

OLYMPIC REGION CLEAN AIR AGENCY  
2940 Limited Lane NW  
Olympia, Washington 98502

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – via Zoom**

February 10, 2021

Members present	Jim Cooper, City of Olympia (Chair) Cynthia Pratt, City of Lacey (Vice Chair) Greg Brotherton, Jefferson County Joan Cathey, City of Tumwater Randy Neatherlin, Mason County Bill Peach, Clallam County Carolina Mejia, Thurston County Jill Warne, Grays Harbor County
Members absent	Mike Runyon, Pacific County
Legal Counsel	Jeff Myers and Michael Throgmorton of Law, Lyman, Daniel, Kamerrer and Bogdanovich
Staff Present	Fran McNair, Executive Director; Robert Moody, Compliance Manager; Mark Goodin, Engineering Manager; Odelle Hadley, Senior Monitoring Specialist; Dan Nelson, Public Information Officer; Lynn Harding, Administrative Services Manager; and Debbie Moody, Office Manager/Public Records Officer

Cooper called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. Cooper requested roll call and introduction. Cooper noted a member of the public was online and requested they introduce themselves. Dale Putnam, Fire District #9 representing Thurston County Fire Commissioner's Association.

Cooper stated he was open to a motion to approve the Agenda. Pratt moved approval of the Agenda. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

**CHAIR REPORT**

Cooper noted in February of each year the Chair selects members for a Finance Committee. The current committee members are Pratt (chair), Neatherlin, and Cooper. Cooper stated he was inclined to continue with this group if Pratt and Neatherlin are interested. Cooper noted we could have up to 4 members, so if anyone else is interested speak up. Pratt and Neatherlin both agreed to continue. Peach stated he would be willing serve as an alternate. It was decided to not appoint any other committees at this time. If needed, an Executive Session would be held to discuss the Director's salary.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Cooper asked approval of the Consent Agenda. Neatherlin moved approval of the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Outdoor Burning Discussion

McNair stated Nelson and R. Moody would be presenting.

R. Moody gave a brief history, noted changes to the WAC began in 1992 and ORCAA updated their Regulations in 1993 to ban outdoor burning in Olympia, Lacey, and Tumwater, specifically. In 2000, we modified our maintenance plan, however our burn restrictions for the three cities are included in the maintenance plan and this document is federally enforceable. In 2006, we rewrote our outdoor burn regulation which clarified the ban on outdoor burning in the city limits.

Nelson showed a Thurston County map plotting the complaints we have received (October 2019-2020 as well as previous 2 years). We added the Notices of Violations issued in the same area, covering October 2019-2020. Nelson noted the majority of complaints show up in areas where burning is prohibited or restricted to recreational fires only (UGA). Nelson noted a specific cluster of complaints resulting in the issuance of an NOV. R. Moody added we do see clusters and sometimes it indicates issues, other times it just indicates very active complainants.

McNair added the complaints appear to be reduced in areas based on education and notices of violations. We hope to eliminate repeat offenders. Nelson stated we have good compliance and education via our compliance team as well as himself. When we get a cluster of complaints, Nelson stated, compliance lets him know so a targeted mailing can be sent out or work with an HOA if possible.

R. Moody noted the ban in the city limits has been in effect for nearly 30 years. We continue to have new people move into the areas and we still respond to burns in those areas. Cooper noted the map seems to be showing an increase in both complaints and NOVs over the past years. Is this a result of people being home? R. Moody noted we had an increase in complaints over the past year and felt it is because of Covid. We provided signs to DOT and they have posted them near the homeless camps as well as near the city boundaries.

The Thurston County burn permit program has been ongoing for several years now. The advantage to compliance team is if we get a complaint, we can check permits in the area and just call and discuss the issues. Nelson pulled up the permit map for the Board to see. Nelson noted this map is only available to staff.

Cooper asked staff to explain why we are only discussing Thurston County. R. Moody noted it is the most populous county, we get the most complaints in Thurston and the further from Thurston you go burning is more acceptable. The practical side is it has been decades since ORCAA, Thurston County Fire Districts, DNR, county Fire Marshall and some other entities got together and crafted a burn permit program for the entire county.

Cooper noted, several years ago, the conversation of starting this coordinated burn permit program through ORCAA and another conversation around whether or not we should charge a fee or perhaps ban burning altogether. Cooper asked how other air agencies handle similar programs. R. Moody stated he believes the only agency charging for residential permits is Yakima Clean Air-they charge \$75 per permit. Spokane does not charge for permits but they have significantly reduced the number of days burning is allowed. Puget Sound has agreements with their local fire districts and they all have different programs. Cooper stated we need to think about how we can fund the education and in the long term determine how we can have more coordination in our area and consider if we want to ban burning in our region. Cooper stated he would like the Board to request staff to bring a plan or some feasibility over this entire conversation. Would the Board be open to exploring fees for permits?

McNair wanted to make it clear that fines are used for education. Permit fees need to be high enough to cover our costs. Ultimately, we would like to change behaviors and not have burning in



Thurston County, but it needs to be a progressive process. McNair noted she would like to consider having our entire jurisdiction involved in our online permitting system. Cooper felt timing is good now to start those conversations.

Peach stated Clallam County works with local agencies with regards to issues (abandoned vehicles, etc). Peach wondered if ORCAA uses any of these types of agencies or promotes those types of things. R. Moody we do work cooperatively with other agencies for problem sites.

