

Southwest Clean Air Agency

Board of Directors Minutes

April 6, 2023

The regular meeting of the Southwest Clean Air Agency Board of Directors was held in the Southwest Clean Air Agency office, Vancouver, Washington on April 6, 2023.

Those present were: Dr. Alan Melnick, Chair, Clark County
Ryan Smith, Vice-Chair, Member at Large
Ben Shumaker, Director, City of Stevenson
Lee Tisher, Director, Wahkiakum County
Robert Stowe, Director, Town of Cathlamet
Ruth Kendall, Director, City of Longview
Max Vogt, Director, City of Centralia
Arne Mortensen, Director, Cowlitz County
Kim Harless, Director, City of Vancouver
Richard Mahar, Director, Skamania County

Excused: Sean Swope, Director, Lewis County

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

Guests: None

Call to Order

Dr. Melnick called the meeting to order. A quorum was confirmed to exist.

Board of Directors Minutes

Dr. Melnick asked for consideration of the March 2, 2023 minutes. Mr. Mortensen moved and Mr. Smith seconded that the minutes for the March 2, 2023, Board meeting be approved. Motion passed.

Consent Agenda

Dr. Melnick asked for approval of the Consent Agenda including voucher numbers 309 through 325, 327 through 356 and 358 through 363 in the amount of \$24,295.51 which have been approved for payment by the Executive Director, voucher 326 and 357 in the amount of \$27,652.02, January 2023 Salaries and Benefits in the amount of \$167,393.59 and February 2023 Salaries and Benefits in the amount of \$165,261.50. Mr. Shumaker moved and Mr. Smith seconded that the Consent Agency be approved. Motion passed.

April 5, 2023

Changes to Agenda

None

Info Items & Public Comment

Mr. Papish read a comment received from Don Steinke, Climate Action of Southwest Washington regarding the EPA grants mentioned in SWCAA Agenda Item IX for April 6, 2023 for the record.

Hello everyone,

I'm concerned that local agencies will leave grant money on the table because they don't have the enough staff to identify and pursue the federal grant opportunities related to emissions reduction mentioned in agenda item IX.

I urge SWCAA to help them and alert the various jurisdictions of those opportunities.

Because of the efforts of my team, the Vancouver City Council has adopted a climate action framework with the goal of reducing ghg emissions 80% by 2035 or sooner. Vancouver has also hired Rebecca Small to guide the process.

My team has also begun talks with Clark County Commissioners about reducing emissions. I believe that if we are not proactive, we'll have a lot of complaints from the business community as the Climate Commitment Act and the Clean Fuels Standard drive up the cost of pollution.

Mr. Papish said he can talk more in depth about the EPA grants during the Control Officer report. Dr. Melnick agreed that would be appropriate.

Public Hearing

None

Unfinished Business/New Business

Dr. Melnick opened Decision on Cost-of-Living Wage Adjustments for Fiscal Year 2023/2024 and recognized Mr. Papish. Mr. Papish said a decision on SWCAA's employee cost of living wage adjustments is one of the early budget decisions that must be made prior to submitting the proposed Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget for Board approval. The proposed Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget will be presented to the Board of Directors for approval at the May Board meeting.

Below is some data regarding inflationary indexes along with a survey of COLAs at other local government agencies in SWCAA's jurisdiction:

April 5, 2023

2022 Western States Consumer Price Index	7.50%
2022 Labor Cost Index	5.10%
2023 COLAs at Other Local Governments*	3.81%

Jurisdiction	COLA
Clark	2
Lewis	3
Skamania	3
Wahkiakum	5
Cowlitz	2
Stevenson	5
Vancouver	4
Cathlamet	8.63
Longview	3.5
Centralia	2
Average	3.81

*Some COLA's vary by bargaining unit.

Mr. Stowe asked what Mr. Papish's recommendation to the Board is so they have a discussion starting point. Mr. Papish recommended the Labor Cost Index.

Mr. Mortensen said the Cowlitz County COLA number may not be completely accurate since contract negotiations are just beginning. Mr. Papish said he recognized some COLA's vary by contacts.

Mr. Tisher said Wahkiakum is high because there is a catch-up process in place due to prior contacts. Mr. Smith said Cathlamet was also using a catch-up process.

