

MEMORANDUM

TO: Asheville-Buncombe Air Quality Agency Board of Directors

FROM: Ashley Featherstone, Director

RE: Minutes for November 8, 2021

DATE: January 4, 2022

Enclosed, please find the Minutes for the **Monday, November 8, 2021 Western North Carolina Regional Air Quality Agency (WNCRAQA)** board meeting. The name of the agency was officially changed to Asheville-Buncombe Air Quality Agency (AB Air Quality) on November 9th when amendments to the Interlocal Agreement were approved by Asheville City Council. The next meeting of the AB Air Quality Board is scheduled for **Tuesday, January 11, 2022 at 4:00 pm.** Due to recommendations to limit public gatherings and Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), this meeting will be conducted remotely as authorized by Session Law 2020-3 and GS §166A-19.24. The meeting will be hosted via Zoom Webinar. The public may listen to the meeting as is occurs at the following link: <https://bit.ly/abair0122>. Meetings will continue to be virtual until further notice. If anyone needs an accommodation to be able to listen to the meeting, please call the agency's office at 828-250-6777.

****Public comment on agenda items will be taken via electronic means only. The following criteria for comment will apply: (1) any public comment must be received by 5:00pm Sunday before the Board Meeting by sending an email to airquality@buncombecounty.org or by leaving a voice message at 828-250-6790; and (2) must be no more than 350 words. Comments should be limited to air quality or specific topics relevant to the Board.****

Comments will be read into the record, but the Board reserves the right to limit this practice to one hour. All comments received will be retained by the Agency as permanent record.

The attendance of the Board members was conducted by roll call and was as follows:

Members Present:

*Karl Koon
Joel Storrow
Evan Couzo
Garry Whisnant*

Members Absent:

Vonna Cloninger

Staff Present: *Ashley Featherstone, Director; James Raiford, Permitting Program Manager; Mike Matthews, Senior Air Quality Specialist; Betsy Brown, Air Quality Coordinator; Alex Latta, Senior Air Quality Specialist*

Others Present: *Michael Frue, County Attorney; Ben Hale, Eaton Corporation; John Russler, Eaton Corporation; David Overly, Eaton Corporation; Keith Bamberger, NCDEQ Division of Air Quality; Max Taintor, Buncombe County Communications and Public Engagement*

Mr. Storrow called the meeting of the Western North Carolina Regional Air Quality Agency Board of Directors to order on November 8, 2021 at 4:00 pm. (The Agency's name change was not final until approved by Asheville City Council on November 9, 2021).

The order of business was as follows:

I. Public Comment Protocol Announcement

Mr. Storrow read the announcement:

Due to recommendations to limit public gatherings and Corona Virus disease 2019 (COVID-19), this meeting will be conducted remotely as authorized by Session Law 2020-3 and GS §166A-19.24.

Public comment on agenda items is taken via electronic means only and must have been received by 5:00pm Sunday before the Board Meeting by email or voice message. Comments should be limited to air quality or specific topics relevant to the Board. No comments have been received.

II. Adjustment and approval of agenda

Mr. Storrow noted that there was a typo on the Agenda under item VIII. C. Calendar. The date of the next meeting should be "2022" instead of "2021."

Mr. Koon moved to approve the agenda as amended. Mr. Whisnant seconded the motion.

Voting was conducted by roll call.

Mr. Koon-yes

Mr. Whisnant-yes

Dr. Couzo-yes

Mr. Storrow-yes

The motion passed 4-0.

III. Special Presentation

A. Clean Air Excellence Award-Eaton Corporation, Arden Plant

Ashley Featherstone stated that the Agency had been giving these awards since 2004. We give special recognition to local businesses who go above and beyond the air quality regulations to implement voluntary measures to reduce air pollution. This year the award goes to one of our permitted facilities, Eaton Corporation, who has received this award previously. This facility is part of an environmental stewardship initiative with the Department of Environmental Quality. They submitted a new project for 2020. They replaced an older class 4 laser with a new class 4 optic fiber laser. They project an 87% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions or GHGs, equivalent to 65,981 pounds per year. Any time we reduce GHGs we are also reducing nitrogen oxides,

ground level ozone, and fine particles. Our Advisory Committee, who voted to give the award to Eaton, is represented in the meeting by Keith Bamberger.

