

DRAFT

MINUTES OF THE NHTCOG MEETING OF May 8, 2014

Members or Representatives in Attendance:

Barkhamsted, Donald Stein	Canaan (Falls Village), Patricia Allyn Mechare
Burlington, Ted Shafer	Colebrook, Thomas McKeon
Cornwall, Gordon Ridgway	Goshen, Robert Valentine
Hartland, Wade Cole	Harwinton, Michael Criss
Kent, Bruce Adams	New Hartford, Daniel Jerram
Norfolk, Susan Dyer	North Canaan, Douglas Humes, Jr.
Sharon, Jessica Fowler	Torrington, Elinor Carbone
Warren, Craig Nelson	Washington, Mark Lyon
Winchester, Marsha Sterling	

Others in Attendance:

Ron Thomas, CCM	Kevin Maloney, CCM
Doug Parker, NW CT EDC	JoAnn Ryan, Chamber of Commerce
Jim O'Leary	Steve Silver, CL&P
Brian Ohler	Paul Gibb
Richard Lynn, NHTCOG Staff	Jocelyn Ayer, NHTCOG Staff
Darlene Krukar, NHTCOG Staff	Media Representatives

1. Call to Order, Opportunity for Public Comment. The meeting held at the Cooperative Extension Meeting Room, UConn Torrington was called to order by Chairman Don Stein at 10:08 a.m. Paul Gibb reported that there are laminated maps for the EOCs printed with DEMHS funds and asked that towns take theirs on the way out along with a package of markers and a dry eraser. There was no other public comment.
2. Summary of 2014 Legislative Session. Ron Thomas from CCM spoke about the legislative session which ended last night. He stated that the budget gives towns an increase of \$81.7 million in education funding and about \$26.9 million in non-education funding. He reviewed mandate relief proposals that did not pass. One bill that did pass was the study of the tax structure in Connecticut. He stated that there was a lot of activity during the final hours and CCM is still assessing the bills passed. Kevin Maloney stated that CCM is still looking for input from the CEOs. Ted Shafer asked if anything happened on the State Police issues. Mr. Thomas replied the State Commissioner is setting up a task force to look into the State Police issues. Discussion followed on the proposed bill (which did not pass) to allow legal notices in newspapers to be shortened and information to be placed on the town's website. Marsha Sterling suggested that the State have a town clerk section on the state website for listing of legal notices.

3. Town by Town Issues and Updates by COG Members. Bruce Adams gave an update on the tribal recognition issue. After reading a letter, he passed it around and asked CEOs to consider signing the letter in support of Kent's position on the proposed regulations. Dan Jerram stated that New Hartford is looking at school security issues. Elinor Carbone stated that Torrington is working with the DOT to purchase property for the Northwestern Connecticut Transit District Center. She stated that she will be looking for COG support of the proposal at the June COG meeting. Mike Criss stated that Harwinton is working on sidewalks and lighting, and that Harwinton is interested in pursuing another façade program. Doug Humes stated the town of North Canaan has a tax incentive program which allows the assessor to phase in taxes. Pat Mechare stated that Canaan - Falls Village has three STEAP grants that they are working on and a Main Street grant for sidewalk/streetscape improvements. Don Stein stated Barkhamsted passed its budget. There is a four mile section of state road in town where DOT is cutting down a lot of trees to improve the road. There was a problem with the tree cutting company taking down more trees than necessary. Don Stein stated he has a problem with a proposed regulation to allow an out building on property of over 3 acres without setbacks, etc. and asked for information from other towns. Marsha Sterling stated that Winchester is focused on financial restoration, getting roads repaired and establishing stability in town. They have budgeted \$700,000 for roads and the Holabird Bridge will reopen next week. She stated the Public Works Equipment Cooperative with the NHCOC is a great help for Winchester. Winchester is establishing a coordinated Economic Development Committee that will include the P&Z and the Building Officials. Ted Shafer has two projects for pedestrian walkways going out to bid. One is a Rail to Trails project along the Farmington River and the other one is for the center of town for streetscape and sidewalks. Sue Dyer and Tom McKeon stated that Colebrook and Norfolk have come to a conclusion on school consolidation and are moving forward. All other towns reported they are working on the budgets.
4. Highlights of EDA Approved Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the Northwest Hills Region and Request for Designation of the Northwest Hills Economic Development District. JoAnn Ryan distributed a Chamber newsletter and a 2014 directory and then she reviewed some of the programs that are going on in the Chamber. She promoted the "All aboard the Trains" program. She stated that 732 students attended a Financial Reality Fair/Course. Doug Parker passed around a copy of the updated CEDS. It has been approved by EDA. The next step is getting recognition as an Economic Development District. He distributed a list of the objectives/initiatives in the CEDS and reviewed them. They have been working on developing EDC task teams and looking for funding to hire staff. He stated the CEDS is available online at nwctedc.com. Jocelyn Ayer stated that the COG will be looking for the State to approve the CEDS and asking the Governor to recognize our area as a new Economic Development District. Discussion followed.
5. The Need for DEEP Regulations on the Municipal Issuance of Burning Permits. Bob Valentine distributed and reviewed a copy of Sec. 22a-174(1) regarding open burning. He stated that the on-line course and state statute do not agree. He is looking for the state to have regulations that the town would need to follow. Discussion followed. The

consensus was to put discussion of burning permits on the agenda for next month so that CEOs can research this with their town Burning Officials.

