

DRAFT

MINUTES OF THE NHCOC MEETING OF April 9, 2015

Members or Representatives in Attendance:

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

Others in Attendance:

Rista Malanca, Torrington ZEO	David Battista, Lenard Engineering
Jessica Fowler, Sharon	Mike Muszynski, CCM
Maria Morre, New Hartford	Bob Moore, New Hartford
Steve May, Milliman, Inc.	Bernie Harrington, LWV
Richard Lynn, NHCOC Staff	Jocelyn Ayer, NHCOC Staff
Darlene Krukar, NHCOC Staff	Lois, Pinney, NHCOC Staff
Media Representatives	Steve Silver, Eversource

Call to Order, Opportunity for Public Comment. The meeting held at the NWCT Chamber of Commerce was called to order at 10:08 am. Steve Silver stated there is going to be a briefing on the State annual economic review on Monday in Berlin and he will email the details to COG members. He distributed copies of the Economic Review to COG members in attendance.

Appreciation for Service of Lois Pinney, Retiring NWCCOG/NHCOC Financial Manager. Mark Lyon presented Lois Pinney with a retirement gift and thanked her for her 15 years of service. COG members expressed their appreciation for Lois's service.

Town by Town Issues and Updates by COG Members. Elinor Carbone stated that Torrington is working on their budget and road work. Sue Dyer stated that the State Board of Education approved a 10 year exemption on their MBR for the consolidation of Norfolk and Colebrook's elementary schools. They are now waiting for legislation changes to occur and then they can take the consolidation to the townspeople for approval. Candace Bouchard stated the Holabird Bridge project in Winsted will begin construction in the spring of 2016. Bob Valentine stated that Goshen's budget should be flat and he is working with Cornwall to obtain a handicap bus for Goshen and Cornwall to share. Michael Criss stated that Harwinton's budget should stay flat, they have signed up for the Nutmeg Network and they are continuing with LED lights and working on purchasing land

for senior housing. Dan Jerram stated that New Hartford's school budget for special education kids is skyrocketing. Don Stein stated that Barkhamsted's budget for their resident trooper is of great concern and he is participating in the MORE Commission which is considering state police and the feasibility of regional police departments. There was discussion on which towns budgeted for 100% or 70% for their resident troopers. Leo Paul stated that Litchfield is considering a proposal for the former jail and Stop & Shop is still in the courts. Leo is also on the MORE commission for state police. Pat Mechare stated that Falls Village will hopefully be finishing up their sidewalk project this spring and she reported on other projects. Bruce Adams asked for a show of hands on the percentage of raises being considered for non-union employees. Curtis Rand stated that Salisbury's budget is up because of the resident trooper proposal. Mark Lyon stated that Washington is working on their budget. Gordon Ridgway stated that Cornwall is pursuing land for preservation, getting a generator from a FEMA grant, and working on their 250th anniversary celebration. Cornwall is very concerned about the state's proposal on car taxes. Brent Colley stated that Sharon's budget is lower this year due to savings in medical insurance. Barbara Henry stated that everything is wonderful in Roxbury. Ted Shafer stated Burlington is in a growth spurt and he is busy working on the budget.

Overview of ConnDOT District 4 Paving Program for the Northwest Hills in 2015. Aron Steeves. Tabled for next month due to a conflict with speaker attendance.

Improving Local Road Management through the Use of Pavement Management Software and Discussion on Existing Practices in the Northwest Hills. Bob Valentine stated that Goshen has used a software program over the past few years for pavement management and effective budgeting for road maintenance. David Battista gave a PowerPoint presentation. He stated that he had two objectives: identify the appropriate funding level for roadway management and make sure money is spent wisely. He stated that roads are evaluated for current condition. Goshen uses the PASER system which is visual and uses a 1-10 scale. He reviewed the scale that is used. Each road is placed in one category and a cost is assessed for each category. Roads are re-evaluated every two years. Bob Valentine stated that it was important to Goshen to know the condition of all the roads and plan how the maintenance should be done to make the best decisions on how it should be funded. Discussion followed.

Update on Farm Viability Grant Awarded to NHCOCG. Jocelyn Ayer distributed and reviewed an updated project overview for the \$45,000 farm viability grant that we received from the CT Dept. of Agriculture. Much of the in-kind match required by the grant will be provided by the Litchfield Hills Food System which has changed their name to Partners for Sustainable Healthy Communities. This is a one year project. We will be looking for input from local farmers when doing the needs assessment and Jocelyn asked that if COG members know of a farmer that should be contacted, please let her know. Discussion followed. On a motion by Pat Mechare and seconded by Bob Valentine, NHCOCG members unanimously authorized Rick Lynn to sign the grant award for the Farm Viability Grant.