Mr. Storrow began the presentation by reading the Mission Statement of the Agency: “The Mission of the Asheville-Buncombe Air Quality Agency is to protect and monitor the area's air quality to safeguard the public health and the environment.” When a facility goes above and beyond in their efforts, this advances our mission. There is a plaque that goes with this award. Mr. Storrow read the inscription: “Air Quality Excellence Award presented to Eaton Corporation Arden Plant for Outstanding Efforts to Improve Air Quality in Western North Carolina presented November 8, 2021 by the WNC Regional Air Quality Agency.”

Ben Hale, John Russler, the plant manager, and David Overly, the environmental and safety officer for the plant were present. Ben Hale spoke on behalf of Eaton. He thanked the Agency for the award. Eaton Corporation is involved in several initiatives and they appreciate the partnership with the WNC Regional Air Quality Agency.

Ms. Featherstone thanked Buncombe County Communications for being there to record the presentation and provide additional publicity and recognition to Eaton. John Russler wanted to thank Mr. Hale for speaking on Eaton’s behalf. He thanked the Agency for the award and being supportive of their company. Eaton, with many other corporations, has the great vision of being carbon neutral by 2030. They hope to be the recipient of the award for years to come as they march toward that initiative across the globe.

IV. Consent Agenda:

A. Approval of minutes from September 27, 2021

There is a small typo “:” instead of “;” following Mr. Frue’s name in the minutes. Mr. Whisnant moved to approve the minutes with that correction. Mr. Koon seconded the motion.

Voting was conducted by roll call.

Mr. Whisnant-yes

Mr. Koon-yes

Dr. Couzo-yes

Mr. Storrow-yes

The motion passed 4-0.

V. Unfinished Business:

A. Renaming of Agency-Interlocal Agreement Update

Mr. Storrow said the Agency received approval from the County at the most recent commissioners’ meeting to rename ourselves Asheville-Buncombe Air Quality Agency. It will not be official until our other partner, the City of Asheville, meets tomorrow night. It is on their consent agenda. By the next time we meet in January, we will have a new name.

Ms. Featherstone said we would be doing press releases with the County Communications Team. We will be updating our Dun and Bradstreet number and documents with the EPA. We will send notifications out to our permitted facilities and the state and federal partners. We are looking at updating the name on our permits. We should know more by the next meeting. It will be helpful to have a name representative of the geographic area that we serve.

There were other details in the interlocal that were updated as a part of this action with the County and City. These had to do with our office location and charges that are budgeted each year.

VI. Director's Report:

A. Asbestos Removal and Demolition/Renovation Permits online

Our demolition, renovation and asbestos removal permits have gone live online. We handle the demolition and renovation permits for the County and, as the air quality agency, handle the asbestos removal permits. We have been taking electronic payments for these permits in Accela since January. Since October, applicants can go online and fill out their application; their fees are calculated by the program. Previously, Mr. Matthews had to enter the information in Accela and then email the customer with the fee. Customers must be registered in the system. Mr. Raiford has been working with Mr. Matthews and the IT department to get this implemented. He is also working on a press release to let the public know. Mr. Raiford said it is a lot easier and more efficient for the customer to get their permit. We have been reaching out to constituents. NESHAP permits require an ink signature. In this case, the customer gets a message to sign and send the necessary form into the office before the permit is issued. Mr. Matthews stated that he is getting positive feedback from the contractors utilizing the online applications and payments.

Ms. Brown said that the credit card and online payment fees from January through September have been \$672. They have been running around \$85 to \$100 per month. The time savings for Mr. Matthews and Ms. Brown have made this cost well worth it. We will know more when we have a full year's worth of data. That cost is factored into our budget. We had to estimate the cost for this year but should have better data for the next budget year.

