

DRAFT

MINUTES OF THE NHTCOG MEETING OF JANUARY 9, 2014

Members or Representatives in Attendance:

Barkhamsted, Donald Stein	Canaan (Falls Village), Patricia Allyn Mechare
Colebrook, Thomas McKeon	Cornwall, Gordon Ridgway
Goshen, Robert Valentine	Harwinton, Michael Criss
Kent, Bruce Adams	Litchfield, Leo Paul, Jr.
Morris, Barbara Bongiolatti	New Hartford, Daniel Jerram
Norfolk, Susan Dyer	North Canaan, Douglas Humes, Jr.
Roxbury, Barbara Henry	Salisbury, Curtis Rand
Sharon, Brent Colley	Torrington, Elinor Carbone
Warren, Craig Nelson	Washington, Mark Lyon
Winchester, Dale Martin	

Others in Attendance:

Ted Shafer, Burlington First Selectman	Robert Rubbo, TAHD
Hon. Kevin Witkos, Senator	Sharon McCoy, TAHD
Hon. Roberta Willis, State Representative	Michael Jastremski, HVA
JoAnn Ryan, NW Chamber	Tom Vannini, DEMHS Region 5
Bill Riiska, NW Chamber	Leonard Campbell, NWCPOA
Steve Silver, CL&P	Mary Wilford Campbell, NWCPOA
Chuck Burnham, CL&P	Brian Ohler, N. Canaan
Richard Lynn, NHTCOG Staff	Darlene Krukar, NHTCOG Staff
Jocelyn Ayer, NHTCOG Staff	Lois Pinney, NHTCOG Staff
Media Representatives	

1. Call to Order, Opportunity for Public Comment. The meeting, held at the Cooperative Extension Meeting Room at UConn Torrington, was called to order by Chairman Don Stein at 10:08 a.m. Since it was the first meeting of the NHTCOG, everyone in attendance introduced themselves. Senator Kevin Witkos congratulated the NHTCOG members for being pro-active and merging into the new COG. He stated that the LHCEO and NWCCOG set a good example for other regions to follow.

2. Introductions and Brief Town by Town Updates by COG Members. T. McKeon stated that Colebrook is still working on the Colebrook/Norfolk school consolidation and things are going along well. B. Valentine stated that he is working on the town budget and getting back to things that he didn't get to do last time he was in office. S. Dyer said nothing was particularly new in Norfolk. D. Martin stated Winchester has a lot of new board members and they are getting up to speed. He stated that in spite of what you read in the newspaper there is a lot of good things happening in Winchester and it should be a good year. T. Shafer stated that Burlington is reaffirming their desire to join the NHTCOG and they should

know by the end of the month if OPM will allow them to join the NHCOC. B. Bongiolatti stated Morris is starting their budget season same as everyone else. B. Adams stated that the ongoing issue of Federal Tribal Recognition has resurfaced and if allowed it will have a major impact on the region. He stated he would let the COG know if they can be of any assistance in fighting this. M. Lyon stated that Washington has been on a roller coaster ride with the weather and trying to obtain enough salt for the roads. D. Stein stated that he is researching the Nutmeg Network and Barkhamsted is applying for an Incentive Housing Zone Grant. P. Mechare stated that Falls Village has approved a new Emergency Service Center and will be appointing a committee to work on it. They also received a \$450,000 Streetscape grant. D. Humes stated that N. Canaan uses limestone with magic salt on the roads and it is working well. M. Criss stated that Harwinton is working on small cities grants and that they always have something going on. C. Nelson stated that Warren is also working on the budget and the proposed closing of the CL&P plant is of concern. E. Carbone stated that Torrington is meeting with the state on the courthouse and she is grateful for the work being done on the Animal Shelter and looks forward to working with everyone. C. Rand stated that Salisbury is considering Wild and Scenic designation of the Housatonic River along with other towns located along the river corridor. B. Colley stated that Sharon Hospital is at risk due to funding cuts. He asked that other towns reach out to state and federal legislators to stop cutting aid to the hospitals. L. Paul stated that Litchfield is busy with the budget. G. Ridgway stated that he is concerned about the local economy and declining school population and he is thankful for Jocelyn Ayer and Rick Lynn for the help that they give Cornwall. D. Jerram stated that New Hartford is working on school security and bridge repairs and sewer issues. They had an emergency with a broken sprinkler in the town hall which did a lot of damage. B. Henry stated that she hopes that the STEAP grants continue and that Roxbury is concerned with a number of federal and state issues that have municipal implications.

3. Update on Torrington Area Health District and Overview of the Community Transformation Grant for Litchfield County. Robert Rubbo stated that is the new Director of Health at the Torrington Area Health District and he provided some background information on himself. He introduced Sharon McCoy who distributed and reviewed handouts on the Community Transformation Grant. She stated that 75% of health care dollars go to treat chronic diseases that are caused by personal choices related to not eating right, smoking, lack of exercise, etc. She stated that the Litchfield County Community Transformation Grant is geared to improve the health of area residents through policy change. They will be working with governments, organizations and schools to promote tobacco-free living, healthy eating, active lifestyles, preventive services, safe physical environments and social emotional wellness. She said the program will work with schools to create habits that will carry over into adulthood. They will work with employers to create tobacco-free work campuses so employees don't have to walk through clouds of smoke. They are also working on creating a website that will list healthy places in town such as biking/hiking trails, farmers' markets and road races. If anyone would like to list locations on the website please contact McCoy. Discussion followed.

