

Minutes

Bi-State Region Air Quality Task Force

Friday, December 9, 2011, 11:00 A.M
Bi-State Regional Commission
Rock Island County Office Building
Third Floor Room 320
1504 Third Avenue
Rock Island, Illinois

1. Introductions and Consideration of October 14, 2011 Meeting Minutes. The Air Quality Task Force meeting was called to order by Ms. McCullough. Introductions of those in attendance were requested. Participating by conference call included Betsy Tracy, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Matthew Johnson, and Jim McGraw both of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IADNR). Task Force members were asked if there were any comments or corrections to the previous meeting's minutes. Hearing none, the minutes were approved as written by consensus.
2. Election of Chair and Recognition of Outgoing Chair. Former Chair, Wally Mook, was recognized for his substantial contribution to the Air Quality Task Force over the last decade by Ms. McCullough. She suggested Mr. Steve Boka as the new chairmen of the Air Quality Task Force as a community representative and from the Muscatine area where air quality issues are of greatest concern. Brandy Olson motioned to nominate Mr. Boka as chairman. The motion was seconded by Erica Williams. The nomination was approved by consensus.
3. Update from Resource Agencies on Current Air Quality Status/Issues. Mr. Johnson reported that the recent proposed changes for the ozone standard have been halted until the end of the five-year cycle in 2013. Mr. Johnson confirmed that the 2008 standards for ozone are still in effect, and the EPA is acting on the 75 part per billion (ppb) standard designation. He further stated that all of the State of Iowa is expected to remain in attainment under said regulation. It was reported that there had only been 2 PM_{2.5} exceedences in Muscatine through September 30th.
4. Energy Conservation Opportunities/Options Related to Local Power Utilities. Rick Leuthauser of MidAmerican Energy presented an overview of MidAmerican's efforts to improve energy efficiency and promote sustainability. He began by presenting MidAmerican's Energy Efficiency Commitment. A comparison of proportional generating capacity by fuel type of December 31, 2000 and December 31, 2011 was presented. Mr. Leuthauser pointed out that the most significant changes seen in the past 10 years were a 22% proportional decrease in coal generated capacity and a 26% proportional increase in wind generated capacity. MidAmerican has and will continue to focus on increasing capacity from renewable resources such as wind and solar and shared that they had recently purchased the Topaz Solar Energy Plant. Mr. Leuthauser reported that there is a deadline for additional wind turbines as preferential tax credits for wind production expire at the end of 2012. He also stated that to his knowledge no orders have been placed for wind turbines in 2013. Mr. Leuthauser then went on to describe a variety of non-residential programs available in 2012.

He also described in more detail some of the commercial energy consuming elements addressed by the programs. He expanded on residential energy efficiency programs as well.

Mr. Leuthauser briefly described MidAmerican's use of various forms of social media as a tool to distribute information to its customers. He explained that MidAmerican has an internal social media task force comprised of representatives from departments of corporate communications, customer service, economic development, distribution, safety, and legal to maintain content therein. He also explained that two key audiences are targeted in their social media efforts. The primary audience is MidAmerican Energy Company customers, and the secondary audience is MidAmerican Energy employees, regulators, other stakeholders, the media, and general public.

Follow up questions were asked at the end of the presentation. Jerry Neff asked about limitations of the addition of wind farms to the MidAmerican grid because of lack of capacity. Ms. Olson commented that it is not only capacity, but capacity and transmission capabilities that limit the incorporation of additional energy sources into the power grid. Mr. Leuthauser responded that MidAmerican is currently working to incorporate its 9th wind farm in Iowa, and they are continuing to look at additional transmission capability. This effort is in response to the state energy portfolio requiring incorporation of alternative energy sources. A question was also asked regarding the differences in incentives offered in Illinois vs. Iowa. Mr. Leuthauser explained that these differences are due to regulatory differences between the states causing logistical and legislative challenges for implementation.

Brandy Olson presented an overview of energy efficiency and renewable energy programs for Muscatine Power and Water (MP&W). Ms. Olson presented the mission statement and core values of MP&W. She outlined the local resources utilities by MP&W. These resources include 3 coal-fired units, a membership in the Midwest Independent System Operator, Inc. (MISO) allowing them to buy and sell electricity off the grid, and high-quality drinking water from local Muscatine Island aquifer.

Unlike MidAmerican Energy, MP&W is a municipal utility not subject to a mandatory renewable portfolio standard. MP&W is, however, required to conduct a study and establish goals for energy efficiency savings by S.F. 2386 as of 2008. According to S.F. 2386, municipal utilities are expected to spend up to 2% of native system revenues on energy efficiency programs and incentives. MP&W's 2011 goal is 0.65%. Ms. Olson presented 2011 energy efficiency statistics for MP&W. The statistics showed that MP&W is on track to meet their goal for 2011. She went on to explain that a local issue exists with improving energy efficiency. MP&W is unique in that 50% of their electrical load is utilized by two industrial customers. Recent economic conditions make it difficult for companies to dedicate capital dollars to energy efficiency projects, but this trend is slowly improving. Ms. Olson noted that large customers are slow to embrace the value of energy efficiency, but non-profit groups were willing to participate in demonstration projects with ARRA grant funds. This tendency was also noted by Mr. Leuthauser. Ms Olson explained that MP&W sponsors many community education activities and youth programs.

Ms Olson listed several residential incentive programs. Ms Olson also presented a list of commercial and industrial incentives offered by MP&W. A number of energy efficiency projects have been conducted by MP&W, both in the city and on MP&W properties.

5. Review of “Make Air Quality Visible” Strategic Plan and Public Awareness Efforts. Ms. McCullough directed attention to the draft of the strategic plan. Ms. McCullough described the structure of the plan and pointed out the table of strategies contained within. She requested comments from the group to be included in the final draft of the strategic plan. Mr. Melton reported that a 4-page color insert had been produced and was to be included in the Quad City Times, Dispatch-Argus, and The Muscatine Journal reaching 101,000 subscribers. Mr. Melton also reported that a public service announcement had been produced and would be playing on the 4 most listened to stations in the region. The radio advertisement will be played approximately 50 times on each station over a three-week period. For two of the stations, it was estimated that the ad will be heard by 115,800 people five times each. The other two stations have a total listener base of 119,100 people.
6. Local Status Report on Air Quality Issues. The local air quality status report was attached in the agenda packet and was briefly reviewed by the task force.
7. Scheduling of Next Meeting. The next meeting was scheduled for Friday, February 10, 2012 at 11:00 a.m.
8. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 12:00 p.m.