

AQAC MINUTES
November 3, 2015

Members/alternates present: Bert Chessin, Guy Hanson, Jan Hoem, Ryan Leach, Kathy Tonnessen, Ronni Flannery, Sue Spanke, Dave Atkins, John Ottman, Tom Roberts, Garon Smith

Members/alternates absent: Bill Flanery, Beth Berlin, John Garberson

Staff: Sarah Coefield

Public: None

- 1. Jan Hoem called the meeting to order**
- 2. Excused absences recognized** – John Garberson and Beth Berlin were excused.
- 3. Agenda approved.**
- 4. October minutes approved with a typo correction.**

- 5. Public comment on non-agenda items**
Ryan Leach announced he would not be seeking another term on the Council in order to focus on his family and new baby.

6. Article presentation

Jan Hoem spoke about peat in Ireland and Ireland's movement away from using it as an energy source. Peat plays an important role in carbon sequestration, so it is good news that it will not be used for energy.

Jan also spoke about a New York Times article about Greenland that has a lot of good information, including a video and a story about the people who study the melting ice to find out if it refreezes or if it all goes to the ocean.

Jan said this month's National Geographic is devoted to climate change, and there's an interesting article about Germany and renewables.

Bert Chessin will present next month.

7. Compressed natural gas discussion

Dave Atkins presented his proposal for incorporating compressed natural gas (CNG) into local fleets (buses, garbage trucks, etc.) to reduce diesel emissions in Missoula.

Dave said the thought he has is to really try to go after fleet vehicles that use diesel in town. He said there could be a CNG filling station in town for Mountain Line, Beach, garbage trucks, etc. Dave said he thinks it's worth looking into from an air quality standpoint.

Dave said there's a number of bigger companies, such as UPS and FedEx that have started using CNG in some locations, and they're saving money doing it.

Dave passed out the table of contents for the National Renewable Energy Laboratory technical report “Business Case for Compressed Natural Gas in Municipal Fleets.”

He said the case study looked at fleet vehicles using an economic model. In doing so, they looked at the number of vehicles in a fleet and the miles driven (as well as other variables). The results provided a return on investment that ranged from less than three years to 10-12 years.

Sue asked if the return on investment focused on the fueling depot of vehicle investments. Dave said it looked at both.

Guy asked what makes CNG better than propane, and Dave replied the difference is cost. Guy pointed out that the infrastructure for propane would be easier. Dave said some rural areas use propane because it’s easier, but CNG is more commonly embraced because it’s cheaper.

Guy said you can get propane in a liquid form and use it in pumps. Dave pointed out that CNG is liquefied for transport. Guy said yes, but it’s a much more intense process.

There was a brief conversation between Guy and Garon Smith about propane and CNG.

Dave said an analysis could be done for Missoula following the case study example in order to look at its viability in Missoula. He said this is an example of the kinds of information out there and it would facilitate the analysis being done relatively easily. He said from an air quality standpoint, it’s something worth pursuing. He said it’s really nice not having diesel emissions.

Dave said he also has some information on the potential for accessing grant funds to help improve the return on investment. He said it looks worthwhile, even if you don’t have any grant money. The system pays for itself and you also see a health benefit.

A brief discussion on funding opportunities followed.

Dave said he’d like to make a recommendation to the Board that staff collect data and run the model to see economic impacts and how much diesel would be replaced.

Sue Spanke said she can think of a lot of questions, particularly in regards to the last attempt to launch CNG in Missoula. How was it funded before? What happened to it? Are there still CNG vehicles in town? How does CNG compare to propane, and is it competitive with electric vehicles? What percent of diesel emissions in Missoula is from the fleet? She said CNG is a neat idea, but there’s a lot of background information to find out. She said we need to answer those questions before running models.

Ryan Leach asked if the model takes into account the amount of time it takes to do a fleet turnover. He said it’s unlikely there’d be an immediate fleet turnover in Missoula, which makes the fueling facility less profitable. Ryan also asked if it’s true that diesel emissions are cleaner now than they were when this case study was done (2010).

Dave said the new diesel pollution reductions are all about NOx.

Guy said the challenge is that new diesel vehicles are very expensive and have a high failure rate. He said Tier IV diesels are not something you'd necessarily want to own if you didn't have to, so it adds some incentive for CNG.

