

MINUTES
WATER QUALITY FEES BOARD
April 8, 2021
Regular Meeting

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** - George Woolwine, Chairman, called the April 8th Meeting of the Water Quality Fees Board (WQFB) to order at 9:01 a.m. and read the following statement:

“Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and State of Emergency, this meeting is being held via live video teleconference pursuant to 2020 Senate Bill 150, and in accordance with KRS 61.826, because it is not feasible to offer a primary physical location for the meeting.”

Water Quality Fees Board Members in Attendance: Harry Clarke, George Ely (arrived via ZOOM at 9:45 a.m.), David Lowe, and George Woolwine. Donna Fogle was absent.

Staff Members in Attendance: Charles Martin, P.E., Director, DWQ; Jennifer Carey, P.E., DWQ; Frank Mabson, DWQ; Denice Bullock, DWQ; and Michael Cravens, Department of Law.

Guests in Attendance: Lori Halligan, Executive Director, Jessica Byassee, Grant Manager, and Amanda Wheeler, Planetarium & STEM Discovery Educator, Living Arts & Science Center; Chris Dent, SynTerra Corporation; and Scott Southall, Earthcycle Design, LLC.

- II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** - Mr. Woolwine asked the WQFB to review the minutes of the January 14, 2021, Water Quality Fees Board Meeting.

Mr. Lowe moved to accept the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Clarke, and the motion passed unanimously. Ely and Fogle were absent.

III. **LIVING ARTS & SCIENCE CENTER PRESENTATION**

Board comments and questions: Mr. Woolwine said that there have been several grants approved for the Living Arts & Science Center (LASC). Ms. Byassee replied affirmatively.

Mr. Woolwine asked if the grants awarded dealt with the educational component. Ms. Byassee replied affirmatively. Mr. Mabson indicated that the Living Arts & Science Center had received a grant for Class B Infrastructure to install pavers as well. Ms. Byassee replied in agreement.

LASC's presentation: Ms. Lori Halligan, Executive Director, thanked the Board for allowing them to speak and began by introducing herself along with Ms. Jessica Byassee, Grant Manager, and Ms. Amanda Wheeler, Planetarium & STEM Discovery Educator.

Ms. Halligan directed the Board's attention to the shared screen and said that the Living Arts & Science Center inspires participation in art and science by engaging the community through education, discovery, exploration, and creativity.

Ms. Byassee briefly touched on the population census data in the area surrounding the LASC. Next she noted the center's location relative to Transylvania University, the University of Kentucky, and Bluegrass Community & Technical College, and indicated that they have partnered with each of these institutions in a variety of ways including utilizing faculty as guest lecturers and advisors, hiring interns from the institutions, and recruiting volunteer groups.

Ms. Halligan spoke about the pre-COVID Annual Programming, which included the classes and camps, field trips, Wonders on Wheels (WOW), art and science exhibits, professional development programs, and community art events.

Ms. Wheeler and Ms. Byassee commented on how the programs benefit the students and allow them to focus on the importance of stormwater, especially the Water Conservation and Ecology Programming.

Ms. Byassee shared a picture of the permeable pavers constructed with the center's expansion project, and explained the paver installation for the parking lot and path was made possible through the FY 2012 and FY 2014 Stormwater Incentive Grants. She added that there are also educational signs throughout the property touching on stormwater conservation and the importance of the rain gardens and pavers.

Ms. Halligan remarked that the LFUCG Incentive Grant Program has made an impact on LASC's stormwater education curriculum which has made a difference in their students' lives throughout the years.

Ms. Wheeler said that the 2018 Kentucky Department of Education reported only 30.8 % of the students scored proficient or better in science. The classroom teachers lack the time to teach science and expose the students to more programs. The Incentive Grant Program allows the Living Arts & Science Center to expose the students to an enriched science program, which is a benefit to the kids and teachers.

Ms. Wheeler briefly explained that the Science Explorers Program is an eight-week after-school course that is offered in the fall and spring via ZOOM.

Ms. Byassee said that the LASC is an education center and it is important to perform evaluations of the students' academic performance. Their test scores show the students' science comprehension has improved by 63%, on average.

Ms. Wheeler spoke on the Urban Ecology curriculum, as well as how the Ambassador Animal course plays an important role in educating about the living organism, habitats, conservation, the importance of water, and more. Ms. Byassee said the Incentive Grant Program allows them to print trading cards for each of the animals and on the back of the card includes information on water quality and water conservation tips.

