclusions relative to the primary PM_{2.5} standards (see pp. 3-181– 3-203), including, “When taken together, we reach the conclusion that the available scientific evidence, air quality analyses, and the risk assessment, as summarized above, can reasonably be viewed as calling into question the adequacy of the public health protection afforded by the combination of the current annual and 24-hour primary PM_{2.5} standards. In particular, we note the information and analyses new to this reconsideration (and discussed in detail above) in reaching this conclusion.” EPA staff go on to explain their preliminary conclusion that available evidence suggests that the current annual PM_{2.5} standard of 12 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) could be tightened to as low as 8 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and the current daily standard of 35 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ to as low as 30 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. EPA staff briefed the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee on the Draft PM PA, as well as the September 30, 2021, supplemental Draft PM Integrated Science Assessment (Draft PM ISA), during a virtual public meeting on Thursday, October 14, 2021. CASAC will reconvene November 17-19 and December 1-2, 2021, to peer-review the Draft PM PA and Draft PM ISA. For further information: https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-10/draft-policy-assessment-for-the-reconsideration-of-the-pm-naaqs_october-2021_0.pdf

EPA Seeks Comment on Draft Updated Policy Assessment for Reconsideration of 2020 PM NAAQS Decision (October 8, 2021) – EPA published in the Federal Register (86 Fed. Reg. 56,263) a notice announcing that the draft document titled, “Policy Assessment for Reconsideration of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Particulate Matter, External Review Draft (Draft PA).” The draft PA updates and builds upon the information presented in the 2019 Integrated Science Assessment for Particulate Matter (2019 ISA), the September 30, 2021 Supplement to the 2019 ISA (ISA Supplement) and the 2020 PA and, when final, is intended to “bridge the gap” between the scientific and technical information assessed in the 2019 ISA and 2021 ISA Supplement and the EPA Administrator’s judgments exercised in determining whether to retain or revise the PM NAAQS. EPA is seeking review of this Draft PA by the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC) and the public. The deadline for written comments on the Draft PA is December 14, 2021. For further information: https://casac.epa.gov/ords/sab/f?p=105:18:1263966618971:::RP,18:P18_ID:2607

Dr. Melnick asked what would happen if the lower standard was adopted. Mr. Papish said adoption of the lower standard would have national implications. Undoubtedly several areas would be in non-attainment which creates a need for tighter restrictions. At this time none of the five counties SWCAA serves would go into non-attainment with the proposed standard. However, during the winter when woodstove use increases it could create multiple days of non-attainment that could result in being declared a non-attainment area.

Harvard Researchers Find Long-Term Exposure to Even Permissible Levels of Air Pollutants Increases Risk of Mortality (October 1, 2021) – In a study published in The Lancet Planetary Health, a team of researchers from Harvard’s T.H. Chan School of Public Health –

including Dr. Joel D. Schwartz – presents the results of its examination of the relationship between exposure to lower concentrations of air pollution and the risk of mortality. To conduct their study, the researchers investigated the impact of annual average exposure to air pollution on all-cause mortality using a nationwide cohort of Medicare enrollees from the start of 2000 to the end of 2016; participants were restricted to those who had only been exposed to lower concentrations of pollutants (i.e., PM_{2.5} at a concentration of up to 12 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) at a concentration of up to 53 parts per billion (ppb) and summer ozone at concentrations of up to 50 ppb) over the course of the study period. The researchers adjusted for two types of covariates – individual level and postal code level variables; used a “doubly-robust” additive model to estimate the change in risk; and further investigated effect-measure modification by stratification on the basis of demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. The researchers found an increased risk of mortality for all three pollutants: 1) Each 1- $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ increase in annual PM_{2.5} concentrations increased the absolute annual risk of death by 0.073 percent; 2) each 1-ppb increase in annual NO₂ concentrations increased the annual risk of death by 0.003 percent and 3) each 1-ppb increase in summer ozone concentrations increased the annual risk of death by 0.081 percent. This translates approximately to 11,540 attributable deaths for PM_{2.5}, 1,176 attributable deaths for NO₂ and 15,115 attributable deaths for ozone per year for each unit increase in pollution concentrations, with greater impacts occurring in certain subgroups, including among individuals living in areas of low socioeconomic status. These results led the researchers to conclude that long-term exposure to permissible concentrations of air pollutants increases the risk of mortality. The researchers state the following in their study: “The EPA released a decision [published on December 7, 2020] regarding tightening the standards for ambient PM_{2.5}. The EPA argued that ‘based on the available evidence, the Administrator has concluded that the current primary PM_{2.5} standards are requisite to protect public health, with an adequate margin of safety, from effects of PM_{2.5} in ambient air and should be retained, without revision.’ Our results, which were based on current standards and were obtained using causal-modelling methodology, combined with the scientific assessment done by the EPA provide evidence that the US EPA Administrator's decision for the annual PM_{2.5} standard was unjustified. Our findings suggest that reduction of air-pollution concentrations through stricter regulations would reduce mortality among older people...” For further information:

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(21\)00204-7/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(21)00204-7/fulltext)