Mr. Papish said SWCAA had a salary survey done about four years ago to put all the positions in market ranges. The consultant said he recommended using the Labor Cost Index because it is a better representation of changes in the labor market. This method keeps wages competitive in hopes of retaining staff.

Mr. Vogt asked what SWCAA used last year for the COLA decision. Mr. Papish said the Board used the Western State Consumer Price Index which was 6.1%. Historically the agency used the Portland Consumer Price Index, but it is no longer available.

Mr. Mortensen asked how the Labor Cost Index is defined. Mr. Papish said it is based on wage increases during calendar year 2022. This data is based on civilian workers for both private and government salaries (approximately 28,000 salaries surveyed).

Mr. Stowe asked if the agency has had any turnover in the past year. Mr. Papish said the agency lost one employee to retirement. He said the average tenure is around 16 years.

April 5, 2023

Mr. Mahar wanted to confirm if the COLA is based on this year or the prior year. Mr. Papish said the COLA is based on the prior year.

Mr. Hamlin asked for a motion. Mr. Stowe made a motion for a 5.1% COLA effective July 1, 2023. Ms. Kendall seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session

Dr. Melnick opened discussion on the performance evaluation for the Executive Director. Dr. Melnick asked for the Board to go into Executive Session for the purpose of performing the Executive Director's performance evaluation. He said the Executive Session will be utilized for discussion related to the performance evaluation in accordance with RCW 42.30.10(1)(g). Any salary adjustment or other decision will be made during the open public meeting following the Executive Session. He requested Mr. Papish and the general public to leave during the Executive Session which he estimated would begin at 3:35 and last for 10 minutes.

Dr. Melnick reconvened the general meeting at 3:45 and requested another 5 minutes of executive session.

Dr. Melnick reconvened the general meeting at 3:51 and requested another 5 minutes of executive session.

Dr. Melnick reconvened the general meeting at 3:56.

Dr. Melnick opened the discussion for Board member comments.

Mr. Mortensen said he is extremely happy with the Executive Director's performance.

Mr. Smith moved to approve a 5.1% COLA and 2.5% merit increase for the Executive Director to be effective July 1, 2023. Mr. Mahar seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Papish expressed his appreciation to the Board.

Executive Session

None.

Control Officer Report

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

EPA Issues Guidance, "Opt-In" Announcement for IRA-Funded Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (March 1, 2023)

April 5, 2023

EPA has released information about how state, local and territorial governments can apply for and implement the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funded Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) program. This program will provide grants to states, local governments, tribes, and territories to develop and implement plans for reducing greenhouse gas and other air pollution emissions. Section 60114 of the IRA provides \$5 billion to support states, municipalities, air pollution control agencies, and tribes to develop and implement greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction strategies. This program will offer \$250 million for noncompetitive planning grants, and \$4.6 billion for competitive implementation grants. States can opt in to receive \$3 million grants; the largest 67 metropolitan areas can opt-in to \$1 million grants. As part of the planning grants, grant recipients will create or update initial and deeper plans, and participating agencies and non-recipient agencies that are covered by these plans will be eligible for the implementation grants. EPA expects to announce the notice of funding opportunity for the implementation grants later in 2023, with applications due in the first quarter of calendar year 2024. Metro is planning to be the lead agency for the Portland/Vancouver Metro Area. For further information: <https://www.epa.gov/inflation-reduction-act/climate-pollution-reduction-grants>

Dr. Melnick confirmed this is the grant mentioned by Mr. Steinke during the public comment section. Mr. Papish confirmed this is the grant Mr. Steinke referred to. Mr. Papish said SWCAA is eligible to apply for this grant money.

Dr. Melnick asked who SWCAA would apply to for the grant money. Mr. Papish said SWCAA would apply directly to EPA. SWCAA's jurisdiction includes City of Vancouver which is considered part of the Portland metropolitan area. Metro of Portland will submit the Climate Action Plan to EPA and then agencies will apply for grant funds based on that action plan. Mr. Shumaker asked if Skamania would be part of Metro's plan. Mr. Papish said only the City of Vancouver is included in the Metro plan, the rest of SWCAA's jurisdiction will be part of the state plan. Mr. Shumaker asked what type of projects SWCAA would support. Mr. Papish said woodstove replacements, emission reduction equipment on school buses and emission reduction equipment on idling train engines are all possible projects.