B. Monitoring Update

Mr. Lance is on vacation. Mr. Raiford gave the report. The ozone season just ended October 31. The season runs March 1 through October 31. We had a pretty good ozone year, but not as good as last year. The standard is 70 parts per billion (ppb). Our fourth highest reading this year was 60 ppb. Last year the fourth highest was 54 ppb, so you can see how Covid affected the results. During the pandemic, people were traveling less. For the ozone season in 2021 we had 17 yellow days. For 2020, we had one yellow day. No orange days at all. Particulate matter (PM) was pretty similar. PM monitoring season does not end. So far in 2021 we have had 31 yellow PM days. Our average is 6 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) for the year. The annual standard is $12 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Last year we only had 9 yellow days for PM, and the average was $4.9 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ for the year. You can see the difference from 2020 to 2021 as things move back toward "normal." Our data completeness is great. PM is at 97% and ozone is at 96.5%. We have applied for some additional EPA grant funds for monitoring equipment, but we have not yet heard anything about that funding.

C. COVID-19 Update

The County does have a mask mandate through November. We still have reduced staff in the office.

D. EPA's Advance Program

We mentioned this program during the last meeting. This is a technical program through the EPA where we would partner with other agencies. The focus is to maintain or achieve attainment for ground level ozone and particulate matter. We did discuss this with the Advisory Committee during the last meeting on October 18, 2021. Dr.

Couzo will mention later in this meeting. The Committee is very supportive of the Agency pursuing this program

There are other partnership opportunities. Mr. Koon shared an announcement for some emission reduction grant funds through the Department of Environmental Quality. We are talking to Buncombe County Sustainability to see if there is maintenance equipment that needs updating. We might be able to pursue some of those funds for replacement equipment that has lower emissions. This is an example of a partnership where we might be able to utilize additional resources available and would fit in well with the Advance Program.

E. Facility Permit Renewals

The renewals are all small facilities. In the Board packet we provided the most recent inspection reports for these facilities.

Facility Name	Type of Facility	Facility Classification	Location	Changes from Existing Permit
Oldcastle APG South, Inc., dba Adams	Concrete Block Manufacturing Facility	Small	Meadow Road, Asheville	Update exempted activities list
Pace Construction	Portable Concrete, Stone, and Recycled Asphalt Pavement Crusher	Small	Various sites with local zoning authority approval	None
Silver-Line Plastics LLC	PVC Pipe Manufacturing Facility	Small	Riverside Drive, Asheville	Update exempted activities list

Mr. Koon moved to approve the permits renewals for Oldcastle, Pace, and Silver-Line Plastics. Mr. Whisnant seconded the motion.

Voting was conducted by roll call.

Mr. Whisnant-yes

Mr. Koon-yes

Dr. Couzo-yes

Mr. Storrow-yes

The motion passed 4-0.

F. Facility Permit Modifications

There is one modification. A Simple Cremation has requested that a pet crematory be removed from their permit.

Facility Name	Type of Facility	Facility Classification	Location	Changes from Existing Permit
A Simple Cremation	Crematory	Small	Sand Hill Road, Candler	Remove pet crematory from permit

There are currently no pet crematories and six or seven human crematories here in Buncombe County. Mr. Koon moved to approve the modification to the permit for A Simple Cremation. Mr. Whisnant seconded the motion.

Voting was conducted by roll call.

Mr. Whisnant-yes

Mr. Koon-yes

Dr. Couzo-yes

Mr. Storrow-yes
The motion passed 4-0.

VII. New Business:
None

VIII. Other Business:

A. Legal Counsel Report

1. Air Quality Board Consideration of Mount Carmel Road Lease Termination

Mr. Storrow said the Board would consider the lease at this meeting. The financial elements of the County reimbursements to the Agency are still being explored. These will be presented as a separate item at a future meeting.

Mr. Frue noted that by State law and the interlocal agreement the Agency cannot own property. Mr. Frue recommends doing a mutual termination of the lease. Mr. Frue was on vacation during which time, Mr. Brandon Freeman, another attorney on staff with Buncombe County, drafted a unilateral termination for the Agency to sign. If this Board is in agreement, he would recommend the Board vote to authorize Mr. Storrow to sign the mutual termination on behalf of the Agency. This recognizes that the Agency has moved out of the property and does not claim any property or improvement interest on the property.

