

Southwest Clean Air Agency

Board of Directors Minutes

November 2, 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 November 2, 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  
Dennis Weber, Director, Cowlitz County  
Richard Mahar, Director, Skamania County  
Kim Harless, Director, City of Vancouver  
Sean Swope, Director, Lewis County

Excused:

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 October 5, 2023 minutes. Ms. Kendall moved and Mr. Smith seconded that the minutes for the October 5, 2023 Board meeting be approved. Motion passed.

Consent Agenda

Dr. Melnick asked for approval of the Consent Agenda including voucher numbers 142 through 169, 171 and 172 in the amount of \$12,118.91 which have been approved for payment by the Executive Director, voucher 170 and 173 in the amount of \$23,783.96, September 2023 Salaries and Benefits in the amount of \$184,871.12.

November 2, 2023

Mr. Mahar moved and Ms. Kendall seconded that the Consent Agenda be approved. Motion passed.

### Changes to Agenda

None

### Info Items & Public Comment

Mr. Papish introduced SWCAA's online Asbestos Tool update. SWCAA's goal is to become more electronic to reduce paper and manual work. Contractors and homeowners can now submit asbestos and demolition notifications online. When a notification is submitted online the system generates an email to notify SWCAA of the submittal, the database is automatically updated, an inspector reviews the information electronically and a system generated approval goes back to the person who submitted the notification. Mr. Papish said the online system reduces data entry and form generation for staff. He said the largest benefit of this new tool is contractors no longer have to come into the building to file notifications.

Dr. Melnick verified the notifications can still be done manually. Ms. Kendall verified people who submit notifications can still talk to a live person as needed. Mr. Papish confirmed people can still bring paperwork into the office and staff is available by phone for questions.

Mr. Papish read a comment received from Don Steinke, Climate Action of Southwest Washington regarding the Climate Amendment to the Growth Management Act at the November 2, 2023 for the record. The Board was also provided with the attachment Mr. Steinke sent.

Hello, my name is Don Steinke.

I composed this email two months ago, but have no record that I sent it. Therefore, I'm sending it now with an update attached from The Alliance for Community Engagement (ACE). ACE includes Washington Conservation Action, The Sierra Club, Friends of Clark County, Columbia Riverkeeper, Friends of the Columbia Gorge and others.

The update is our comment regarding Clark County's Public Participation Plan for implementing the Climate Amendment to the GMA.

### Context

The Growth Management Act was amended on May 3 this year. The amendment applies to the 11 fastest growing counties such as Clark and in those counties all cities with a population > 6000.

The amendment requires jurisdictions to reduce ghg emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled.

November 2, 2023

I'm here to encourage you to look for ways to support that effort.

The task is huge and all of us need to do what we can.

As I understand it, your authority is for only health harming air pollutants and stationary sources, not greenhouse gases and not mobile sources.

However, many stationary sources emit both types of pollutants (ghg and criteria pollutants)

What can you do?

I've noticed on your website that sometimes you report the greenhouse gas emissions on some facilities. Maybe try to do that on all the facilities you monitor, and make the results much more public.

I highly encourage you to use social media to bring much more awareness to the public about health harming emissions, such as from burning yard debris and trash and from idling vehicles as well as from facilities you monitor.

Educate the public about the health harms of the emissions from vented gas boilers and gas water-heaters.

Educate the public about the health harms of gas cook stoves in unvented spaces.  
Educate the restaurant industry about all-electric-options to gas cooking.

Talk about the health harms of living near a gas station.

Twenty years ago, I asked your staff about the legality of burning yard debris and trash. Staff provided the RCWs.

I know you do a few education and outreach events to small groups every year but our population is growing faster than the number of people you reach. Maybe authorize your communications and outreach staff and board members to do more.

Do this outreach not only in Clark County, but in all other counties in your territory.

According to the Berkley-Lawrence Livermore Lab, the air pollution level in a home with a gas range would be illegal if at the fence line of a power plant.

We've spent billions of dollars reducing NOx from tailpipes and power plants, but we have no emissions controls on gas heaters and furnaces.

I apologize for not speaking verbally during your meeting, but I have a conflict today.

Attached is the comment we're sending to Clark County.

November 2, 2023

Thanks for all you do.

Don Steinke

The Board thanked Mr. Papish for reading Mr. Steinke's comment.

Mr. Papish read a comment received from Kevin Morse of Elite Collision Center regarding the proposed fee increase for the record.

Mr. Morse sent an email which stated: I do not support the fee increase. I feel we are taxed and pay too much as it is.

The Board thanked Mr. Papish for reading Mr. Morse's comment.

