



1600 South Second Street  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-5202  
ph 360-428-1617  
fax 360-428-1620  
info@nwcleanairwa.gov  
www.nwcleanairwa.gov

## **BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

The meeting of the Board of Directors of the Northwest Clean Air Agency was held at 1:30 p.m. Thursday, September 9, 2021, via video conference.

### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Skagit County	Mary Hudson Ron Wesen
Whatcom County	Todd Donovan Brian Heinrich
Member-At-Large	Terry Nyman

### **ABSENT:**

Bob Severns  
Janet St. Clair

### **ALSO PRESENT:**

NWCAA staff members	Mark Buford, Alicia Huschka, Toby Mahar, Agata McIntyre, Seth Preston, and Laurie Caskey-Schreiber
Legal counsel	Svend Brandt-Erichsen

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Board of Directors Chairman Brian Heinrich called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.

### **APPROVAL OF PRIOR BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

On motion by Mary Hudson, seconded by Ron Wesen, the minutes for the Aug. 12, 2021, meeting were approved 5-0 (*minutes were approved after the fee schedule presentation*).

## **PRESENTATION**

NWCAA Compliance Manager Toby Mahar presented an overview of some proposed registration fee schedule revisions.

The proposed changes would reduce fees from the current registration fee schedule for the following source types:

### **1. Stand-Alone Stationary Emergency Engines**

- a. Facilities registered *only* because of large emergency engines.
- b. Proposing "locking in" at lowest fee category (e.g., flat rate \$162 vs \$676 + \$232/ton emissions).
- c. Emissions beyond required testing and maintenance are a result of emergency power needed which can vary widely year-to-year and inspection and tracking is very basic for this equipment.

### **2. Synthetic Minor (SM) Sources**

- a. These are facilities that would otherwise be "major" and subject to the Air Operating Permit program except that they have enforceable limits that keep them below major emissions thresholds.
- b. Proposing a new fee category added to SMs, to apply to those with enforceable limits below 80% of major thresholds. Proposing 50% of current SM additional fee (e.g., \$1,405 vs. \$2,810).
- c. Four sources currently would qualify for this reduced SM fee.
- d. Reflects reduced administrative oversight. SMs having limits above 80% of the major threshold required NWCAA to report and monitor in accordance with additional EPA requirements.

### **3. Commercial Composting Facilities**

- a. Currently eight facilities have been identified, all new to NWCAA registration this year.
- b. Proposing registration fees that also simplify recordkeeping and emissions reporting:
  - i. \$0.30 per wet ton of feedstock for uncontrolled operations.
  - ii. \$0.06 per wet ton feedstock for facilities implementing controls at 80% or better (80% fee reduction).
- c. Five facilities implement controls (both large and small operations), and controls are readily available and straightforward; pile aeration and covers.
- d. Composting offsets other environmental impacts and often serve yard waste collection programs.

Mahar explained that there will be a public comment period, public hearing, and then these changes will be presented to the Board for adoption. If the revisions are approved, they will go into effect in January 2022.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **Bills and claims**

Board members discussed the bills and claims reports for August 2021. Todd Donovan made a motion to approve the August (\$368,331.18) 2021 bills and claims. Terry Nyman seconded the motion, and the Board approved the bills and claims 5-0.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

### **Director's report – Mark Buford**

Buford reported to the Board on the following matters:

- Lately, Agency staff have been doing more indoor inspections, and have been noticing an increase in non-compliance at smaller facilities (auto-body shops, gas stations). Some of these problems are related to staff turnover at the facilities or new facility staff lacking knowledge of the requirements of their permit. We are generally able to get the facilities back into compliance, but inspections are taking longer and requiring more resources than pre-COVID days as we work with them and pursue appropriate enforcement and compliance assistance actions.
- The Agency full re-opening for staff (not the public) has been pushed back until Jan. 3, 2022, due to the upswing of the Delta variant COVID virus. Employees are now allowed to work from the office on a voluntary basis, mask-less, with proof of vaccination. The majority of employees are still remotely working.
- The Advisory Council met on August 26, 2021, and it was announced that John Wolpers from the Whatcom County Health Department had retired. The group supported replacing Wolpers' position with another staff member from the Whatcom County Health Department. Buford will bring forward that name for Board approval once a replacement has been identified.
- The Advisory Council also advocated that the Agency incorporate Environmental Justice goals and values in the NWCAA Strategic Plan, as soon as possible. Buford will work with a small sub-group to finesse the language for these revisions.
- The Agency has an opportunity to partner with Whatcom County acquiring some meteorological equipment, which will be located at the Lummi Island ferry dock. They are seeking around \$5,000 and this would allow the Agency to gain valuable data to assist us with our forecasting efforts. Buford supports this project, as this would be a one-time cost, with limited maintenance obligations, and this would allow the Agency to add another location for air monitoring equipment if needed in the future.
- The Agency received a \$260,000 grant from the Washington State Department of Ecology for the Columbia Valley woodstove replacement project. With these funds they can replace woodstoves with new woodstoves and ductless heat pumps. Buford will prioritize and strive to purchase new stoves that are listed on the Alaska list of compliant wood stoves. Stoves on that list have passed more rigorous scrutiny as to their compliance with EPA 2020 emission standards. The Agency will work with the Opportunity Council to implement these change-outs over the next two years.

**New source review and air operating permit update – Agata McIntyre**

NWCAA Engineering Manager Agata McIntyre reported on the August 2021 construction permit (new source review) and air operating permit activity.

NWCAA permit writers are tasked with onsite inspections for many of the facilities which hold air operating permits. As noted by Buford, they are seeing an increase in non-compliance with air quality requirements and permits. Work is ongoing to rectify these non-compliance issues.

During August 2021, the Agency received four applications for construction permits. One of the permit applications received was for Skagit River Sawmill. They are a new operation that was discovered after NWCAA received a dust complaint about their operation in Concrete. This sawmill can process up to 17,800 tons of logs per year. Their equipment is used for log debarking, sawing, chipping, and handling the material.

**Enforcement update – Toby Mahar**

NWCAA Compliance Manager Toby Mahar reported that NWCAA issued five notices of violation in August, related to facility operational issues and a case involving an illegal demolition and removal of asbestos.

The Agency also issued one penalty for outdoor burning.

NWCAA staff have also been partnering with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as it completes an audit of the operation of the Shell Puget Sound Refinery.

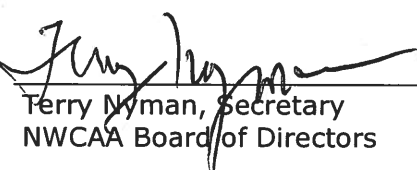
Mahar reported that a compliance agreement that was negotiated with the Mount Baker Ski Area will need to be updated due to unforeseen technical issues.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to consider, the meeting adjourned at 2:23 p.m.

**CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify this is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the meeting of the NWCAA Board of Directors held on September 9, 2021, in Mount Vernon, Washington.

ATTEST:   
Terry Nyman, Secretary  
NWCAA Board of Directors

  
Mary Hudson, Vice Chair  
NWCAA Board of Directors

DATED: October 14, 2021

