

DRAFT

MINUTES OF THE NHCOG MEETING OF October 9, 2014

Members or Representatives in Attendance:

Barkhamsted, Donald Stein	Canaan (Falls Village), Patricia Allyn Mechare
Colebrook, Thomas McKeon	Goshen, Robert Valentine
Kent, Bruce Adams	Morris, Barbara Bongiolatti
Litchfield, Leo Paul, Jr.	Roxbury, Barbara Henry
Norfolk, Susan Dyer	Sharon, Brent Colley
Salisbury, Curtis Rand	Washington, Mark Lyon
Warren, Craig Nelson	Winchester, Candace Bouchard
Winchester, Dale Martin	

Others in Attendance:

Jonathan Costa, Education Connection	Jonathan Lillpopp, DPH
Tom Vannini, DEMHS Region 5	Ray Drew, Torrington WPCA
Fred Rosa, Campion	Steve Silver, CL&P
Chuck Burnham, CL&P	Bernie Harrington, LWV
Richard Lynn, NHCOG Staff	Jocelyn Ayer, NHCOG Staff
Darlene Krukar, NHCOG 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 10:05 a.m. Ray Drew from Torrington Water Pollution Control Authority distributed handouts and explained the proposed upgrades at the Torrington Water Pollution Control Facility. He asked that the NHCOG support this upgrade. On a motion by Curtis Rand and seconded by Sue Dyer, COG members unanimously endorsed sending a letter of support for this upgrade.
2. Town by Town Issues and Updates by COG Members. Brent Colley stated that Sharon has dead zones for cable access and broadband and would like to know how other towns have handled this. Bob Valentine stated that Goshen just celebrated the 275th anniversary of the town. Candace Bouchard stated that Winchester has just submitted an application for a STEAP grant for improvements on Newfield Road. The town has another potential buyer for Lambert Kay which looks promising. Don Stein stated that Barkhamsted just installed the conduit between the school and the town hall for the Nutmeg Network. Discussion followed on the cost of the Nutmeg Network. The town also just hired an engineering firm to review the roads in Barkhamsted. Pat Mechare stated that Falls Village is working on their streetscape and sidewalk project. She stated Falls Village is the second smallest town in the state and it has received almost 2 million dollars in grants over the last 10 years and they feel very fortunate. Their Regional High School just celebrated their 75th anniversary. Mark Lyon stated that the base for the cell tower has been installed behind the Washington town garage and the floor for the garage is being poured today. All other towns reported business as usual.

3. Regional Trends in School Age Populations and Municipal Implications. Jonathan Costa stated that the declining school age population is due to forces beyond all of our control. The private school population has remained steady in recent years. The trends are set, and school enrollment will continue to decline. Connecticut has 18 regional schools, and there will be increased demand for further regionalization due to the declining school populations. He stated that the legislation concerning regionalization of schools worked in previous times of growth, but it doesn't work in today's economy of decline. The MBR law needs to be changed so that the cost savings from a merger can be shared between towns. Mr. Costa suggested that this become a legislative priority for the upcoming session. He stated that most schools have already cut wherever possible and the cost per pupil will just continue to rise. The average elementary school in the state has 426 students. For perspective, even if Norfolk and Colebrook combined, they would still be at half of this statewide average. Mr. Costa stated that he does not see the State providing any financial relief from ECS if the towns have options to regionalize and cut costs and do not act on them. Pat Mechare stated that there is tremendous local interest in keeping elementary schools within town and so far towns have been willing to shoulder this expense rather than aggressively pursue regionalization at the K-8 level. Bruce Adams stated that we should continue to track this issue and consider addressing it as a legislative priority. Discussion followed.
4. Farm Viability Grants. Jocelyn distributed and reviewed a handout which describes how towns have used farm viability grants to support farming in their towns. She stated that although the NHCOCG is applying for a grant for a regional project, this does not preclude individual towns from applying for grants for their own projects. She stated that a 50% match is required which can be in-kind, it does not have to be a cash match. She reviewed the NHCOCG Farm Viability grant proposal that was in the board packets. The focus of the grant would be to determine the feasibility and need for a regional food hub (place where local farmers can bring their food to be processed, stored, and distributed) which was a strategy that resulted from the region's economic development plan. Discussion followed. On a motion by Leo Paul and seconded by Bob Valentine, NHCOCG members unanimously endorsed applying for the grant.
5. New Procedures and Performance Standards for Primary Service Area Responders. Jonathan Lillpopp gave a PowerPoint presentation on the new EMS statutes and plan requirements. He reviewed the town's new responsibilities. The plan calls for written agreements with all EMS segments. The DPH is required to review the town EMS plan every 5 years and to assess the EMS system provider's performance. He reviewed the procedures for removal of a responder and the reasons for the removal. The DPH is developing a local EMS template to help town's create their local EMS plans. He will send notice to NHCOCG staff when the template is available on the DPH website. Discussion followed, which included several comments by COG members about the burden of increased training hours that are required for EMS volunteers in order to be certified. Fred Rosa stated that the new legislation is significant and he encouraged towns to look at their plans carefully and talk with their providers to make sure they can meet the requirements.