### Public Hearing

None

### Unfinished Business/New Business

Dr. Melnick opened discussion on adoption of SWCAA's Consolidated Fee Schedule and recognized Mr. Papish. Mr. Papish said SWCAA is proposing for the Board to increase SWCAA's fees by last year's Western State's CPI which is equal to 7.5 percent and proposes to increase the per capita fee by four cents (from 58 to 62 cents). The four-cent per capita fee increase is equal to 6.9 percent instead of 7.5 percent due to rounding to the nearest cent.

The Board has recommended revising fees on an annual basis equal to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to keep up with inflation. The purpose of incremental CPI fee increases is to avoid having to do larger (catch-up) fee increases every several years. SWCAA's Board has been adopting annual CPI fee increases to SWCAA's fees since 2019.

On September 11, 2023, SWCAA posted its current proposal to increase the fees by last year's CPI. 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. In addition, SWCAA held a public hearing on the evening of October 17<sup>th</sup>. SWCAA received one written comment which is summarized in the Public Hearing Officer Report.

Mr. Swope asked for the total percent increase over the last three years. Mr. Papish said the total percent increase including this proposed increase would total 14.9%.

Mr. Weber expressed concern about the percentage increase. He said he was more comfortable with something closer to 5% and shared Cowlitz County has seen an increase in business activity which has contributed to smaller fee increases.

November 2, 2023

Mr. Swope stated he is very uncomfortable with a 15% increase over three years. It has a compounding effect which is often very negative.

Dr. Melnick said the ongoing cycle of increasing inflation in both goods and labor has a compounding effect as well.

Mr. Swope said fee increases just create more inflation and costs keep going up which negatively affects the average person. He said it is time to start tightening spending to protect citizens. He reiterated there is no way increasing fees and increasing spending is going to solve the inflation problem.

Mr. Shumaker asked if the agency actually collects any tax revenue, rather all the agency revenue is fee based. Mr. Papish said that was correct, the majority of SWCAA's revenue is fee based. SWCAA also receives grant money from federal and state resources. The grant money has been relatively stagnant for several years.

Ms. Harless said the fee based approach is about keeping up the good work the agency does and she is in favor of the fee adoption.

Mr. Mahar agreed the cycle of inflation needs to stop. He expressed concern about continuing to spend and spend. It is a very difficult situation which he finds frustrating and the inflation / spending spiral could have very negative consequences.

Dr. Melnick asked for a motion. Mr. Smith moved to adopt SWCAA Resolution 2023-03 which adopts the proposed changes to SWCAA's Consolidated Fee Schedule. Ms. Kendall seconded the motion.

Mr. Shumaker suggested the next time there is a proposed fee increase that Mr. Papish include information on what would happen if the fee increase is not approved. Mr. Papish said he would include an impact statement next time.

Mr. Vogt stated he agreed with the increase because Centralia has experienced putting off increases and then having a huge increase which upsets people.

Mr. Weber said he is in favor of a fee increase but he would prefer a more modest increase somewhere around 5% regardless of the inflation rates.

Mr. Weber made a motion to amend the original motion to limit the increase to 4.5%. Mr. Mahar seconded the amendment to the original motion. Dr. Melnick requested a roll call vote. Mr. Smith, Mr. Shumaker, Mr. Stowe, Ms. Kendall, Mr. Vogt and Ms. Harless voted against. Mr. Weber, Mr. Mahar and Mr. Swope voted in favor. Mr. Tisher abstained. Motion failed.

Dr. Melnick requested a roll call vote on the original motion to adopt SWCAA Resolution 2023-03 which adopts the proposed changes to SWCAA's Consolidated Fee Schedule. Mr. Smith, Mr. Shumaker, Mr. Stowe, Ms. Kendall, Mr. Vogt and Ms. Harless voted in favor.

November 2, 2023

Mr. Weber, Mr. Mahar and Mr. Swope voted against. Mr. Tisher abstained. Motion passed.

### 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.

**New EPA Reports on Food Waste Highlight Methane Implications (October 19, 2023)** Two new reports from EPA identify the methane impacts of food waste in municipal solid waste landfills and identify recommendations for reducing that waste stream. More food reaches MSW landfills than any other material and generates about 58 percent of the methane coming from landfills, according to the reports, and over one-third of the food produced in the United States is never eaten. This effort represents the first time the climate impacts of waste food have been identified. Its analysis estimates annual methane emissions from landfilled food waste from 1990 to 2020 and found that while total emissions from municipal solid waste landfills are decreasing, methane emissions from landfilled food waste are increasing. EPA suggests that addressing this methane source may be a highly cost-effective climate change mitigation strategy, with source reduction being the most environmentally beneficial approach. SWCAA recently permitted a new food waste processor proposed in Longview that will receive approximately 100,000 tons per year of food waste that would have gone to a landfill and converts it to renewable natural gas that can be fed into a nearby natural gas pipeline for downstream uses. For further information: <https://www.epa.gov/land-research/quantifying-methane-emissions-landfilled-food-waste>

