

Southwest Clean Air Agency

Board of Directors Minutes

September 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 September 4, 2024.

Those present were: Dr. Alan Melnick, Chair, Clark County
Ben Shumaker, Vice-Chair, City of Stevenson
Lee Tischer, Director, Wahkiakum County
Arne Mortensen, Director, Cowlitz County
Richard Mahar, Director, Skamania County
Robert Stowe, Director, Town of Cathlamet
Andy Oien, Director, City of Centralia
Kim Harless, Director, City of Vancouver
Ruth Kendall, Director, City of Longview
Sean Swope, Director, Lewis County

Excused: Vacant, Director, Member at Large

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 August 1, 2024 minutes. Mr. Shumaker moved and Mr. Tischer seconded that the minutes for the August 1, 2024 Board meeting be approved. Motion passed.

Consent Agenda

Dr. Melnick asked for approval of the Consent Agenda including voucher numbers 44 through 57, 59 through 91 and 93 through 98 in the amount of \$39,965.17 which have been approved for payment by the Executive Director, voucher numbers 58 and 92 in the amount of \$26,271.45, July 2024 Financial Statements, July 2024 Salaries and Benefits in the amount of \$182,835.59.

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

Changes to Agenda

None

Info Items & Public Comment

None

Public Hearing

None

Unfinished Business/New Business

Dr. Melnick opened discussion on the CPI fee increase proposal and recognized Mr. Papish. Mr. Papish said SWCAA's Board of Directors has requested SWCAA bring a CPI fee increase to the board for consideration on an annual basis. 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.

SWCAA's cost recovery is approximately 70 percent at current fee levels for registration and Non-Title V Permitting. Program costs are supplemented by per capita dues, grants, and other funds. SWCAA's expenses are 75 percent labor (salaries and benefits) and 25 percent overhead (rent, vehicles, equipment, supplies, etc.). SWCAA increased 2024/25 salaries by the Employment Cost Index (4.1%), plus merit increases (3%) for eligible staff after board approval. Salaries are increasing by \$88,000 in the upcoming year, which the proposed CPI fee increase at 3.5% and Per Capita at a 2% increase only generate \$57,000 in revenue.

Dr. Melnick asked if the other funds make up the difference. Mr. Papish said the lower rent over the next five years will help offset the difference as well as vacancies in staff. The budget will continue to be monitored, and adjustments will be made as necessary.

Mr. Mortensen asked if the 70 percent recovery was an agency target. Mr. Papish said the agency has historically only asked for CPI fee increases and additionally the rule says the cost of the registration program by law cannot exceed revenue.

Dr. Melnick suggested the agency work toward user fees covering the cost of the program. He felt the Per Capita fees and/or other programs shouldn't necessarily be used to cover costs for the registration program.

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Ms. Harless agreed the agency should work toward 100 percent cost recovery. Dr. Melnick suggested working toward 90 percent recovery to allow for economic fluctuations. Mr. Shumaker agreed there should be a target to work toward, if it's 80 percent or 90 percent, and to plan for it to be implemented over multiple years.

Discussion ensued regarding using the Employment Cost Index this year as opposed to the Consumer Price Index. Mr. Papish said the request for this meeting is only to propose the fee increase and send out public notice to fee payers. The adoption of the proposed fee increase would happen after the public notice and all comments will be brought before the board at the November meeting.

Dr. Menick asked for a motion. Ms. Kendall made a motion to approve SWCAA to public notice and solicit public comment related to raising SWCAA's 2025 fees by last year's Employment Cost Index (ECI) which is equal to 4.1 percent and raising the per capita fee by two cents (from 62 to 64 cents). The two-cent per capita increase would be 3.2 percent when rounded to the nearest cent. Mr. Mortensen seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Ms. Kendall made a motion for the agency to move toward a 90 percent cost recovery model to be spread across a four-year period and present this information at a future board meeting. Mr. Mortensen seconded the motion. 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 Research Shows Exposure to Wildfire Smoke “Greatly Raises” Risk of Dementia
Diagnosis - Research presented this week at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference in Philadelphia shows wildfire smoke may be “particularly hazardous” to brain health, increasing the risk of being diagnosed with dementia more than other forms of air pollution. Based on a 10-year study of 1.2 million residents of southern California researchers found “the risk of exposure to fine particulate matter (PM2.5) air pollution is much more pronounced when the source is wildfire smoke than when it comes from other sources, such as motor vehicles and factories.” According to Joan A. Casey, Ph.D., senior author of the study and Assistant Professor in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences at the University of Washington, Seattle, “These findings underscore that clinical and health policies seeking to prevent dementia-associated disparities should include efforts to reduce exposure to long-term wildfire and non-wildfire PM2.5.” In addition, the researchers advise that risk can be reduced if home air filtration systems are updated and people stay inside when the air quality is unhealthy and wear an N95 mask outside when the Air Quality Index reaches 100. For further information: <https://aaic.alz.org/releases-2024/exposure-wildfire-smoke-raises-dementia-risk.asp>

