

Advisory Council Minutes

April 24, 2025

Members Present:

Ron Edgar, Chemistry
John Dietzman, Environmental
Ray Byrne, Public Health (Zoom)
Hal Ophus, Business Community (Zoom)
Doug Bleeker, Fire Protection (Zoom)
Jana McDonald, Air Pollution Control (Zoom)

Staff Present:

April Westby, Executive Director
Derek Aubrey, Compliance Section Manager
Lisa Woodard, Education/Outreach Manager

The meeting was called to order at 8 a.m.

1. Introductions

2. Approval of the March 27 2025, Minutes

- a. John moved to approve the March 2025 minutes, Hal 2nd. Minutes approved.

3. Executive Directors Report

- a. EPA approved the SRCAA regulation updates from 2023 into our State Implementation Plan (SIP). The adoption notice was published in the Federal Register on 4/16/25 and will become effective on 5/16/25. SRCAA has started working on our next round of regulation updates which we expect to be completed by the end of this calendar year. Portions of these regulation changes will then be submitted to EPA for approval into our SIP.
- b. SRCAA has continued to participate in meetings regarding the upcoming federal and state budget projections and reductions to our federal and state grants for the upcoming fiscal year. There is nothing definite on the federal or state funds, so we had to make some assumptions for budget development. Once we get some actual grant amounts, we will update the budget. The budget will be presented to the Board on May 1, 2025.
- c. The American Lung Association released the 2025 State of the Air Report on 4/23/25. The report is based on air monitoring data from 2021-23. Spokane received poor grades again this year due to wildfire smoke; we received a "C" for ozone and an "F" for particle pollution. The grades for Spokane were similar to other counties in Washington. We put an article on our website with information about the report in case there are questions from the public or media.

- d. SRCAA will begin the hiring process for an Air Quality Specialist I to fill a current vacancy. We anticipate opening the position in early May and having the position filled by July 1st.
- e. Work is continuing by our monitoring department to install our new PM2.5 monitor at Ridgeline High School in Liberty Lake and wind anemometers at our 5 existing monitoring stations. Ozone monitoring will begin at our two stations on May 1st.
- f. The PM10 monitor at Turnbull has been removed and PM10 monitoring has been discontinued from the site based on low historical monitored values and periodic localized road dust causing readings to spike. The decision to remove the monitor was made in consultation with Ecology and approved by EPA. The monitor may be deployed at another site in Spokane County to monitor PM10 or PM2.5 in the future. Currently, there are two remaining PM10 monitors in Spokane: our official monitor at Broadway and another monitor at Augusta.
- g. SRCAA staff are assisting in the preparation of plans being developed by several municipalities, including the City of Spokane Smoke Readiness Plan and Spokane County's Climate Resiliency Plan required by the State Climate Commitment Act. SRCAA is also working with partner agencies on several grants involving wildfire preparedness and communication.

4. FY 26 Budget Updates

- a. April gave a brief overview of the draft budget. Presentation is attached. Highlights include:
 - i. Possibly setting the COLA for staff at a standard 3% instead of varying every year based on the CPI.
 - ii. Our estimated revenue for FY26 3.4 million Total estimated expenses 3.5 million, including \$226,000 in internal transfers to reserve accounts. Our total estimated fund balance is 1.5 million.
 - iii. Core grants are budgeted at a 20-30% reduction
 - iv. We will discuss with the Board possibly using the Ozone Study reserve budget to bridge the gap if the federal funding is not available for this fiscal year.
 - v. PM 2.5 grant may also have a reduction.
 - vi. We are looking at a 3% increase to fees for NOC, Registration, and Asbestos to keep pace with rising costs.
 - vii. Project Reserve account is currently at \$334,000. We are looking to move around \$100,000 into this account this fiscal year.
 - viii. The building lease was renegotiated from a 2.5% increase every year to a 0% increase for the next four years.

5. Asbestos Program: Overview of Enforcement and Education/Outreach Activities

- a. Derek gave a presentation on the Asbestos program. Presentation is attached and discussion ensued.
 - i. Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral fiber that was mined throughout the world for their strength and fire/chemical resistance.
 - ii. All building materials that are not wood, metal, or glass are considered suspect ACM (Asbestos Containing Materials)
 - iii. There are Federal, State, and Local regulations regarding Asbestos.
 - iv. Article IX, Asbestos Control Standards adopted in 1991. It has been amended several times since then, with the last one being in 2014.
 - v. Some of the local SRCAA rules are more stringent than the Federal NESHAP.
 - vi. SRCAA Asbestos Regulations have two different categories: owner-occupied, single-family residence with the homeowner doing their own work or everything else.
 - vii. Expected sequence of events for a typical renovation or demolition project are: Asbestos Survey, Notice of Intent, waiting period, Asbestos abatement (if necessary), demolition of structure or renovation may begin.
 - viii. Sites are identified for inspections by complaints, NOIs, or surveillance. After a site is inspected the result is either no issue found, Notice of Corrective Action, or Notice of Violation.
 - ix. SRCAA inspectors have AHERA certification, asbestos workers certification, a medical surveillance respiratory program, asbestos supervisor certification, and AHERA designer certification. SRCAA Inspectors perform inspections, review NOIs, conduct area surveillance, provide customer assistance, work in conjunction with the building department/L&I, field inquiries from the public regarding asbestos, provide presentations, and attend home shows.
 - x. Violations occur because it is someone's first reno or demo project, they are ignorant of how many products contain asbestos, they believe asbestos was banned entirely many years ago, there is a communication breakdown between owners and contractors, or negligence where they completely ignore the requirements.
 - xi. After a NOV is issued the recipient has 30 days to provide pertinent info to SRCAA or wait for the penalty assessment. Within 30 days after the penalty assessment parties can pay the fine, request relief, or file an appeal.
 - xii. Penalties are assessed based on previous history, responsiveness, economic benefit, and other factors. The typical first-time fine for no asbestos survey performed is \$550, while a typical citation for multiple

issues found, including improper handling and disposal of ACM would be \$4,000 and up.

- xiii. Only a small portion of the projects get NOVs. In 2024 there were 922 NOIs for asbestos and only 30 NOVs.
 - xiv. Asbestos NOVs are the most time-consuming and are usually the ones that are contested and taken to PCHB.
 - xv. Otis Hotel NOI noted hazardous conditions, so an inspector stopped by the location to see what was happening. They found a chute from an upper floor leading to a dumpster. After further investigation they found that a handyman service from the west coast was in charge of the demo and were gutting the hotel without proper precautions or procedure. The owners had denied entry to L&I, but because we had a NOI we were allowed inside and could document some of the violations and turn that information over to L&I. The initial figures on this case was over \$100,000. Of the three NOVs issued, PCHB dropped one from \$75,000 to \$40,000, but they upheld the penalties on the other two. If materials are all mixed together before getting testing done you may need to use an alternate work plan and treat it all as asbestos when disposing. This causes the demo to cost much more.
- b. Lisa went over the outreach and education portion of the asbestos program, including our intended audience, printed materials we distribute, and the media used to educate the public on asbestos and the requirements for abatement.

The meeting was adjourned at 9 a.m.

The next Advisory Council Meeting is scheduled for May 22, 2025.

Advisory Council Member

April Westby, Executive Director