

OFFICIAL RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Missoula City-County Air Pollution Control Board
May 21, 2009

Board Members Present: Dr. Sandy Kuntz (Vice Chair), Jean Curtiss, Dr. Alan Gabster, Renee Mitchell, Ross Miller, and Eileen Sansom

Board Members Excused: Dr. Garon Smith (Chair)

Health Department Staff Present: Health Administration: Ellen Leahy and Julie Mohr; and Environmental Health: Jim Carlson, Mamie Colburn, and Ben Schmidt

Legal Counsel Present: Marnie McClain (Chief Civil Deputy County Attorney)

Others Present: Ron Scholl

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Dr. Kuntz called the meeting to order at 1:56 p.m. Minutes for the April 9 and April 23, 2009 meetings will be approved at the June meeting.

ITEM 1 UPDATE ON THE AIR REGULATION PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The Frenchtown meeting was a negative experience: transmission of correct information was difficult since a postcard containing inaccurate information was mailed to many residents by, or with the support of, Guy Hanson. The anger level of the public was not easily reversed. Director Leahy reported that members of county staff afterward suggested, and the commissioners supported, switching to an open house format to improve opportunities to exchange information, even if parties disagree. Air Quality Specialist Mamie Colburn said the open house approach was used this week in Seeley Lake and Clinton. Personnel set up 16 posters in stations to tell 60 attendees in story format why the regulations changes were proposed.

- Staff members acknowledged that wood burning is necessary and is in heavy demand and indicated they do not want to decrease it but pointed out there are risks associated.
- They explained PM_{2.5} and described past data that have been collected.
- They identified problems and provided a solutions section.
- Attendees were able to look on a map to see if they live in an area where alerts and warnings might affect them.
- Attendees were told how they can get involved. Copies of the regulations and summaries of proposed changes were distributed, along with information on the public hearing.

Additional open houses are scheduled June 3rd at the University Center and June 4th at the Lolo Community Center. Shannon Therriault sent out a press release to state representatives and the news media. Ms. Colburn did an interview for KUFM. The Seeley Lake Pathfinder did an article before and then covered the open house during the Tuesday event.

Jean Curtiss was on a call-in radio show following the event in Frenchtown. The majority of callers had not read the regulations and responded based on fear. Eileen Sansom received a call from a person who complimented staff members for their professionalism at the Frenchtown meeting in a volatile situation. There were people there who appreciated their efforts. Director Leahy noted the department did hear from people who said that they would not ask a question or risk being viewed as being on the wrong side of their neighbors in that kind of forum. The change in approach was not made because of the atmosphere: staff members have been to angry meetings in the past. It was done as a means to get better information to the public. The department has considered going back to Frenchtown but a county staff member who has been giving advice and has more experience with Frenchtown thinks it will not be useful. Jean Curtiss recommended going back because people might not be afraid to speak in the different environment. Ms. Sansom added that the person who spoke to her favors the regulations but did not feel comfortable speaking up in the other forum. The board and staff members discussed possible opportunities for further media coverage and posting of the posters on the website.

ITEM 2 PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

No comments were given.

ITEM 3 BOARD AND STAFF COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

No comments were given.

ADJOURNMENT: Dr. Kuntz adjourned the meeting at 2:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Leahy
Health Officer

Sandy Kuntz
Vice Chair