

**ALLEGHENY COUNTY HEALTH PROGRAM
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Community College of Allegheny County - Allegheny Campus
K. Leroy Irvis Science Center, Room 302
808 Ridge Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15212
Meeting No. 04-24**

July 8, 2024 - 5:30 p.m.

Committee Members Present

Dan Bricmont (Chair), Bricmont Law
Sara Marie Baldi, Salvation Army
Anna Batista, High Street Consulting (TEAMS)
Jeanne Clark, ALCOSAN
Coleen Davis, U. S. Steel (alternate) (TEAMS)
Steven Hvozdoch, Clean Water Action (TEAMS)
Courtney Mahronich Vita, Friends of the Riverfront (TEAMS)
John Palmiere, Vice President, Allegheny County Council

Committee Members Not Present

Chip Babst (Vice Chair), Babst Calland
Mark Jeffrey, U. S. Steel
Robert Orchowski, Hillcrest Group
Anna Siefken, U.S. DOE

ACHD Staff Present

Geoff Rabinowitz, Deputy Director, EH Bureau
Jason Maranche, AQ Program Manager
Ian Anderson, EH Administrator
Sandy Fisher, EH Comm. Specialist (TEAMS)
Tom Lattner, AQ Engineer (TEAMS)
Karen M Sagel, Senior Secretary (TEAMS)
Brendan Turley, Attorney

Participants Present

Hudson Albert, Penn Environment (TEAMS)
Zach Barber, Penn Environment
Tom Bailey, Citizen
Steve Bohnel, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
Lee Ann Briggs, SBAC/EMAP
Patrick Campbell, GASP (TEAMS)
Mike Dzurinko, U. S. Steel (TEAMS)
Amanda Gillooly, GASP (TEAMS)
John Graham, GASP (TEAMS)
Chris Harden, U. S. Steel (TEAMS)
Jeremy Hancher, SBAC/EMAP (TEAMS)
Stephen Hepler, PA DEP (TEAMS)
Clara Jane, Penn Environment (TEAMS)
Brian Joos, Citizen (TEAMS)
Helen Lin, Penn Environment (TEAMS)
Matthew Mehalik, Breathe Project (TEAMS)
Sandro Mocchiolo, Penn Environment (TEAMS)
Kelsey Wakijama, Penn Environment (TEAMS)
Natisha Washington, Breath Project (TEAMS)
Carol Wivell, Citizen (TEAMS)

1. Welcome and Call to Order

Action: Chair Dan Bricmont called the special meeting as requested by Acting Director Dowd to order at 5:40 p.m. A quorum was present. Jeanne Clark moved to change the order of the agenda by moving the action item up to the first subject of discussion, which was seconded by John Palmiere. The Committee unanimously approved the motion to change the order of the agenda.

All in attendance in person and via Microsoft Teams made their introductions.

2. Chair's Remarks

Mr. Bricmont had no remarks.

3. Action Item - Vote to Recommend Proposed Fee Updates

Dr. Geoff Rabinowitz provided the proposed requested fee updates and revisions of language in Article XXI in detail.

Ms. Clark requested an estimate of the cost of asbestos removal for organizations and municipalities doing residential projects. Dr. Rabinowitz explained it would be cumulative depending on the aspect of the project.

John Palmiere asked how the Department was going to pay for new positions. Dr. Rabinowitz explained the cost of one new position is figured into the request of this increase, with a salary in the range of 50 to 60 thousand dollars, depending on the classification of the position. Mr. Palmiere expressed concern that the Department will not receive many applicants at that pay level.

Coleen Davis questioned if 61 full time employees include the current vacancies. Dr. Rabinowitz confirmed that it includes vacancies and represents fully staffed Air Quality Programs. Mrs. Davis also asked what the Department has done to improve the efficiencies of the staff. Dr. Rabinowitz responded that the Department has been reviewing all operations of the department, even prior to his arrival, as part of a continuous improvement process.

Mrs. Davis disagreed that the fee schedule was consistent with the PA DEP, adding that Title V source fees would be significantly out of line with the DEP fee structure. Dr. Rabinowitz explained that current fees are consistent, and the proposed fees would be higher, but the comparison from one agency to another is not a direct comparison for a multitude of reasons. He added that Title V funds must come from Title V facilities, and the total work associated with these facilities determines the fee schedule. Mrs. Davis also asked if Department would redo the fee structure if there is a surplus or after the new Director arrives. Dr. Rabinowitz could not speak as to what will happen with the new Director, but when developing a budget for the program, it should be done with the plan to be fully staffed.

