

Southwest Clean Air Agency

Board of Directors Minutes

October 5, 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 September 7, 2023.

Those present were: Dr. Alan Melnick, Chair, Clark County
Ryan Smith, Vice-Chair, Member at Large
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
Richard Mahar, Director, Skamania County
Kim Harless, Director, City of Vancouver
Sean Swope, Director, Lewis County

Excused: Ben Shumaker, Director, City of Stevenson

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 September 7, 2023 minutes. Mr. Mortensen moved and Mr. Mahar seconded that the minutes for the September 7, 2023 Board meeting be approved. Motion passed.

Consent Agenda

Dr. Melnick asked for approval of the Consent Agenda including voucher numbers 100 through 134 and 136 through 141 in the amount of \$18,124.58 which have been approved for payment by the Executive Director, voucher 135 in the amount of \$10,957.36, August 2023 Salaries and Benefits in the amount of \$192,132.76.

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Mr. Smith moved and Mr. Mortensen seconded that the Consent Agency be approved. Motion passed.

Changes to Agenda

None

Info Items & Public Comment

Mr. Papish introduced SWCAA's Board Action and Implementation Summary. He said the Board has requested documentation of follow-up/implementation of Board actions/decisions. SWCAA has added a new Board Action and Implementation Summary document to accompany the revised activity report presented to the Board last month.

The Board thanked Mr. Papish for the new report and asked that it be included with the activity report on SWCAA's website.

Mr. Papish said he had prepared a presentation on Air Quality Advisory Criteria. He said he wanted to present information on the different types of air quality notifications and the criteria for each, including Air Quality Alerts, Air Quality Advisories, and Stage I and Stage II Burn Bans due to air quality impairment. An air quality alert is the easiest thing for SWCAA to issue and has the lowest threshold for when it would be used. It involves a phone call or email to the national weather service asking them to post an alert. SWCAA does this as a precaution when there might be concentrations of fine particulate which might get into the range of unhealthy for sensitive individuals (USG), but it will either be intermittent, for a short time, or if there is a low level of confidence.

Mr. Mortensen asked what SWCAA uses as the basis for the pollution criteria. Mr. Papish said there are five different air quality models used to predict when and where air pollution may occur. The models are based on meteorological data and weather forecasts including wind direction, mixing zones, heat maps and ground material. Each air pollution agency contributes to the researchers at Northwest Air Quest who do some of the modeling. Mr. Mortensen asked how many monitors are in SWCAA's jurisdiction. Mr. Papish said there is one reference monitor and three nephelometers in SWCAA's jurisdiction. Additionally, there are multiple sensors and purple air monitors throughout SWCAA's jurisdiction. Dr. Melnick asked how accurate the models are. Mr. Papish said much like the weather, if the predictions are more than a couple days out it is not as accurate.

Mr. Swope said he was outside all day on August 20, 2023 and the air quality was horrible in Lewis County. He said there was no email or alerts issued for Lewis County. He used his personal air sensor which reported in the hazardous zone. Concern was expressed that Lewis County was not receiving the same amount of attention from SWCAA as Clark County does even though Lewis County is paying the required fees.

Mr. Papish said SWCAA takes forecasting very seriously for all counties in its jurisdiction and he planned to use that specific weekend as an example during the presentation to show what SWCAA did and how it was communicated to the affected areas.

Mr. Papish said Air Quality alerts now go to cell phone weather apps. Generally speaking, the local news picks up on these alerts and will broadcast the information.

When SWCAA has a higher degree of confidence, the agency will issue an Air Quality Advisory. This is when the forecast clearly shows AQ levels will reach USG for a 24-hour period or longer. Additionally, the monitors are showing rising PM levels. The weather service will issue an alert and SWCAA will issue a press release which gets distributed to a large email list of subscribers including local media and SWCAA's Board of Directors. The current criteria is based on a 24 hour period of prolonged poor air quality.

In the wintertime SWCAA may issue a Stage I or Stage II burn ban. These bans are based on statute and have specific criteria. This will only apply to areas where particulate matter will exceed USG and is in a designated at-risk community. During Stage I the use of all uncertified wood stoves is prohibited unless it is the only source of heat. During a Stage II burn ban the use of all wood stoves is prohibited unless it is the only source of heat.

SWCAA regularly documents the forecast because there is sometimes criticism for calling an advisory or not calling an advisory. Mr. Papish showed and explained all the forecast documentation for Chehalis, Washington during the August 20, 2023 weekend. This included the air pollution model, the weather forecast, the air quality alert that was issued, and monitoring data supporting the notification decision.

SWCAA holds regular calls with the weather service and multiple agencies around the state trying to predict air pollution levels. It is often a group decision made with several forecasting experts. Calls are held during the week and on weekends when necessary.

Often haze and poor air quality are confused. Haze is high elevation pollution which is not in the breathing zone. Haze does look bad and it will block the sun and/or create an orange glow, but is not necessarily harmful at ground level. Additionally, the purple air monitors and other sensors typically read about twice what the actual air quality index is. The EPA correction factor must be applied to the data to get the correct reading which has been proven to closely match the regulatory monitors.