EPA Announces Electric Sector Pledge to Support School Bus Electrification (February 8, 2023) EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan announced a new pledge by two electric utility organizations to work proactively to promote “seamless” collaboration between school districts and their electricity providers to ensure successful nationwide deployment of electric school buses. The specific pledges made include facilitating communication; providing technical support and assistance; and working in partnership to increase funding for deployment of electric school buses. The organizations making the pledge are the Edison Electric Institute and the Beneficial Electrification League. Also this month, EPA submitted its “Clean School Bus Program Second Report to Congress: Fiscal Year 2022,” detailing the agency’s program that funds the replacement of higher-emitting school buses with zero-emission or “clean” (lower-emitting) school buses. EPA reports that in the first year of the Clean School Bus Program the agency conducted widespread program outreach and administered a national rebate competition that drew almost 2,000 applications: “The enthusiastic response prompted EPA to almost double the funding level available for rebates to nearly \$1 billion.” In October 2022, EPA announced that over 400 applications had been selected, to replace about 2,600 buses, with 95 percent of those replaced with electric buses. For further information:

April 5, 2023

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-administrator-regan-marks-delivery-kansas-first-electric-school-buses-announces>, <https://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/clean-school-bus-technical-assistance>

Researchers Find Virtually Everyone On Earth Faces Exposure To PM_{2.5} At Levels Exceeding Those Recommended By WHO (March 7, 2023) In a study published in The Lancet Planetary Health, researchers at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia conclude that in 2019, “only 0.18% of the global land area and 0.001% of the global population had an annual exposure to PM_{2.5} at concentrations lower than 5 [micrograms per cubic meter] µg/m³, with more than 70% of days having daily PM_{2.5} concentrations higher than 15 µg/m³. Five µg/m³ is the World Health Organization’s (WHO) recommended annual PM_{2.5} limit and 15 µg/m³ is WHO’s recommended daily recommended limit. Noting that “short-term exposure to ambient PM_{2.5} is a leading contributor to the global burden of diseases and mortality” the researchers explain that few studies have offered the global spatiotemporal variations of daily PM_{2.5} concentrations over recent decades. However, in their study, the Monash University researchers used deep ensemble machine learning (DEML) to estimate global daily PM_{2.5} concentrations between January 1, 2000 and December 31, 2019, combining ground-level PM_{2.5} measurements from nearly 5,500 monitoring stations in 65 countries with GEOS-Chem chemical transport model simulations of PM_{2.5} concentrations, meteorological data and geographical characteristics. “The high-resolution estimates of daily PM_{2.5} provide the first global view of the unequal spatiotemporal distribution of PM_{2.5} exposure for a recent 20-year period, which is of value for assessing short-term and long-term health effects of PM_{2.5}, especially for areas where monitoring station data are not available,” write the researchers. For further information: <https://www.monash.edu/news/articles/world-first-study-into-global-daily-air-pollution-shows-almost-nowhere-on-earth-is-safe>

Purpleair Sensors Underestimate PM_{2.5} by A Factor of 5-6 In Dust Events, Researchers Find (March 13, 2023) A research study evaluating EPA’s recently developed national correction equation for PurpleAir sensor data found that the sensors provide reasonably accurate PM_{2.5} results for typical wintertime urban pollution and smoke events, but they underestimate PM_{2.5} concentrations by a factor of 5-6 for dust events. The research team, led by Daniel A. Jaffe at the University of Washington, examined 50 short-term pollution spikes that could be classified as typical urban, smoke or dust events. For each event, PurpleAir sensor data were paired with a nearby regulatory PM_{2.5} monitor to evaluate the agreement. The PurpleAir data were then corrected using either the 2021 Barkjohn correction equation or a new equation being used by EPA for the AirNow Fire and Smoke Map. Both equations did a good job correcting the data for smoke and typical pollution events, but both were too low by a factor of 5-6 in dust. The authors proposed a modified correction equation that improves the PurpleAir data for some dust events, but concluded that further work is needed to improve the algorithm. The study is published in the international scientific journal Atmospheric Measurement Techniques and is available to the public online. For further information: <https://amt.copernicus.org/articles/16/1311/2023/>

Administration Calls for Significant Increase in State/Local Air Grants For FY 2024 (March 16, 2023) The Administration’s FY 2024 budget request for EPA is calling for \$400.2 million in grants to state and local air agencies under Sections 103 and 105 of the Clean Air Act.