6. Organizing for December 17th DEEP Public Hearing on Proposed Stormwater Regulations. Don Stein stated there is a public hearing scheduled for December 17, 2014 and CCM is asking for input on the cost of implementing these proposed stormwater regulations. CCM will be opposing the regulations at the hearing. Don stated that he also plans to attend the hearing and speak for the NHCOC based on the previously prepared staff comments on this issue. He encouraged other COG members to also attend.
7. Administrative Items.
 - a. On a motion by Barbara Henry and seconded by Mark Lyon, the NWCCOC treasurer's report for 8/2014 was unanimously approved.
 - b. On a motion by Sue Dyer and seconded by Craig Nelson, the LHCEO financial statement for 8/2014 was unanimously approved.
 - c. On a motion by Tom McKeon and seconded by Sue Dyer, the NHCOC minutes from 9/11/2014 regular meeting and the financial statement for 8/2014 were unanimously approved.
 - d. On a motion by Pat Mechare and seconded by Craig Nelson, the NHCOC members unanimously authorized the NHCOC to serve as the successor entity to the LHCEO for the purposes of preparing a Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan Update.
 - e. On a motion by Leo Paul and seconded by Craig Nelson, the NHCOC members unanimously approved signing a MOU with the CRCOC for transportation planning in Burlington.
 - f. Rick Lynn stated that progress is being made with the new COG office renovation. The metal support beam for the conference room is being installed today and the interior is being framed out.
8. Committee Updates.
 - a. *Public Works Equipment Cooperative.* Rick Lynn reported we are completing another successful year due to the excellent cooperation of the participating towns. There is about \$235,000 in the capital replacement fund. Maintenance costs have been increasing however as the equipment ages. Interest has been expressed in purchasing a third sweeper due to the growing demand for its use. We are looking for a current certificate of insurance from the towns that have been using the equipment. The asphalt recycler and hotboxes have not been used as much as anticipated. There will be a Road Foreman and Supervisor meeting on October 27th in Goshen.
 - b. *Public Safety Task Force and DEMHS Region 5.* Tom Vannini reminded COG members that the 2014 HSGP MOAs need to be sent in. The REPT meeting will be held on November 10th at 2:00 and it will include election of officers. The Steering Committee will meet before the REPT meeting. Smart tag triage system training will be held in New Milford, Sharon, and Torrington for EMS providers in October and November. It is a three hour training class held on a Saturday. School security plans were due at the beginning of the school year and most of the schools have not submitted them. Tom encouraged COG members to remind their school boards to get the plans submitted.
9. Other Business as Raised by Members and Adjournment. Jocelyn stated that the former NWCCOC towns need to respond to Dave Murphy's questions regarding their

Hazard Mitigation Plans if they have not already so that these can be completed. If you have any questions, please call Jocelyn. Barbara Henry has agreed to act as the lead town again this year to re-apply for the multi-town STEAP grant for signage. On a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 12:10 pm.