Mr. Papish said SWCAA has several purple air monitors in the jurisdiction. He said Washington Department of Ecology has created a new sensor called SensWA that is more accurate and durable than the purple air monitors. Additionally, the SensWA already has the correction factor applied and they do not require power or wi-fi, rather they can run using solar and cell phone data. This makes them easier to locate and the data will be available on Ecology's website.

Dr. Melnick asked if the criteria SWCAA is currently using is the same as other agencies in the state. Mr. Papish said all the air agencies in Washington are using these criteria and

SWCAA also coordinates with Oregon DEQ because SWCAA shares an airshed with them. Vancouver has issues with ozone not present in other counties which triggers ozone specific alerts. Oregon DEQ readily issues ozone advisories when there is a chance of elevated levels for the Portland Metro area and sometimes jointly with SWCAA.

Public Hearing

None

Unfinished Business/New Business

None

Executive Session

None

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Papish summarized the information provided in the Executive Director's Report and offered to answer any questions.

EPA Releases Guidance For \$4.6 Billion Climate Pollution Reduction Implementation Competitive Grants; State and Local Applications Due April 1, 2024 (September 19, 2023) EPA has released two Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs) and guidance detailing \$4.6 billion in implementation grant funding under the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) program. These competitive grants are aimed at funding efforts identified in Preliminary Climate Action Plans (PCAPs) being developed under Phase 1 of the CPRG, and in the Phase 2 grants, \$4.3 billion general competition is open to states, municipalities, tribes, and territories, including air pollution control agencies; a second pool of \$300 million is available only to tribes and territories. As part of its evaluation of applications, EPA will prioritize measures that achieve the greatest amount of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions and deliver "transformative opportunities or impacts"; particularly weighting emissions reductions expected between 2025 and 2030. Community benefits and community engagement are also important selection criteria in the competition. The deadline for state and local agencies to apply to the general competition is April 1, 2024. The deadline for territories is May 1, 2024. For further information <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=350252>

Researchers Report Increasing Influence Of Wildfire Smoke On Air Quality Trends Across Most Of U.S. (September 20, 2023) Using air pollution data from ground and air sensors researchers from Stanford and Harvard have documented that average annual levels of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) dropped in as many as 41 of the contiguous United States between 2000 and 2016, but since that time these air quality trends have either slowed or been fully reversed in 35 states due to wildfire smoke, "eroding about 25% of previous multi-decadal progress in reducing PM2.5 concentrations on average in those states, equivalent to 4 years of air quality progress, and more

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than 50% in many western states.” In “The contribution of wildfire to PM2.5 trends in the USA,” the researchers conclude that “wildfire-driven increases in ambient PM2.5 concentrations are unregulated under current air pollution law and, in the absence of further interventions, we show that the contribution of wildfire to regional and national air quality trends is likely to grow as the climate continues to warm.” For further information:

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-023-06522-6>

SWCAA Awarded \$595,000 in State of Washington Woodstove Change Out Money (September 15, 2023). SWCAA’s change out project will reduce PM2.5 emissions in the airsheds of the “at-risk” areas in Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis and Wahkiakum Counties by replacing non-compliant wood stoves/inserts with cleaner heating devices, retrofitting fireplaces with inserts that burn cleaner and “buying-back” non-compliant stoves to be recycled. SWCAA is in the process of updating our program and website. Replacement/retrofit eligibility (UGA/NBA) will include Vancouver, Camas, Washougal, Battle Ground, Ridgefield, La Center, Woodland, Longview, Kelso, Centralia, Chehalis, and Wahkiakum County. Once the program begins, a standard voucher will be between \$1,500 and \$4,000 depending on the type of replacement system installed. The voucher is increased by 25 percent in EJ areas and is doubled for low-income applicants. All areas in SWCAA’s jurisdiction are eligible for buybacks.

Board Policy Discussion Issues

None.

Issues for Next Meeting

A. Public Hearing.

1. As Necessary.

B. New Business/Unfinished Business.

1. CPI fee increase decision

C. Meeting Date and Location.

1. November 2, 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 November 2, 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 2023	J 2023	J 2023	A 2023	S 2023	O 2023	N 2022	D 2022
Clark County	+	+	0	+	0	+	C	0	+	+	+	C
Cowlitz County	A	+	+	+	+	+	C	+	+	+	0	C
Lewis County	0	+	0	0	+	0	C	+	0	+	0	C
Skamania County	+	+	+	+	+	+	C	+	+	+	+	C
Wahkiakum County	A	+	+	+	+	+	C	+	+	+	+	C
Cathlamet	+	+	+	+	+	+	C	+	+	+	+	C
Centralia	+	+	+	+	+	+	C	+	+	+	+	C
Longview	+	+	+	+	+	+	C	+	+	+	+	C
Stevenson	0	+	+	+	+	+	C	+	+	0	+	C
Vancouver	+	0	+	+	+	0	C	0	+	+	+	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 3:58 p.m.

DocuSigned by:

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 Chair

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 Executive Director