**EPA Makes Endangerment Finding for Aircraft Lead Emissions (October 20, 2023)** - EPA published in the Federal Register its final action, announced earlier this week, finding that lead emissions from aircraft engines that operate on leaded fuel cause or contribute to lead air pollution that may reasonably be anticipated to endanger public health and welfare under Clean Air Act section 231(a). The basis of this finding is the comprehensive review and consideration by agency experts of extensive scientific evidence that has been accrued over decades and peer-reviewed by EPA's Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee. Among other things, this scientific evidence demonstrates that low levels of lead in children's blood can have harmful effects on children's cognitive function, including reduced IQ and decreased academic performance. As EPA reiterates in the final action, "there is no evidence of a threshold below which there are no harmful effects on cognition from [lead] exposure." Further, "evidence suggests that while some neurocognitive effects of lead in children may be transient, some lead-related cognitive effects may be irreversible and persist into adulthood, potentially contributing to lower educational attainment and financial well-being." Although this finding does not prohibit or place restrictions on leaded fuel, or establish new control measures for aircraft lead emissions, it does obligate EPA to fulfill its statutory duty to propose and promulgate federal emission standards, under section 231(a), applicable to covered aircraft, the majority of which

November 2, 2023

are piston-engine powered. Likewise, the Federal Aviation Administration is obligated to fulfill its statutory duty “to prescribe standards for the composition or chemical or physical properties of an aircraft fuel or fuel additive to control or eliminate aircraft emissions which the EPA has found endanger public health or welfare.” For further information:

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2023-10-20/pdf/2023-23247.pdf> and <https://www.epa.gov/regulations-emissions-vehicles-and-engines/regulations-lead-emissions-aircraft>

**DOE Announces Hydrogen Hubs, 16 States to Share \$7 Billion (October 13, 2023)** The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has announced seven proposed “hydrogen hubs” in 16 states will share \$7 billion in federal grants to jump-start the emerging hydrogen industry. Funded by the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), the Hydrogen Hubs convene teams of states to deploy projects that are intended to “accelerate the commercial-scale deployment of clean hydrogen helping to generate clean, dispatchable power, create a new form of energy storage, and decarbonize heavy industry and transportation”, according to DOE. The regional hubs responded to a competitive solicitation to propose networks of hydrogen producers and consumers linked with new and existing infrastructure. The goal of the overall program is to increase clean hydrogen output by a factor of five to 10 million metric tons by 2030 and 50 million tons by 2050 and reduce 25 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions from end-uses each year. A Pacific Northwest hub that includes Washington, Oregon and Montana were also awarded \$1 billion for projects producing hydrogen exclusively from renewables. The Pacific Northwest Hydrogen Hub has committed to negotiating Project Labor Agreements for all projects over \$1 million and investing in joint labor-management/state-registered apprenticeship programs. Workforce commitments include priority hiring programs for former coal industry workers and investing more than \$4 million in the Centralia College training center to provide worker training. This Hub notes that attracting, training, and retaining local skilled, qualified, local, and diverse construction and operations workforces begins with leveraging high union density through collaboration with local labor unions and relevant workforce bodies. This H2Hub anticipates creating more than 10,000 direct jobs—8,050 in construction jobs and 350 permanent jobs. For further information: <https://www.energy.gov/oced/regional-clean-hydrogen-hubs-selections-award-negotiations>

#### Board Policy Discussion Issues

None.

#### Issues for Next Meeting

- A. Public Hearing.
  - 1. As Necessary.
- B. New Business/Unfinished Business.
  - 1. Appointment of Board Officers.
- C. Meeting Date and Location.
  - 1. January 4, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. Southwest Clean Air Agency, 11815 NE 99th Street, Vancouver, Washington.

November 2, 2023

The next Board of Directors meeting will be held on January 4, 2024 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 2023	D 2023
Clark County	+	+	0	+	0	+	C	0	+	+	+	C
Cowlitz County	A	+	+	+	+	+	C	+	+	+	A	C
Lewis County	0	+	0	0	+	0	C	+	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 3:57 p.m.

DocuSigned by:  
  
DFB652FC3A604AF...  
 Chair

DocuSigned by:  
  
7A3556CB273B487...  
 Executive Director