6. Regional Planning Topics.

- a. *Proposed Establishment of Regional Planning Advisory Committee.* Jocelyn Ayer proposed that the NHCOC establish a Regional Planning Advisory Committee and reviewed what the committee would be responsible for. Each town would appoint a member. On a motion by Pat Mechare and seconded by Wade Cole, NHCOC members unanimously endorsed the establishment of a Regional Planning Advisory Committee.
- b. *Suggested Boundary Changes to Water Utility Coordinating Committees.* Don Stein stated he attended a meeting in New Britain of the Upper Connecticut River WUCC. He stated we presently have boundaries for seven WUCCs and the committee is trying to consolidate into four WUCCs. Don stated that each RPO can appoint a delegate to look into this and he stated that he is willing to be the COG representative. Discussion followed. On a motion by Craig Nelson and seconded by Mike Criss, COG members appointed Don Stein as the representative with Craig Nelson working with him.
- c. *Community and Economic Development Update.* Jocelyn Ayer referred to her summary of community & economic development work completed on behalf of member towns in the meeting packet. She reminded CEOs that the next Regional Housing Council meeting is coming up next week. If you do not have a representative you may send someone from your town. She stated that there is a marketing grant available through the CPACE program for the towns that have opted in and the NHCOC staff would be willing to help with the applications. On a motion by Pat Mechare and seconded by Doug Humes, NHCOC members unanimously approved having NHCOC staff help with the applications.

7. Follow-up on April 24th Meeting with Area Assessors on Field Use of Tablets. Rick Lynn reported on the meeting with the area assessors and stated that there was mixed feelings about whether the use of tablets is worth the price. He stated that he is looking into whether we could get a price break from Vision if we did this regionally. He asked if the NHCOC should look into getting prices for tablets for regional purchase, and the consensus was that this should be pursued.

8. Administrative Items.

- a. On a motion by Bob Valentine and seconded by Wade Cole, the NWCCOG treasurer's report for 3/2014 was unanimously approved.
- b. On a motion by Sue Dyer and seconded by Craig Nelson, the LHCEO financial statement for 3/2014 was unanimously approved.
- c. On a motion by Pat Mechare and seconded by Michael Criss, the NHCOC minutes from 4/10/2014 regular meeting and the financial statement for 3/2014 were unanimously approved.
- d. After discussion, on a motion by Doug Humes and seconded by Craig Nelson the proposed NHCOC budget for FY 2014-15 was unanimously approved.

- e. On behalf of the nominating committee, Tom McKeon presented the following proposed slate for NHCOC officers for FY 2014-2015: Don Stein, Chairman; Mark Lyon, Vice-Chairman; Sue Dyer, Secretary; Bruce Adams, Treasurer; Pat Mechare, At-Large Member; and Leo Paul, Jr., At-Large Member. There were no nominations from the floor. On a motion made by Michael Criss and seconded by Bob Valentine, the Council members unanimously voted to accept the slate as presented and to close nominations.
- f. Rick Lynn stated that the NHCOC received two proposals for auditing services and the NHCOC staff recommends that the proposal submitted by King, King and Associates be accepted. On a motion by Sue Dyer and seconded by Michael Criss, COG members unanimously approved accepting the proposal for auditing services by King, King and Associates.

9. Committee Updates.

- a. *Legislative Committee.* Don Stein spoke on the CRRA issues and stated that CRRA will become MIRA based on new legislation that included tipping fee protection as requested by the COG and others.
- b. *Recycling Advisory Committee.* Sue Dyer stated there will be a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day held on June 7, 2014 in Falls Village. Volunteers are needed.
- c. *Public Works Equipment Cooperative.* Wade Cole reported the region's cooperative purchase agreement for road signs has been extended. Also, International Salt has offered to extend the LHCEO/NWCCOG salt agreement at a 2.5% increase. He stated that the regional sweepers are being heavily used which is making maintenance difficult and we should look at possibly purchasing another one. Mike Criss stated that John Fredsall asked that towns clean up the sweeper before returning them and let the host town know if there are any problems with the sweeper when they are returned. Discussion followed on how towns dispose of sweepings, construction debris, etc.
- d. *Public Safety Task Force Update from DEMHS Region 5.* Jim O'Leary reviewed how the PSTF was formed. The concept was to present a forum for the CEOs and other emergency managers to meet and discuss topics. Over the years the PSTF meetings have been attended by mostly the EMDs from the towns. After discussion, on a motion by Bob Valentine and seconded by Pat Mechare, NHCOC members unanimously approved reorganizing the PSTF to consist primarily of local EMDs.

10. Other Business as Raised by Members and Adjournment. There was no other business raised by members. On a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 12:20 pm.