

Southwest Clean Air Agency

Board of Directors Minutes

January 4, 2024

The regular meeting of the Southwest Clean Air Agency Board of Directors was held in the Southwest Clean Air Agency office, Vancouver, Washington on January 4, 2024.

Those present were: Dr. Alan Melnick, Chair, Clark County
Ryan Smith, Vice-Chair, Member at Large
Ben Shumaker, Director, City of Stevenson
Gene Strong, 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
Asa Leckie, Director, Skamania County
Kim Harless, Director, City of Vancouver

Excused: Sean Swope, Director, Lewis County

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

Guests: Don Steinke, Climate Action of Southwest Washington

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 November 2, 2023 minutes. Mr. Smith moved and Mr. Stowe seconded that the minutes for the November 2, 2023 Board meeting be approved. Motion passed.

Consent Agenda

Dr. Melnick asked for approval of the Consent Agenda including voucher numbers 228 through 255 and 257 in the amount of \$50,511.04 which have been approved for payment by the Executive Director, voucher 256 in the amount of \$11,099.94, October 2023 Salaries and Benefits in the amount of \$200,561.32 and November 2023 Salaries and Benefits in the amount of \$178,716.31.

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Mr. Stowe moved and Mr. Strong seconded that the Consent Agenda be approved. Motion passed.

Changes to Agenda

None

Info Items & Public Comment

Mr. Papish shared comments received from Don Steinke, Climate Action of Southwest Washington regarding the Growth Management Act at the January 4, 2024 for the record. The Board was provided with the attachment Mr. Steinke sent.

To SWCAA

Hi Tina,

I planned to provide public comment tomorrow, but I'm not able to be there or to attend via Zoom.

Please distribute my comment to the board and executive director.

I've included Dr. Melnick and Kim Harless in this thread because I live in Clark County.

Hello, my name is Don Steinke. I taught science for 43 years, mostly at Camas and FV high schools.

The Growth Management Act was amended last year. The amendment requires the 11 fastest growing counties such as Clark and all cities in those counties with a population > 6000 to reduce air pollution.

I'm here to encourage you to look for ways to support that effort. According to the EPA, for each dollar spent reducing tailpipe pollution, we'd save at least \$10 in health care costs.

Efforts to reduce health harming pollutants also serve to reduce climate pollution. Even though the GMA doesn't apply to the other counties in your service territory, the people in Cowlitz and Lewis Counties are exposed to significant air pollution from their industries. According the Health Disparities map from the Washington State DOH, Woodland, Longview, Kelso, and Centralia are rated 9 with 10 being the worst.

I appreciate your report on coal power plants, "Staggering" Contribution of Individual Coal-Fired Power Plants To Mortality. The Trans-Alta coal plant has been operating for 55 years and will be closing in 1 year. Seems a bit late to start paying attention.

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What can you do? I wish you would do more to educate the public about health harming pollutants, such as from wood smoke, burning yard debris and trash and from idling vehicles as well.

Clark PUD puts a weekly column into the Columbian. I'd like to see you publish a weekly column. If not weekly, then monthly. Not only in the Columbian, but in the Centralia Chronicle, the Longview Daily News and the Chinook Observer. Air pollution kills and people are oblivious.

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

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

Don Steinke

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

Dr. Melnick opened discussion on potential relocation of Southwest Clean Air Agency's office and recognized Mr. Papish. Mr. Papish said SWCAA's building lease is up for renewal on March 1, 2024. SWCAA has been negotiating a new lease agreement while also exploring options for other more cost-effective and centrally located office space. SWCAA is considering relocating to an office location near the Vancouver Mall which could result in significant cost savings for the agency while providing reduced travel time and better freeway access for conducting fieldwork and responding to air pollution complaints.

Mr. Papish said the building management at a new location has agreed to an office remodel as well as three months free rent. SWCAA has also been authorized to install an electric vehicle charger at SWCAA's cost. The cost of the move, vehicle charger, possible furniture purchases and stationary updates should be covered by the free rent and saving from the lower cost rent. A majority of staff had a positive response to the idea of moving and the location. To make the smaller space work, SWCAA would need to clean out at least ten filing cabinets prior to the move and commit to digitizing agency records.