Dave said the model does look at standard fleet turnover rates. He said there's a basic inventory of data that is used to determine necessary fueling facility size.

Dave said refuse trucks saw a return on investment in 3-4 years.

Guy pointed out that refuse trucks currently get about 3 miles per gallon.

Ronni Flannery asked if the health department is the most appropriate place to initiate this, insofar as the investment of staff and time resources.

Dave said this reaches into several departments and he would like to approach the Health Board to see who they want to have work on it.

Garon Smith said we've tried for a clean diesel grant and didn't get it. He said Mountain Line has declined to work with us in the past, and the coolest reception has been from Beach Transportation. He said they're not interested. Garon said a changeover of the fleet would be difficult without buy-in from Mountain Line and Beach.

Garon said that as far as the Health Board doing anything, he doesn't think they would task staff to do it directly. He said they would probably bounce it back to the Council to host community discussions and encourage engagement with the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee and Transportation Policy Coordinating Committee.

Garon said ASUM buses are under Jordan Hess' direction, and he's looking at going electric. He's also open to looking at getting better emissions. Garon said the university has a strong commitment to reduce their carbon footprint. ASUM would be the most receptive bus line.

Dave said electric clearly has the most local air quality benefits; natural gas is a transition fuel. He said it will take 30-50 years to move away from fossil fuels. CNG provides a way to be clean and lower carbon – it's a stepping stone.

Garon said coal-fired power plants could be converted to natural gas.

Guy said, according to the article Dave brought up, the bang for transit buses is higher than for school buses.

Jan Hoem asked if engines can be converted to use CNG.

Dave said you can convert diesel engines to natural gas for less than the price of a new

truck.

Jan asked if there are people making money doing this, who would be interested in bringing it to Missoula.

Dave said UPS has more than 1,000 trucks in some areas. He said he doesn't know how they choose locations for using CNG, but they'd be a good entity to engage with.

Sue said she would think the Council's job would be to say if you could get a certain number of vehicles on board, it would lead to "x" decrease in emissions, and then take it to the fleets and other groups. She said we shouldn't be setting up or orchestrating public/private partnerships. Instead, the Council should say it's a good idea and then put it out to other entities.

Dave said we need some staff work that would provide numbers.

Garon said it would be reasonable to have Sarah Coefield and Ben Schmidt digest the report Dave brought in and give a presentation about it. He said it would be good to partner with the University of Montana and have them lead the way; others may follow.

Sue said we should find out what city vehicles were using CNG in the last attempt.

Garon said the university has a small fueling facility for the mail truck.

Guy said that at \$2.50/gallon of diesel fuel, CNG becomes profitable for transit and refuse fleets, but tax credits are critical to success.

Tom Roberts said he has talked about diesel emissions and health in a forum about modernizing our bus fleet. He said his arguments to Mountain Line and ASUM fell on deaf ears. Tom said there's absolute denial that there could be measurable health impacts from their buses. Contrary to what Garon thinks about it, Tom said, they completely ignored what he had to say. Tom said there would be a fairly steep uphill push to document what diesel effects are actually present.

Tom said this is the Air Quality Advisory Council – it would be our job to say how much emissions could be reduced if the fleet is replaced. He said he's not sure we want to be arguing about tax credits and the cost of diesel.

Dave said the economic numbers will make more of an impact on Beach and Mountain Line.

Guy said it's easier to do the right thing if it doesn't cost you money.

Dave asked Tom Roberts is he's saying we should focus on health and air quality benefits.

Sue pointed out we could cite the success with the trains – the incorporation of auxiliary power units has greatly reduced diesel emissions from the railyard, and it was achieved

through a grant application collaboration between MRL and the Health Department.

Ryan said that if we can provide motivation from an air quality perspective we might get them to at least look at the cost. He said the Council is concerned about air quality and health – we shouldn't come out of the gates taking cost and money.

Garon and Guy pointed out that we need to at least talk about the cost or at least have information available.

Dave said there has to be information out there about the health cost from diesel pollution. He said there are grant programs for cleaning up diesel emissions because of the societal benefits.

Sue said we shouldn't quantify the cost of health, because no one else will care about it.

Dave said he thinks parents would care.

Sue said we need to focus on health.