Researchers Find PM Contributed to Nearly Six Million Premature Births Globally in 2019 (September 28, 2021) – In a study published in the journal PLOS Medicine, a group of researchers report that, globally, in 2019 “ambient and household PM_{2.5} were associated with reduced birth weight and GA [gestational age], which are, in turn, associated with neonatal and infant mortality, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.” In the report, the researchers – from the Institute for Global Health Sciences, University of California, San Francisco and Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, University of Washington, Seattle – state that global incidence of pre-term birth (PTB) and low birthweight (LBW) could be reduced by nearly 80 percent if air pollution in Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa was minimized; indoor air pollution is common in these regions, where pre-term birthrates are the highest in the world. The researchers also report substantial risks from ambient air pollution in more developed regions of the world. For example, they estimate that in 2019 outdoor air pollution contributed to nearly 12,000 pre-term births in the U.S. Regarding the meaning of their findings, the researchers conclude that 1) LBW and PTB are key risk factors for early life mortality and lifetime morbidity

and the impact of PM2.5 on these perinatal health outcomes contributes significantly to the overall global burden of disease attributable to air pollution; 2) the attributable burden assessment extends the impact of air pollution beyond diseases primarily affecting older adults; and 3) “implementation of air quality management and other approaches to reduce PM2.5 exposure may lead to large reductions in the global incidence of LBW and PTB infants and the associated disease burden. Mitigation measures even in low-exposure regions will likely manifest in significant improvement in these outcomes because the increase in risk is steeper at lower than in higher exposures, as shown by our risk curves.” For further information: <https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371%2Fjournal.pmed.1003718&source=email>

EPA Extends COVID-Related Onsite Inspection Flexibilities (September 29, 2021) - EPA’s Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (OECA) has extended the COVID-related inspection flexibilities that they initiated in April 2021 through December 30, 2021. EPA had originally granted flexibilities to count both off-site and onsite compliance assurance activities in meeting state and local compliance monitoring commitments through September 2021. EPA will require agencies to follow the “Recommended Processes for Adjusting Inspection Commitments Due to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency” and that partner agencies separately track and document on-site and off-site compliance monitoring activities. A letter from Larry Starfield, OECA’s Acting Assistant Administrator, says that “For State Review Framework reviews performed in federal fiscal year 2021 and beyond, OECA and regional Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division Directors will work with partner agencies to make necessary adjustments to evaluate commitments” where state and local agencies utilize these flexibilities. For further information: <https://www.4cleanair.org/wpcontent/uploads/COVID-19-Inspection-Commitment-Letter-April-7-2021.pdf>

Mr. Papish reminded the Board with the conclusion of this meeting the agency has met the 10 meeting requirement for the year. December has been cancelled so the Board will reconvene in January 2022. Topics for the new year will include an update on the lawsuit filed against SWCAA and all the air agencies in the state as well as a discussion on a fee restructuring for gasoline stations in SWCAA’s jurisdiction. The intent for the fee restructuring is to be revenue neutral.

Mr. Hamlin asked if Dr. Melnick would speak to the timeline for returning to in-person meetings. Dr. Melnick said it depends on several factors. Disease activity, vaccination rates and what is happening globally. The virus continues to mutate, and variants can emerge. The Delta variant cancelled the summer meetings, and the possibility of another variate will continue to keep the meetings remote. Ms. Kendall commented the agency is saving money by not paying travel reimbursements to the board and less traffic on the road means cleaner air. She feels the zoom meeting is quite efficient and saves travel time for all members.

Board Policy Discussion Issues

None.

Issues for Next Meeting

A. Public Hearing.

1. As Necessary.

B. New Business/Unfinished Business.

1. As Necessary.

C. Board Policy Discussion Issues.

1. As Necessary.

D. Meeting Date and Location.

1. January 6, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. Southwest Clean Air Agency, 11815 NE 99th Street, Vancouver, Washington.


The next Board of Directors meeting will be held on January 6, 2022 at 3:00 p.m., Southwest Clean Air Agency, Vancouver, Washington.


Board Meeting Attendance:

JURISDICTION	J 2021	F 2021	M 2021	A 2021	M 2021	J 2021	J 2021	A 2021	S 2021	O 2021	N 2021	D 2021
Clark County	+	+	+	+	+	+	C	+	+	+	+	C
Cowlitz County	+	+	+	+	+	+	C	+	+	0	0	C
Lewis County	+	+	+	+	0	+	C	+	+	0	+	C
Skamania County	+	+	+	0	+	+	C	+	+	A	+	C
Wahkiakum County	+	A	+	+	+	+	C	0	0	+	+	C
Cathlamet	+	0	+	+	+	+	C	+	+	+	+	C
Centralia	0	+	0	+	+	0	C	0	+	+	0	C
Longview	+	+	+	+	+	+	C	+	+	+	+	C
Stevenson	0	+	+	+	A	+	C	A	0	0	+	C
Vancouver	+	+	+	0	+	+	C	+	0	0	+	C
Member-At-Large	+	+	+	+	+	+	C	0	+	+	+	C

+ = regular member present; 0 = unrepresented; A = alternate present; C = cancelled meeting

Mr. Hamilton adjourned the meeting without objection at 3:36 p.m.

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 Chair

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 Executive Director