4. Request by Housatonic Valley Association for NHCOC Letter of Support for a Proposed Grant Application to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for a Culvert Inventory and

Replacement Action Plan. Michael Jastremski stated that the assessment project would gather information on flood risks to the designated areas and culverts that present barriers to fish and wildlife. The results would show which culverts are most important to habitat and then grant funds would be sought for culvert replacement. Discussion followed. On a motion made by Leo Paul and seconded by Barbara Henry, the NHCOCG members unanimously voted to send a letter of support.

5. Administrative Items.

- a. On a motion by Leo Paul and seconded by Tom McKeon, the proposed bylaws for the NHCOCG were unanimously approved.
- b. On a motion by Curtis Rand and seconded by Sue Dyer, the proposed policies and procedures manual was unanimously approved.
- c. On a motion by Doug Humes and seconded by Leo Paul, the six month work plan was unanimously approved.
- d. On a motion by Pat Mechare and seconded by Leo Paul, the six month operating budget was unanimously approved.
- e. On a motion by Leo Paul and seconded by Brent Colley, the resolution pertaining to the pension program was unanimously approved.
- f. On a motion by Curtis Rand and seconded by Mike Criss, Mark Lyon and Leo Paul were added to the executive committee as At Large members.

6. Unveiling of Northwest Hills COG Website. Jocelyn Ayer stated that the goal of the new website is to make information available to COG member towns and residents. Meeting dates, agendas, minutes, reports, maps and other resources will be available there. There will also be direct links to each town's website from the home page. If there is any additional information or resources COG members would like to see added to the website, please let Jocelyn know. If you would like a photo from your town on the website, email it to Jocelyn.. The address of the website is [www.northwesthillscog.org](http://www.northwesthillscog.org). NHCOCG staff will also be getting new related email addresses. Don Stein suggested that a press release be done when the site is ready.

7. Appointment of NHCOCG Legislative Committee and Approach to Development of Regional Legislative Priorities. Don Stein stated that he, Leo Paul, Dan Jerram, Sue Dyer, Pat Mechare, Barbara Henry, and Gordon Ridgway served on the legislative committee last year and would like to continue but if anyone else would like to be on the committee there can be more. Bob Valentine, Mike Criss and Brent Colley all asked to be on the committee. On a motion by Mark Lyon and seconded by Curtis Rand, the members listed were unanimously approved as the Legislative Committee. Rick Lynn stated that he would set up a meeting of the committee.

8 Request by ConnDOT for Input on Functional Road Classifications. Rick Lynn reviewed the current road classifications in the region and how roads are classified by ConnDOT. He stated that generally only roads classified as collectors or arterials are eligible for state or federal grants. He asked members to review the list attached to the agenda and let him know if they would like any changes be made. He stated that the Federal Highway Administration has a 63 page book on Road Classifications if anyone is interested. He

stated that on the ConnDOT website there are maps for each town showing the road classifications.

9. Committee Updates.

- a. *Consolidation Committee.* Don Stein stated the lease for the new office space is nearly ready for signing.. On a motion by Bob Valentine and seconded by Michael Criss, the COG members unanimously agreed to allow the executive committee to authorize the Chairman and Executive Director to sign the lease.
- b. *MSW and Recycling Advisory Committee.* Don Stein stated that CRRA has a webinar scheduled for Monday and suggested CRRA member towns attend this webinar. It provides an update and should answer any questions that you have on the current status of CRRA. Rick Lynn stated that the Recycling Advisory Committee will be preparing an RFP for the Household Hazardous Waste contract for the upcoming year. Curtis Rand stated that he is looking at ways to compost food waste and get it out of the MSW.
- c. *Public Works Equipment Cooperative.* Rick Lynn distributed a list of the equipment available through the Public Works Equipment Cooperative and current rental rates. He stated that there is close to \$200,000 in the capital replacement account. He will be preparing the schedule for use of the equipment in 2014, and asked members to contact him if they would like to use any of the equipment.
- d. *Update from DEMHS Region 5.* Tom Vannini stated the DEMHS has recently sent out a School Security All Hazard Planning Standards guideline. Please review it to make sure your town didn't miss anything. Your LEOP needs to be submitted by January 15<sup>th</sup> and if there are no changes, you can submit the current one with a notation that there are no changes. The REPT will be sending out a calendar of meetings. There will be a meeting with the ESF chairs to make recommendations for reallocating some funds under the 2010 HSG and 2011 HSG.

Gordon Ridgway suggested that COG representation on LCD be added to the next COG meeting agenda.

10. Other Business as Raised by Members and Adjournment. Brent Colley encouraged COG members to support the protection of state funding for Sharon Hospital. Rep. Willis stated that this issue affects other hospitals in the state as well and that she is available to provide assistance as needed.

Bob Valentine thanked the towns for responding to his request for information on payroll. Don Stein asked that another request be sent out regarding policies on benefits for elected officials.

Jocelyn Ayer stated that there is another round of Incentive Housing Zone Study Grants and she would be available to help interested towns write the grant applications. The NWCT Regional Housing Council is available to serve all the COG member towns. If your town is not currently participating and would like to join this group please let her know. She stated that the NWCT Regional Planning Collaborative facilitated a regional STEAP grant for signage and visitor information in seven towns. If there are any other towns

interested in doing this, she would assist them with applying for another regional STEAP grant.

There was discussion on Burlington's interest in joining the Northwest Hills COG. On a motion by Mike Criss and seconded by Bob Valentine, the COG unanimously agreed to add this topic to the agenda for possible action. On a motion by Mike Criss and seconded by Bob Valentine, COG members unanimously voted to send a letter to OPM in support of Burlington's request to join the NHCOCG.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 1:50 am.