Ms. Halligan spoke about the monthly Discovery Program and how it allows families to experience the wonders of science and art together. She added that this program is closed at this time due to COVID, but in July they are planning to reopen the program.

Ms. Halligan explained that while the COVID-mandated shutdowns are in effect, that they are offering virtual outreach programs, which is ideal for the teachers and the community organizations who do not want to meet in person, but who are interested in Kentucky wildlife, habitats, and urban ecology. Another program offered is the Living Think, which was created for children and parents with limited entertainment options during quarantine. The Living Think currently has twelve (12) episodes that are available through their YouTube channel.

Ms. Wheeler explained that the 2021 LASC curriculum will be a mixture of in-person learning and virtual programs, as well as summer camps.

Ms. Halligan thanked the Board for the opportunity to present the Living Arts & Science Center programs and for their continued support so LASC can continue to provide stormwater education to students.

Board comments and questions: Mr. Woolwine thanked the LASC staff for their presentation and for providing some insight as to how the Incentive Grant Program has benefited their community.

Mr. Lowe thanked the LASC staff for their presentation and said that their passion and the positive impact of the organization are quite clear.

Mr. Woolwine spoke of his admiration for the beautiful mansion and the grounds, and asked if the public can visit the gardens and participate in the activities. Ms. Halligan indicated the gardens are open to the public, but at this time, the building is closed to the public.

Mr. Woolwine asked if they are targeting to open the building in July. Ms. Halligan said that they will be offering summer camp in June, but the building doors will be locked and entry is through appointments only. She then said that they are anticipating reopening the building during regular hours starting the month of July per the CDC and the Governor's recommendations.

Staff comments and questions: Charlie Martin asked if the LASC staff has thought about changing their marketing strategy to attract more students post-COVID. He said that the work that the LASC is providing is a tremendous benefit and he would hate to see them lose some of their audience. Ms. Halligan said that they do realize they would more than likely have to rebuild their audience and to remind the people that the LASC is here and still offering quality programming. She noted that their budget is extremely tight and there is not a lot of money in their budget for marketing, so they rely on social media and communication through the public schools.

Mr. Martin said that whatever the Urban County Government can do to help get that information out there to let us know because these programs benefit the city as well. He thanked the staff for their presentation.

Frank Mabson asked if any additional materials have been added to their curriculum to address *E. coli* pollution. Ms. Byassee replied that they are hoping to add fresh ideas at the summer camps, and added that they are open to any thoughts or suggestions from the city to ensure that these programs are benefitting both sides.

Mr. Mabson said that adding *E. coli* pollution to the curriculum would be a huge help to the city, as well as help the LASC during the scoring of their Incentive Grant application.

Ms. Halligan said that they are intending to start a pre-K STEM pilot program in the fall and they are excited to introduce this program to groups between the ages 2 of 3.

Mr. Woolwine thanked the LASC staff and wished them luck in the future.

No action is required by the Board.

Note: Mr. Ely was having technical difficulty gaining access to the ZOOM meeting; therefore, a brief recess was declared at 9:30 a.m. Mr. Mabson explained that Mr. Ely could hear the conversation through the telephone from Mr. Mabson's office and Mr. Ely advised him to proceed with the meeting. The meeting was re-convened at 9:35 a.m.

IV. INCENTIVE GRANT STATUS UPDATE - Mr. Mabson and Jennifer Carey briefly provided an update on the Incentive Grants from FY 2016 to FY 2021; commenting on a few select projects.

Scott Southall, Earthcycle Design, LLC, gave a brief update on several Incentive Grants he oversees.

Note: Mr. Ely went on record to say he was able to gain access to the ZOOM meeting at 9:45 a.m. Mr. Mabson noted that the staff could provide LASC's presentation if he wished.

V. OTHER MATTERS

1. **FY 2022 STORMWATER QUALITY PROJECTS INCENTIVE GRANT APPLICATIONS** - Mr. Mabson explained that staff had held two Question and Answer sessions for potential grant applicants on April 2nd and April 6th. Both of these sessions were productive.
2. **APPLICATIONS DEADLINE** - Mr. Mabson informed the Board that the application deadline for the Class A and Class B Education grants will be May 7th and the deadline for the Class B Infrastructure grants will be July 31st.
3. **WATER QUALITY FEES BOARD MEETING** - The next meeting will be held Thursday, July 8, 2021.

VI. ADJOURNMENT - The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m. Upon adjournment, those who were available and able met at 101 West Loudon Avenue to tour the FY 2019 Incentive Grant-funded Best Management Practices at Greyline Station.