Mr. Vogt asked how the power for the charging station will be paid. Mr. Papish responded the physical charger and installation would be at SWCAA's expense. Installing a smart charging station would allow SWCAA to collect fees for the use of the charger by vehicles other than the agency fleet. Mr. Vogt asked if SWCAA is responsible for the maintenance of the charger. Mr. Papish said there are different contract options for set up of the machine regarding maintenance and fee collection.

Mr. Mortensen expressed concern about a full-service building with shared expenses. He felt the shared expenses could be inflated without warning. Mr. Papish said the lease would include an optix clause so the shared expenses would be reviewed at regular intervals and possibly raised based on actuals and/or inflationary increases. Mr. Mortensen asked how long of a lease SWCAA is going to sign. Mr. Papish responded it would be a five-year term.

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Mr. Stowe asked if the full-service building includes custodial services. Mr. Papish said he believed that SWCAA would be responsible for custodial within its space. The building management would be responsible for custodial in the shared spaces.

Mr. Mortensen asked how much down time is expected for the move. Mr. Papish said the move would probably take place on the weekend, but the phones and computers might take a little time to get up and running. SWCAA will do everything within its power to keep the downtime to a minimum.

Mr. Smith made a motion to authorize the Executive Director to investigate and enter into a new building lease. Ms. Harless seconded the motion.

Mr. Mortensen expressed concern about the board not having the opportunity to review the lease before it is signed. Mr. Papish said he will have SWCAA's attorney review the lease prior to signing.

Mr. Mortensen made a motion to amend the motion that the terms of the lease are substantially represented as presented. Mr. Smith and Ms. Harless accepted the amendment to the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearing

None

Unfinished Business/New Business

Dr. Melnick opened discussion on the election of Chair and Vice Chair for calendar year 2024. Mr. Papish explained that the Chair position assumes only a small amount of additional work in communicating with the agency and coming to meetings regularly. Dr. Melnick asked for volunteers or nominations for the Chair and Vice Chair.

Ms. Kendall nominated Dr. Melnick for Chair of the SWCAA Board of Directors. Mr. Stowe seconded the motion. Dr. Melnick asked if there were any further nominations for the Chair position. There were none. Dr. Melnick closed the nominations and asked for a vote. The vote was unanimous and Dr. Melnick was named Chair of the SWCAA Board of Directors.

Dr. Melnick asked for nominations for the Vice Chair of the SWCAA Board of Directors. He then nominated Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith nominated Mr. Shumaker. Mr. Weber seconded the motion for Mr. Shumaker as Vice Chair. Dr. Melnick asked if there were any further nominations. There were none. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Melnick and Mr. Shumaker expressed their gratitude for the approval of their nomination and thanked the Board members.

Executive Session

None

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Executive Director's Report

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

Auto Dealers Call On President Biden To “Tap The Brakes” On What They Call “Electric Vehicle Mandate” In Forthcoming LMDV Rule (November 28, 2023) A group of nearly 3,900 car dealers from across the country, who say they reflect “the voice of our customers” and represent all major vehicle brands, sent a letter to President Biden asking him to “slow down [his] proposed regulations mandating battery electric vehicle (BEV) production and distribution” because “the reality...is that electric vehicle demand today is not keeping up with the large influx of BEVs arriving at our dealerships prompted by the current regulations.” The group is referring to EPA's May 2023 proposed regulation for multi-pollutant emission standards for model year 2027 through 2032 light- and medium-duty motor vehicles. The proposed rule, on which EPA expects to take final action in March 2024, does not mandate the use of any specific technology, nor does it mandate that any percentage of vehicle production be zero emission. Instead, each manufacturer may choose what mix of emission control technologies is best suited for its fleet to meet the standards. Nevertheless, the auto dealers tell the President “it's time to tap the brakes on the unrealistic government electric vehicle mandate. Allow time for the battery technology to advance. Allow time to make BEVs more affordable. Allow time to develop domestic sources for the minerals to make batteries. Allow time for the charging infrastructure to be built and prove reliable. And most of all, allow time for the American consumer to get comfortable with the technology and make the choice to buy an electric vehicle.” For further information: <https://evvoiceofthecustomer.com/>