Jan said that's our story.

Dave said policy makers need to have cost and benefit information available.

After Jan said it was time to wrap up the topic for the night, Dave said his thought is to pass this to the Board to ask staff to gather additional information about the gallons of diesel used by Missoula fleets and how much the of diesel emissions in Missoula is comprised of emissions from the local fleets. He said that's the basic data we'd need to move forward.

Jan said it's premature to send this forward to the Board. She said we need to make any recommendation from the Council to the Board be very specific.

Ronni said she wouldn't recommend the Health Department use staff time until we get more information and talk to experts.

Bert suggested a subcommittee be formed to do some work.

Garon said we need to have a specific set of questions to take to the Board. He said he'd be willing to talk to Jordan Hess to test the waters.

Jan said we could dedicate a half hour at the December meeting to continue the discussion.

Guy said he has a friend who was the Montana Power fleet manager last time CNG was tried in Missoula. He said he could ask why it didn't work.

Garon said he'd check and see if the university uses any CNG.

Jan said we'll get information from Garon and Guy at the next meeting.

Ryan said we could potentially form a subcommittee at that meeting.

8. Review the Draft Carbon Monoxide 2nd 10-year Limited Maintenance Plan

Sarah Coefield provided the Council with Missoula County's Draft Carbon Monoxide (CO) 2nd 10-year Limited Maintenance Plan (LMP). Missoula has been in maintenance for CO since 2007, and we are required to submit a plan to the EPA to show how we will remain in compliance with the CO National Ambient Air Quality Standard for another 10 years. Missoula last violated the CO standard in the 1990s and has CO levels so far below the standard that monitoring ceased in 2011. This LMP is largely procedural and should be uncontroversial – it is basically a continuation of the first 10-year maintenance plan.

Kathy Tonnessen said she found some typos. She said she was curious about the fact that Missoula has ceased directly monitoring CO and has difficulties with the assumption that the goal of continued compliance can be confirmed without that monitoring.

Sarah said that traffic data will be used as a surrogate for CO monitoring. Because onroad vehicular traffic contributes the vast majority of CO in Missoula, we can assume that there shouldn't be an increase in CO unless traffic also dramatically increases. There is a vehicular miles traveled (VMT) threshold that, once reached, will lead to CO monitoring being reinstated or temporarily put in place to check CO levels.

Ronni Flannery asked if the assumption is that if control measures stay in place, we can expect to stay below the standard.

Sarah said yes. The control measures from the first maintenance plan remain unchanged, which means we shouldn't see an increase in CO levels.

Garon Smith said the redesign of malfunction junction in the 1990s led to a decrease in idling time of 110 seconds/car.

John Ottman said he sees a lot of backed up traffic at Sussex and Arthur. He said there's been an increase in the number of vehicles near student housing and it's led to a lot of congestion.

John Ottman said there was a campaign some years ago about polluting vehicles in town.

Garon Smith said that it turns out law enforcement wasn't interested in helping out on that front. About all the health department could do was send out postcards to guilt trip polluters.

9. Staff Report

Sarah Coefield gave the staff update. The only outdoor burning allowed this time of year is prescribed wildland burning. The department has received one application for winter outdoor burning.

Sarah has sent the draft CO LMP to the DEQ for initial review and comments. EPA's requested technical document (a 110(l) analysis) is holding up the SIP submission process because MCCHD and DEQ are attempting to answer EPA's questions and comments on the document.

The county will be unveiling a new website in the coming weeks. Sarah encouraged the Council to look it over and see if they could navigate the site and find the information they look for.

Ben Schmidt is in Oregon at a conference for the Pacific Northwest International Section of the Air and Waste Management Association.

The Council has upcoming vacancies – Sarah said she hasn't heard back from everyone whose terms are expiring, but both Ryan Leach and John Garberson are stepping down. Also, it is time to select a new chair and co-chair. Jan Hoem has said she's willing to finish out the year, but she will not be chair again.

10. Public comment

None.

11. Select AQAC representative for next Air Board meeting update

Tom Roberts will give the AQAC update at the Board meeting.

12. Announcements, other business

Bert Chessin said Jan and Harold Hoem should be honored for the award they recently received from the Conservation Round Table for their film about coal development and trains.

13. Adjourn