Brotherton noted Jefferson County is a long way from banning outdoor burning but using technology moving forward is a way to get to our goals. Brotherton agreed a low fee permit will cost more to facilitate and it is important to realize that.

Pratt agreed the small permit fee is not cost effective, however looking at higher fines may be another option and have more of an impact. Cooper asked if any other Board members had any comments. Hearing none, Cooper asked if the Board would allow a word from the public. The Board agreed.

Putnam explained the issue the fire districts have with charging for permits is that the funds being raised by the fees would be going to towards educating the people who aren't allowed to get permits. Charging the rural residents to allow them to burn, the money will not be used to support the rural fire districts it is used to cover enforcement in the cities where burning is banned.

Cooper noted it will be up to staff to determine the best path forward, perhaps in bringing the other counties on board to an electronic system, perhaps one county at a time. Also, any conversation around revenue to reinforce the work we are doing and as it relates to rural not paying for city problems. The Board stated they were ok with the general direction.

(Mejia came online at 10:48 am)

## **DIRECTORS REPORT**

### Compliance Program Update

R. Moody stated the compliance report is a bit shorter than normal. R. Moody explained it is partly seasonal, but likely due to such poor weather in January. We continue to process asbestos and demolition notifications and they are starting to pick up. We expect to see land clearing burns come in as the weather dries out. Brotherton requested copies of the permits for the large project in Black Point. R. Moody stated he could send the information.

### Engineering Program Update

Goodin explained SPI Lumbermill recently paid their final permit fees and the permit for their new kilns is now complete. Goodin reminded the Board if there is anything on the list that needs further detail, let him know. Goodin added you can find additional information on our website for the various permits as well.

### Air Quality Program Update

Hadley stated the January air quality wasn't particularly interesting. We are seeing a decline in the higher PM2.5 levels that we used to see every winter and January was no exception. There were a couple of days in Thurston and Mason that hit moderate but were still low.

Hadley explained she has started the data analysis for the woodstove program to determine if our policies have led to that decline in wintertime PM2.5 values.

Hadley reminded the Board that Peach had requested wildfire impact data. Hadley presented slides related to the smoke episodes. The data covered 2017, 2018 and 2020. In 2017 10 days accounted for approximately 15% of the annual PM2.5 exposure; 2018 had 9 days accounting for approximately 25%; and, 2020 had 12 days accounting for approximately 40% of the annual PM2.5 exposure. Hadley went over where the smoke came from and how it impacted our region. Hadley showed satellite images and video of the fires.

Cooper requested Hadley's wildfire presentation be shared with the Board.

(Neatherlin was excused at 11:13 am)

#### Education and Outreach

Nelson noted outdoor burning, in Thurston County, is responsible for 6% of the annual PM2.5 emissions. Automobiles and woodstoves are the bigger contributors, as well as wildfire smoke. Outdoor burning does have an impact on our air quality. Nelson stated he has been doing a lot of outdoor burning work. Nelson explained the packet includes a recent newsletter that went out to our email list and social media.

On the woodstove grant, Nelson stated, all the funds have been allocated with pre-approvals. Nelson explained he and Harding discussed the future of this program for the next budget cycle. They discussed ways to streamline and make the program more efficient for the upcoming season.

#### Finance/Administrative Update

Harding stated our state audit has officially started this week. We met with them and they are still in the planning stages of what they will be focusing on and will let us know soon. Fiscal Year 2022 budget process has begun. Staff managers will be meeting in March to review the draft department budgets. We will meet during the month to fine tune the budget with a Finance Committee meeting in April. At this time, we expect to provide a proposed budget to the Board at the May meeting. If not approved in May, we will bring it forward to the June meeting for finalization. The budget must be approved by the third week of June.

As of January 31, Harding noted, we have received 66% of our revenue and expended 55%. We are on target and meeting our obligations. Harding explained Cooper had requested information on solar and we have had several companies analyze our building over several years (2008, 2011, 2018 and 2019). Harding contacted another company, Olympia Community Solar, and learned they are a resource for those wanting to transition from electric and gas users to solar energy for offices or residential. Harding noted they have not worked with the government sector yet but are looking at options. Harding stated we will follow up with a couple of leads Olympia Solar suggested.

#### Executive Director's Report

McNair stated our budget has been pretty good this year and staff continue to be mindful of expenditures. Our sources continue to make improvements so permits are coming. McNair noted she continues to follow legislative issues. We are working with DNR on their smoke management plan and we are hoping they communicate with us on their burns and work with us with regards to air quality.

McNair stated her and the managers met with the new Board members at the beginning of the week and hopes it was productive. As always, if any member has any questions, concerns or issues let us know. McNair noted how appreciative of our Board members we are. Having a Board that is willing to look beyond their immediate areas and look at our entire jurisdiction is great. Our staff continues to work remotely, and we believe we won't all be back in the office until later this summer.



**GOOD OF THE ORDER**

There was nothing for the good of the order.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 11:33 a.m.

**CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify this is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the meeting of the ORCAA Board of Directors held on February 10, 2021, in Olympia, Washington.

ATTEST:



Francea L. McNair, Executive Director  
Olympic Region Clean Air Agency

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Jim Cooper, Chair  
ORCAA Board of Directors

DATED: 3/10/2021