Researchers Quantify “Staggering” Contribution of Individual Coal-Fired Power Plants To Mortality (November 23, 2023) In a study published in Science, researchers from Harvard, George Mason University, Georgia Institute of Technology, University of Geneva, Delft University of Technology and University of Texas find that fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) emissions from coal-fired power plants are more than twice as likely as PM_{2.5} emissions from other sources to contribute to premature death in the U.S. Further, the researchers estimate that from 1999 to 2020 PM_{2.5} emissions from coal-fired power plants were associated with 460,000 premature deaths of elderly people in the U.S. In a commentary on the study the lead author, Dr. Lucas Henneman, writes, “It's a staggering number, but the study also has good news: Annual deaths associated with U.S. coal power plants have fallen sharply since the mid-2000s as federal regulations compelled operators to install emissions scrubbers and many utilities shut down coal plants entirely.” In the study, “Mortality risk from United States coal electricity generation,” the authors conclude that their findings “have implications for current air pollution risk assessments, which incorrectly assume equal toxicity for ambient PM_{2.5} from all sources and for all locations. The research platform that we used to quantify exposure associated with individual coal EGUs [electric generating units], which accounts for pollution transport and location relative to population centers, can support more efficient regulatory efforts by producing targeted evidence of how individual EGU sources contribute to the existing health burden.” For further information: <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.adf4915>

EPA, Four Federal Agencies Announce MOU And Joint Work Plan On Wildland Fire And Air Quality Coordination (November 9, 2023) EPA, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) “to strengthen their coordination and implementation of policies, communications, and programs that relate to the use of prescribed fire to benefit restoration of forests and other wildlands, while protecting communities from wildfire and smoke impacts and promoting public health and welfare. With respect to air quality impacts specifically, the Agencies seek to reduce the impact of emissions from wildland fires on concentrations of particulate matter, ozone, and other pollutants of concern.” Along with the MOU, the four agencies released a joint work plan in which they outline the wildland fire-related priorities on which they will focus in fiscal years 2024 and 2025, including community preparedness; ensuring that land management and public health goals are address together; data collection and sharing; and interagency communication and messaging. For further information: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/11/09/biden-harris-administration-agencies-sign-interagency-agreement-to-address-wildfire-risk-and-protect-communities-from-smoke/>

DOE, China, U.S., Agree to Climate Cooperation (November 15, 2023) In a meeting between President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Washington DC, China and the U.S. have pledged to cooperating in accelerating efforts to address climate change. The Presidential meeting included a commitment to reduce emissions of methane and other GHGs. China and the U.S. are the world’s two biggest emitters of greenhouse gases and the commitment comes amid a deterioration in ties between the countries over issues including military provocations, trade, cybersecurity, and Taiwan. Both countries “are aware of the important role they play” and “will work together ... to rise up to one of the greatest challenges of our time,” according to a joint statement reiterating a pledge made by the Group of 20 nations to triple global renewable energy capacity by 2030. The U.S. and China will also convene a working group on enhancing climate action in “the critical decade of the 2020s.” This would include exploring efforts to reduce methane emissions in China, which had previously not addressed emissions of this potent greenhouse gas. For further information: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/11/15/readout-of-president-joe-bidens-meeting-with-president-xi-jinping-of-the-peoples-republic-of-china-2/> and <https://www.state.gov/sunnylands-statement-on-enhancing-cooperation-to-address-the-climate-crisis/>

Board Policy Discussion Issues

None.

Issues for Next Meeting

- A. Public Hearing.
 - 1. As Necessary.
- B. New Business/Unfinished Business.
 - 1. As Necessary.
- C. Meeting Date and Location.
 - 1. February 1, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. Southwest Clean Air Agency, 11815 NE 99th

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Street, Vancouver, Washington.

The next Board of Directors meeting will be held on February 1, 2024 at 3:00 p.m., Southwest Clean Air Agency, Vancouver, Washington.

Board Meeting Attendance:

JURISDICTION	J 2024	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	+	+	+	+	+	+	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	A	+	+	+	+	+	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 4:12 p.m.

DocuSigned by:

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 Chair

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 Executive Director