Minutes
Regular Meeting
of the
Louisville Metro Air Pollution Control Board

June 17, 2020

A regular meeting of the Louisville Metro Air Pollution Control Board was called to order on June 17, 2020, via video teleconference due to the COVID-19 outbreak, at 10:00 a.m., by the Chairman, Carl Hilton. Other Board members present were: Vice Chair Steve Sullivan, Dr. Geoffrey Cobourn, and Kandice Shobe-White. A quorum was present.

The following Louisville Metro Air Pollution Control District staff members were present: Keith Talley, Rachael Hamilton, Matt King, Michelle King, Steven Gravatte, Billy DeWitt, Tom Nord, Rachel T. Smith, Torend Collins, Byron Gary, Andrea Cooley, Craig Butler, Aaron DeWitt, Chris Gerstle, Kevin Klesta, Rick Williams, Kyle Zimmerman, Cherri Steiner, Colette McConville, Shannon Hosey, Bryan Paris, Andy Purdon, and Karen Thorne. Assistant County Attorneys Stacy Fritze Dott and Susan Ely, and County Attorney staff member Tammy Gartland were also present.

The following guests were present: Lori Carson, Zeon Chemicals; Nicholas Ellis, Smith Management Group; Rebecca Cash, LG&E-KU; Brandan Burfict, LG&E-KU; Emily Thompson, Hexion; Greg Dutton, Frost, Brown, Todd; Kelly Bartley, Dentons; and James McDonald, AECOM.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the Public Hearing and regular Board meeting held on May 20, 2020, were approved with no corrections.

Staff Reports

A. Director

Mr. Keith Talley reported that the District presented its 2020 – 2021 budget to Metro Council on June 8, 2020. While the District receives a small portion of its funding from the Metro General Fund, the financial impacts of COVID-19 and the ongoing pension fund needs are fluid. As a result, even though there is recent news that projected revenues for Metro were higher than expected, it is possible that there may be budget cuts and hiring constraints in the future.

Although the impacts from the pension crisis over the last two years have been cause for concern, the District has not suffered serious impact to its core operations due to some strategic and thoughtful planning to this point. Mr. Talley cautioned that stagnant budgets make it difficult for short and long-term planning, including planning for future projects, such as grant opportunities and U.S. EPA collaborations, and impedes the District’s ability to look at internal projects due to staffing constraints. Such budgets also impact the District’s prior long-term strategic planning including future staffing needs for increasing its modeling and forecasting capacity, additional environmental coordinators to support increased outreach, community engagement, program development and continuing to be a resource for its Metro and community partners. The District is committed to remaining prepared to respond to air quality issues in this dynamic environment, which in reality looks nothing like what the District planned for and envisioned just three short years ago. The District will keep the Board updated.
Mr. Talley reported that District staff is still teleworking whenever possible.

Mr. Talley updated the Board on the U.S. EPA odor app and other projects. The testing work is moving forward, hopefully beginning this summer. The other collaborative research projects, including OVET odor tracking and NGEM data analysis being performed by the U.S. EPA, is also moving forward.

Mr. Talley reported that staff attended the Metro4/SESARM Spring Grants/Planning meeting, which was held via teleconference on June 2 and 3, and included updates from U.S. EPA on permitting, enforcement, compliance and air monitoring issues. The meeting also included a discussion of COVID-19 impacts on agencies, with some describing major impacts, including inaccessible monitoring sites at schools closed due to COVID and air quality staff reassignments to contact tracing and social distancing enforcement. The meeting included reports on U.S. EPA’s budget and grants funding, training curriculum and course updates, and new training delivery systems, as well as a discussion on new air quality technology, and finally, recognition of the retirements of senior air professionals throughout many agencies.

Mr. Talley reported that U.S. EPA is celebrating the 50-year anniversary of the Clean Air Act. Information about the celebration as well as its history, priorities, and analysis of where the U.S. EPA is today can found at [https://www.epa.gov/50](https://www.epa.gov/50). U.S. EPA also produced a nice informational and data centric piece entitled, “Our Nation’s Air” that can be found at [https://gispub.epa.gov/air/trendsreport/2019/#home](https://gispub.epa.gov/air/trendsreport/2019/#home), and a link will be emailed to Board members following the meeting.

Mr. Talley reported on some national air quality trends and numbers. National concentrations of air pollutants, as in Louisville, have dropped significantly since 1990 as shown below:

- Carbon monoxide – 8hr concentrations- down 74%
- NOx – annual concentrations- down 57%; 1hr concentrations– down 50%
- Ozone – 8hr concentrations- down 21%
- PM2.5 – annual concentrations– down 39%; 24hr concentrations down 34% since 2000.
- Sulfur dioxide (SO2)- 1hr concentrations- down 89%

These reductions have occurred despite more cars on the road, more vehicle miles traveled (VMT), increased population, and increased energy use, all while the national economy has grown 275% since 1990. What we see nationally as the emission sources by category are also similar to the local source drivers of emissions as shown below:

- NOx is driven by stationary fuel combustion sources including electric generating utilities (EGUs) and on-road vehicles.
- Direct PM 2.5 is driven by stationary fuel combustion sources and industrial sources.
- SO2 is primarily (75%) driven by stationary fuel combustion sources
- VOCs are primarily (75%) driven by industrial and other processes and vehicles.

