

DRAFT

MINUTES OF THE NHCOG SPECIAL MEETING OF March 18, 2015

Members or Representatives in Attendance:

Barkhamsted, Donald Stein	Canaan (Falls Village), Patricia Allyn Mechare
Colebrook, Thomas McKeon	Cornwall, Gordon Ridgway
Goshen, Bob Valentine	Hartland, Wade Cole
Harwinton, Michael Criss	Kent, Bruce Adams
Litchfield, Leo Paul, Jr.	Norfolk, Susan Dyer
New Hartford, Dan Jerram	Roxbury, Barbara Henry
Warren, Craig Nelson	Winchester, Dale Martin

Area Legislators in Attendance:

Sen. Kevin Witkos  
Sen. Clark Chapin  
Rep. Jay Case  
Rep. Craig Miner

Others in Attendance:

Media Representatives  
Launa Goslee, Goshen Tax Collector  
Richard Lynn, NHCOG Staff

Call to Order. The special meeting, held at UConn Torrington, was called to order by Chairman Don Stein at 7:55 a.m.

Update by Area Legislators on Status of Regional Legislative Priorities and Other Proposals of Local Concern or Significance. Clark Chapin stated that he is keeping a watchful eye on the MS4 raised bill that would prevent DEEP from extending coverage to Tier 2 towns. He also expressed support for requiring DEEP to analyze the data they have received in the past for Tier 1 towns before expanding the requirements.

Craig Miner stated that the budget situation is bad this year and projected that there will be some increase in the amount that towns will need to pay for their resident trooper program. He polled towns on those that are budgeting 100% for the resident trooper program based on the Governor's proposal. Mike Criss stated that Harwinton will need to cut one trooper if the 100% local funding is required. Bruce Adams stated that Kent dropped a resident trooper a few years ago and then restored the position and that contributions from the three private schools in Kent help to support the program. Jay Case stated that deploying resident troopers in one town to another town that does not have a resident trooper program is an issue. Leo Paul expressed concern that if a town loses its resident trooper it will also lose its constables.

Clark Chapin expressed support for continued funding of the Community Investment Act and is cautiously optimistic that the funding will remain in place.

While little support has been expressed for the Secretary of State's proposal for Registrar of Voters, Craig Miner stated that there are some good provisions in the proposal such as training requirements. Barbara Henry stated that attention needs to be focused on fixing inconsistencies at the Secretary of State's office, such as technological problems and differing legal opinions, before trying to fix things at the local level. Dan Jerram stated that the Registrar issue is worth studying to improve efficiencies and enhance educational opportunities as it is a costly local government service.

Jay Case stated that his work to maintain the Torrington DSS office is on-going. He stated that the DSS Commissioner visited the Torrington office to discuss re-location plans with employees so the State is very serious about this proposal. Gordon Ridgway commented that only the State can effectively address the growing needs of the elderly and impoverished and it is critical that the Torrington DSS office remain open and functioning.

Craig Miner stated that the Ethic Bill is not yet out of Committee, and he will pay more attention to the bill if it hits the screening level. Bob Valentine expressed support for the legislature using the 2008 Task Force report on this subject as a starting point for local options.

General discussion occurred on concerns with the car tax, PILOT, and revenue sharing proposals in the Governor's budget.

Kevin Witkos stated that he has a number of issues with the Governor's budget and is hopeful that that the Appropriations Committee budget in April addresses these issues. He stated that there is some good news as the Labor Committee voted out a prevailing wage bill and a proposed reduction in MBR is also gaining support.

Bob Valentine expressed concern with the open space proposal for golf courses that would result in a \$40,000 reduction in revenue to the Town of Goshen.

Update by NHCOG Members on Legislative Issues of Particular Local Concern or Interest. This topic was covered under the above agenda item.

Outlook for Additional Urban Action Funding in Support of Regional Façade Improvement Program. This agenda item was tabled.

Schedule for Additional Northwest Hills Legislative Forums this Session. Kevin Witkos suggested that a legislative forum the first week of May might be a good time to meet again. It was suggested that a representative from OPM or the Governor's office might be helpful to invite to the meeting. Interest was expressed in holding a May legislative forum in Hartford to better accommodate the schedules of area legislators.

Question and Answer Period. This item was tabled due to time constraints.

Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 a.m.