Board members were pleased with Mr. Frue's approach and appreciated the background information provided to the Board for consideration. The School Board leased the property to the County and the County subleased the property to Air Quality. By signing the document, the Agency would be terminating the sublease with the County. The lease between the School Board and the County will still exist. Mr. Frue noted that this document clarifies that the Agency is out of the equation. This would be helpful to the County in any discussions with the School Board or other County agencies about the use of that property.

Ms. Cloninger, who could not be at this meeting, spoke with Mr. Storrow last week. She was okay with the Board considering the Agency's finances related to the building separately from terminating the lease.

It was noted that it would behoove the Agency to get out of that lease so there would be no issues or terms or conditions that we might not be fulfilling by not being in that building. We do not want the Agency to appear to be breaching the lease.

Mr. Koon moved that the Board authorize Mr. Storrow, as Chairman, to execute a mutual termination of the lease with the County for the Mt. Carmel Road property. Mr. Whisnant seconded the motion.

Voting was conducted by roll call.

Dr. Couzo-yes

Mr. Koon-yes

Mr. Whisnant-yes

Mr. Storrow-yes

The motion passed 4-0.

B. Advisory Committee Report

1. Committee met October 18, 2021

Dr. Couzo said the Committee met October 18 with Ms. Featherstone. Amongst the topics discussed was the Clean Air Excellence Award (CAE) which was awarded to Eaton.

Membership in the Committee was discussed. They are interested in getting high school and college students involved. They are looking at ways of reaching out to the community.

They discussed specific projects that the Advisory Committee might consider helping out with or leading. Dr. Couzo is interested in low-cost air pollution sensors, working with UNCA students and using PM 2.5 sensors. They are working with Asheville City Schools to locate these sensors. Dr. Couzo met with Ms. Featherstone, Mr. Raiford and Mr. Lance, who have agreed to help as time is available. This is something the Advisory Committee can help with.

The committee also discussed partnering with or working with Blue Horizons and maybe the schools to reduce emissions from school buses. Mr. Bamberger mentioned Inroads, a climate model, at Collider. This is a powerful tool for looking at climate solutions. Reductions in greenhouse gases also result in a reduction in some of our criteria pollutants. That would be an educational opportunity and a way to get the local community more aware and active in air quality issues.

The Committee thought that the EPA Advance program is a good idea for the Agency to pursue. The Committee would explore what projects or partnerships would be appropriate and productive if we had more support from the EPA. The next meeting is December 13. They plan to discuss membership and how they are going to advertise the openings on the Committee.

C. Calendar

1. 2022 WNCRAQA Board Meeting Schedule

Board meetings have historically been scheduled the second Monday every other month beginning January. Dr. Couzo has a conflict on Mondays during the next semester.

Mr. Whisnant made the motion that the next meeting be the second Tuesday in January 2022, the 11th. Mr. Koon seconded the motion.

The voting was conducted by roll call.

Dr. Couzo-yes

Mr. Koon-yes

Mr. Whisnant-yes

Mr. Storrow-yes

The motion passed 4-0.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, January 11, 2022. The Board will vote on the 2022 schedule at the next meeting.

D. Announcements

Ms. Featherstone said that the Clean Air Campaign is having a Clean Air Seminar on November 30 from 9:30 am to 12:00 pm and on December 2 from 9:30 am to 12:00 pm. We will send out a formal announcement once we have a formal agenda. This is geared more toward governments and continuing education. We do not have the exact titles for the seminars. One day will focus on mobile sources, things that move, and the other day will focus on stationary sources of air pollution. Ms. Featherstone is doing a presentation with Brendan Davey, who is with the Department of Environmental Quality, on December 2. They are going to talk about air pollution and the history of

air pollution here in the area including where it originates. They plan to announce Eaton's CAE award during their presentation.

IX. Public Comment

None

X. Adjournment

Mr. Whisnant made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Couzo seconded the motion.

Voting was conducted by roll call.

Dr. Couzo-yes

Mr. Koon-yes

Mr. Whisnant-yes

Mr. Storrow-yes

The motion passed 4-0. The meeting was adjourned at 4:47 pm.