Another interesting data comparison nationally was for Unhealthy Air Days for sensitive groups (PM 2.5 and ozone). Nationally, the number of unhealthy air days since 2013 was well under 1200 and was only 799 in 2018. For rough comparison, that averages out to 43 days per state in 2001, but just 16 days of unhealthy air for sensitive groups per state in 2018. Even with this
success, ozone is still an issue for Louisville and 52 other areas in 22 states and the District of Columbia, following U.S. EPA’s strengthening of the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) in 2015. Mr. Talley also reported that nationally, National Air Toxics Assessment (NATA) data showed mixed success. As a result of the STAR program, Louisville has seen a 73% decrease in total air toxics through 2017. He encouraged the Board and attendees to review “Our Nation’s Air” for additional information.

Mr. Bryan Paris, Air Toxics Supervisor and Data Analyst, gave a presentation on the air quality impacts from COVID-19.

Chairman Hilton inquired as to whether the high number of open burning complaints for the month of April is normal for that time of year. Ms. Rachael Hamilton, Assistant Director, responded that the District had observed an uptick in open burning complaints possibly due to more people being at home and working outside and favorable weather conditions for fire pits. Complaint data for May reflects a decrease which should continue over the next few months.

Vice Chair Steve Sullivan stated that he noticed a decrease in mobile source emission but wanted to know if the District had any information on stationary source emissions as a result of COVID-19. Ms. Hamilton stated that some stationary source operations were curtailed with the onset of COVID; however, many of the stationary sources were classified as federal critical infrastructure and were not impacted by the shutdown. The District may reach out to these companies in the future for information on how the situation has impacted their operations.

Mr. Sullivan also asked if open burning is a significant contribution to air pollution on a regional or county-wide basis. Ms. Hamilton responded that it can be depending on where the burning occurs and what materials are being burned. Open burning can sometimes impact the air monitors, but more importantly, open burning can often affect the neighbors. From an air quality standpoint, open burning affects particulate matter and ozone formation since nitrogen oxide is a product of combustion.

Mr. Paris explained that particulate matter data in his presentation was based on monthly averages. Dr. Geoffrey Cobourn, Board member, asked if the carbon monoxide number was an average over all sites. In response to a follow-up question from Dr. Cobourn, Mr. Paris explained that data on carbon monoxide was based on averages from two sites, one a near-road site. Both sites saw reductions in NO₂ and carbon monoxide; however, he did not compare the two sites to see if one site had a significantly greater reduction than the other. Dr. Cobourn offered a brief comment regarding decreases on the near-road monitor being related to less traffic, while he surmised that PM₂.₅ would be coming from long-range or regional transport. He added that, given the novel issue and its importance, he expected to see studies in the next couple of years evaluating emissions and air quality during the COVID-19 time period.

Chairman Hilton noted that the Board had received a copy of the District’s Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) for the Risk Management Program and asked how many RMP facilities were located in Jefferson County. Ms. Hamilton responded that there are 19 – 20 RMP facilities. She added that the District recently issued a Notice of Advance Rulemaking on the risk management program and it is open for public comment from May 27, 2020 through August 25, 2020. The District is seeking comment on those provisions that would be appropriate to adopt on a local level. More information can be found on the District’s website at https://louisvilleky.gov/government/air-pollution-control-district/services/proposed-actions-apcd. In response to Chairman Hilton’s inquiry, the District will hold a formal public hearing during formal rulemaking. The ANPR is an informal process, so the District will be holding public
meetings via video teleconference. The District will provide information as they are scheduled. Ms. Hamilton encouraged the public to attend the meetings to learn more about the ANPR and the proposed changes that could be made to the District’s RMP program.

B. Air Quality Report

The air quality monitoring report was submitted for filing. A copy is attached to the original minutes.

C. Enforcement Status Report

The enforcement status report was submitted for filing. A copy is attached to the original minutes.

D. Excess Emission Event Report

The excess emission event report was submitted for filing. A copy is attached to the original minutes.

E. Complaint Investigation Status Summary

The complaint investigation status summary was submitted for filing. A copy is attached to the original minutes.

Next Meeting

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 15, 2020, at 10:00 a.m.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

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Carl E. Hilton               Rachael Hamilton
Chairman                    Secretary-Treasurer