Mr. Bricmont questioned if the Clean Air Fund was going to be used to support the program, Dr. Rabinowitz stated that Article XXI allows for limited funding if requested and would need to be approved by the Board of Health. Dr. Rabinowitz said it is not currently planned to use the Clean Air Fund. Dr. Rabinowitz reminded the Committee that the request from 2022 was to utilize the Clean Air Fund as a stop-gap measure.

Ms. Clark asked if Acting Director Patrick Dowd's salary was funded through any of air quality funds. Dr. Rabinowitz explained that neither his nor Patrick's salary came from the Air Quality Programs' budget.

Mr. Palmiere asked about the selection of the new Director, and Dr. Rabinowitz replied that the new Director has already been announced as Dr. Iulia Vann.

Anna Batista asked if there were no other sources of revenue to support the Air Quality Programs. Dr. Rabinowitz replied that Title V must be funded by Title V sources. Non-Title V aspects of the program does receive some grant funding but is based upon the EPA budget and permit fees from the regulated sources and activities. All revenue streams are reflected in the budget provided. Ms. Batista feels the difference between the DEP fees and the purposed fees are not convincing and asked why the urgency to have this pushed through without proper review. Dr. Rabinowitz explained how the fee increase process works between the Air Pollution Advisory, Board of Health, and County Council for approval, then the County Executive for signature, planned by December.

Ms. Batista asked what the plan is if there is a surplus from this budget. Dr. Rabinowitz stated there is not expected to be a surplus with a fully staffed program, especially with cost of living increases. Mrs. Davis asked about the deficit at the current staffing level. Dr. Rabinowitz said he did not have the current year's numbers but suspected that the Air Quality Programs would be close to being funded this year while understaffed.

Mr. Bricmont read a statement from Bob Orchowski that was entered into the record. Sara Marie Baldi asked if there is any concern that sources will leave Allegheny County if they cannot afford these increases. Dr. Rabinowitz said this proposal is about keeping the Air Quality Programs fully staffed to meet the promises made to the residents of the County and to fulfill regulatory requirements.

Action: Motion by Steve Hvozdoovich was made to make a recommendation to the Board of Health for the fee increase and associated rule amendments to be sent to public comment, which was seconded by Ms. Baldi. The vote was a tie with Mr. Bricmont, Mr. Palmiere, and Mrs. Davis voting no, and Ms. Baldi, Mr. Hvozdoovich, and Courtney Vita voting yes. Ms. Batista abstained. No recommendation was provided to the Board of Health.

4. Approval of Minutes

a. Approval of Minutes – December 11, 2023

Action: Mr. Palmiere moved to approve the minutes of the October 3, 2023, meeting and Ms. Batista seconded the motion. The committee approved the October 3, 2023, minutes unanimously with Mr. Hvozdoovich and Ms. Vita abstaining.

b. Approval of Minutes – December 11, 2023

Action: Mr. Palmiere moved to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2023, meeting and Ms. Batista seconded the motion. The committee approved the December 11, 2023, minutes unanimously.

c. Approval of Minutes – February 12, 2024

Action: Mr. Palmiere moved to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2024, meeting and Ms. Baldi seconded the motion. The committee approved the February 12, 2024, minutes unanimously.

d. Approval of Minutes – April 15, 2024

Action: Mr. Palmiere moved to approve the minutes of the April 15, 2024, meeting and Ms. Batista seconded the motion. The committee approved the April 15, 2024, minutes unanimously.

5. Program Update

Dr. Rabinowitz announced a Request for Applications for potential upcoming Clean Air Fund projects in 2024 would be forthcoming in the next couple of weeks. The scope of projects includes electrification of fleets and small tools for municipalities, urban pollution corridor tree planting, and climate resiliency/adaptation. The grant opportunities would be open county wide with priority given to environmental justice communities and top priority given to municipalities listed in the Mon Valley Episode rule. Mrs. Davis requested that Dr. Rabinowitz share his PowerPoint with the Committee.

6. Other Business / Citizen Comments

Tom Bailey expressed concerns about the air quality of the area and supported more funding for the Department.

Zach Barber expressed his support for the increased funding of the Air Quality Program.

Mr. Bricmont shared information from an article that Ms. Clark shared with the committee after she had left the meeting. Mr. Bricmont also requested Dr. Rabinowitz share by email if the Program does send the changes to Public Comment so that the members of the Committee have the opportunity to comment.

10. Adjournment

Mr. Palmiere motioned to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by all, and the Committee approved to adjourn the meeting at 7:03 p.m.