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Researchers Use Satellite Data to Detail NO2 Emissions from Warehousing Facilities - In a study published in Nature Communications researchers at The George Washington University (GWU) conclude that residents of communities located adjacent to large, e-commerce-type warehouses are exposed to 20 percent more transportation-related nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) – a pollutant that can lead to asthma and other serious health outcomes. The researchers used nationwide datasets of warehouse locations, traffic and satellite observations, which “provide a unique capability to evaluate the air quality and environmental equity impacts of these geographically dispersed emission sources.” Their findings, the researchers say, underscore the need for indirect source rules, incentives for truck replacements and corporate commitments to electrification. In addition, they suggest that future ground-based monitoring strategies could help track the effects of individual or small clusters of facilities. For further information:

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-024-50000-0>

SWCAA Applies for Electric Vehicle Charging Station Grant - SWCAA has applied for a grant to install four Level 2 electric vehicle charging stations at SWCAA’s new office location. The grant is through the Washington State Volkswagen Federal Settlement Grant Program. SWCAA aims to enhance community charging infrastructure, promote workplace charging, and expand its electric vehicle fleet. These actions would reduce air pollution in the community. The chargers would be publicly accessible and situated in Vancouver’s overburdened community highly impacted by air pollution. The area has a socioeconomic score of 9, and an environmental exposure score of 9, with a neighboring area scoring 10 for environmental health disparities according to the Washington State Department of Health’s Health Tracking Network.

Mr. Stowe asked if the expense of installing the charging stations is actually worth the money. Mr. Papish said the charging station would be used by the agency and the long-term plan is to have multiple fully electric cars in the agency fleet.

SWCAA Welcomes New Compliance and Enforcement Manager - Bryan Smith joins SWCAA as the new Compliance and Enforcement Manager, bringing over 20 years of experience from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). An attorney, Bryan spent more than a decade in DEQ’s Office of Compliance and Enforcement as an Environmental Law Specialist, managing both enforcement cases and appeals. He later transitioned to DEQ’s Air Quality Division, where he served as the Small Business Assistance Program Coordinator and Ombudsman, gaining expertise in air quality issues affecting small businesses and aiding compliance with air quality regulations. In recent years, Bryan has overseen DEQ’s statewide complaints program. In this role, he supervised complaint specialists and provided guidance and training to inspectors across the state. His extensive background aligns closely with the responsibilities he will undertake at SWCAA. Bryan’s first day will be September 9th.

Mr. Papish reported the agency has not received any applications for the Member at Large position. All the board members said they would get the word out again and encouraged Mr. Papish to try another press release.

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Board Policy Discussion Issues

None.

Issues for Next Meeting

- A. Public Hearing.
 - 1. As Necessary.
- B. New Business/Unfinished Business.
 - 1. SWCAA 400 rulemaking.
- C. Meeting Date and Location.
 - 1. October 3, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. Southwest Clean Air Agency, 5105 NE 82nd Ave., Suite 102, Vancouver, Washington.

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

Board Meeting Attendance:

JURISDICTION	J 2024	F 2024	M 2024	A 2024	M 2024	J 2024	J 2024	A 2024	S 2024	O 2023	N 2023	D 2023
Clark County	+	+	+	+	+	0	C	+	+	+	+	C
Cowlitz County	+	+	A	+	+	+	C	+	+	+	A	C
Lewis County	0	+	+	0	0	+	C	0	+	+	+	C
Skamania County	+	+	+	+	+	+	C	+	+	+	+	C
Wahkiakum County	A	+	+	+	+	+	C	+	+	+	+	C
Cathlamet	+	0	A	+	+	+	C	+	+	+	+	C
Centralia	+	0	0	+	A	+	C	+	+	+	+	C
Longview	+	+	+	+	+	+	C	0	+	+	+	C
Stevenson	A	+	+	+	+	+	C	+	+	0	+	C
Vancouver	+	+	+	+	+	+	C	0	+	+	+	C
Member-At-Large	+	+	+	+	+	+	C	0	0	+	+	C

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

Dr. Melnick adjourned the meeting without objection at 3:58 p.m.

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DocuSigned by:
Dr. Alan Melnick
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Chair

DocuSigned by:
Uri Papish
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Executive Director

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