April 5, 2023

This is an increase of \$151.2 million (approximately 60 percent) over the amount appropriated in FY 2023 (\$249 million). With respect to the recommended increase to state and local air grants, EPA's "Budget-in-Brief" document states: "This increase in grant resources will help expand the efforts of air pollution control agencies to implement their programs and to accelerate immediate on-the-ground efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The increase also will enhance the resiliency, capacity, and capability of air monitoring systems for National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and local-scale monitoring and will support additional air quality monitoring in disadvantaged communities suffering from disproportionate impact of traffic emissions." For further information: <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-03/fy-2024-epa-bib.pdf>

The Department of Ecology Completes Environmental Justice Review; Identifies Vancouver as an Overburdened Community. The Climate Commitment Act (Senate Bill 5126) adopted by the Washington legislature in July 2021 established a Cap and Invest program to address greenhouse gases. One component of the law requires Ecology to conduct an environmental justice review every two years to ensure the cap and invest program achieves reductions in criteria pollutants as well as GHG emissions in overburdened communities highly impacted by air pollution. Ecology is required to deploy an air monitoring network in high priority overburdened communities to collect sufficient air quality data for the 2023 review and subsequent reviews. Once the review determines the levels of criteria pollutants in an identified overburdened community, the law states that Ecology must: in consultation with local air pollution control authorities, establish air quality targets to achieve air quality consistent with whichever is more protective for human health: 1. national ambient air quality standards established by EPA; or the air quality experienced in neighboring communities that are not identified as overburdened; 2. identify the stationary and mobile sources that are the greatest contributors of those emissions that are either increasing or not decreasing; achieve the reduction targets through adoption of emission control strategies or other methods; adopt stricter air quality standards, emission standards, or emissions limitations on criteria pollutants; and after adoption of the stricter air quality standards, emission standards, or emissions limitations, issue an enforceable order on affected permittees or registered sources to comply with the stricter standards or limitations. Ecology may not impose requirements on a permitted stationary source that are disproportionate to their contribution to air pollution compared to other permitted stationary sources and other sources of criteria pollutants in the overburdened community. An area in the west side of Vancouver has been identified as an overburdened community. For more information: <https://ecology.wa.gov/Air-Climate/Climate-Commitment-Act/Overburdened-communities>

Dr. Melnick made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Smith seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Board Policy Discussion Issues

None.

Issues for Next Meeting

April 5, 2023

- A. Public Hearing.
 - 1. As Necessary.
- B. New Business/Unfinished Business.
 - 1. SWCAA Budget
 - 2. Updates to Civil Penalty Matrix
 - 3. Air Toxics Rulemaking Proposal
- C. Board Policy Discussion Issues.
 - 1. As Necessary.
- D. Meeting Date and Location.
 - 1. May 4, 2023 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 May 4, 2023 at 3:00 p.m., Southwest Clean Air Agency, Vancouver, Washington.

Board Meeting Attendance:

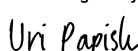
JURISDICTION	J 2023	F 2023	M 2023	A 2023	M 2022	J 2022	J 2022	A 2022	S 2022	O 2022	N 2022	D 2022
Clark County	+	+	0	+	+	+	C	+	+	+	+	C
Cowlitz County	A	+	+	+	+	+	C	0	+	+	0	C
Lewis County	0	+	0	0	0	+	C	+	+	+	0	C
Skamania County	+	+	+	+	+	+	C	+	+	+	+	C
Wahkiakum County	A	+	+	+	+	+	C	A	+	+	+	C
Cathlamet	+	+	+	+	+	0	C	+	+	A	+	C
Centralia	+	+	+	+	0	+	C	0	+	0	+	C
Longview	+	+	+	+	+	0	C	+	+	0	+	C
Stevenson	0	+	+	+	+	A	C	+	+	+	+	C
Vancouver	+	0	+	+	+	0	C	+	+	+	+	C
Member-At-Large	+	+	+	+	+	+	C	+	+	+	+	C

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

Dr. Melnick adjourned the meeting without objection at 4:37 p.m.

DocuSigned by:

 Dr. Alan Melnick
 Chair
DFB652FC3A604AF...

DocuSigned by:

 Uri Papish
 Executive Director
7A3556CB273B487...