Regional Transportation Planning.

- a. *Overview and Request for Endorsement of Proposed Unified Planning Work Program for FY 2016-2017.* Rick Lynn reviewed the proposed Unified Planning Work Program. On a motion by Bob Valentine and seconded by Leo Paul, the proposed unified planning work program for FY 2016-17 was unanimously endorsed.
- b. *Request for Endorsement of LOTCIP Application for Highland Avenue in Torrington.* On a motion made by Craig Nelson and seconded by Michael Criss this item was tabled, and the proposed grant application for the Naugatuck River Greenway Economic Impact Study was added to the agenda.
- c. *Grant Application for Naugatuck River Greenway Economic Impact Study.* Elinor Carbone asked for approval for the NHCOC to submit a grant application to the Northwest CT Community Foundation in the amount of \$10,000 for an economic impact study of the Naugatuck River Greenway for Torrington, Litchfield and Harwinton. Leo Paul asked if the Greenway would interfere with future use of the railroad tracks. Rick Lynn stated that it would not interfere based on the conceptual Greenway plan developed by the LHCEO in 2006. On a motion by Curtis Rand and seconded by Michael Criss, COG members unanimously endorsed the grant application for the Naugatuck River Greenway Economic Impact Study.

Administrative Items.

- a. On a motion by Leo Paul and seconded by Mike Criss, the NHCOC minutes from the March 12, 2015 meeting and the minutes from special meeting of March 18, 2015 were unanimously approved.
- b. On a motion by Elinor Carbone and seconded by Craig Nelson, the NHCOC financial statement for 2/2015 was unanimously approved.
- c. On a motion by Leo Paul and seconded by Bob Valentine, the NHCOC members unanimously authorized a bylaw change regarding election of Ad Hoc Executive Committee members.
- d. Chairman Don Stein appointed the following to the Nominating Committee for COG Officers for FY 2015-2016: Tom McKeon, Chairman, Dale Martin and Bruce Adams.
- e. Jocelyn Ayer gave an update on the Housing Enterprises application for the Northwest Hills Homeownership Program. She stated that the NHCOC is not an eligible applicant for this program so the application was submitted directly by Housing Enterprises. She will let the COG know if the application is approved.
- f. Rick Lynn stated that a meeting was recently held with Mark Greenberg and office renovations should be completed by the end of May. He hopes to convene the first meeting in the new offices at our regular June 11th meeting.
- g. We received 32 applications for the available “Administrative and Planning Assistant” position. Staff interviewed the top five candidates and we are looking at references and writing samples. Rick Lynn stated that he anticipates offering the job to the top candidate next week.

Committee Updates.

a. Legislative Committee.

1. Update on MORE Commission and Legislative Issues of Interest and Concern. Leo Paul stated that there remains considerable turmoil in Hartford over legislative proposals. Prevailing wage came out of finance committee with higher limits than we

were asking for. There will be discussion on regionalization of PSAPs. There are four subcommittees of MORE including mandates, technology, and regional police. They are mostly listening to presentations at this point. Mike Muszynski from CCM stated any work done by the MORE commission will not impact this legislative session; it will be dealt with during the 2016 legislative session. He stated the big issue right now is the budget. He doesn't think the car tax or resident trooper bills will pass this year. Discussion followed.

2. COG Interest in scheduling a Legislative Forum in early May in Hartford. Don Stein asked if something were set up how many would attend. About half the COG members showed interest.

b. Recycling and MSW Advisory Committee. Don Stein stated that DEEP is working on updating their state solid waste management plan and they are holding forums around the state to get input on the plan. He would like to schedule a presentation by DEEP on this at an upcoming NHCOG meeting.

c. Public Works Equipment Cooperative. Craig Nelson stated that OPM has awarded a grant for half the cost of a new sweeper under the ICE program. On a motion by Bob Valentine and seconded by Michael Criss, authorization to participate in the grant and provide 50% funding from the Public Works Equipment Cooperative's capital replacement account was approved.

d. Regional Medical Insurance. Brent Colley introduced Steve May a health benefits consultant from Milliman, Inc. Mr. May stated that he set up the regional medical insurance plan in the eastern part of the state. Public act 10-174 allows for collaboratives to be made. He stated that you could save about 7 to 9 percent of cost if the towns joined together to purchase insurance. Due to time constraints, it was decided that his presentation should be schedule for an upcoming meeting. COG members requested that they receive information prior to the meeting on this so that it could be reviewed prior to the presentation.

Other Business as Raised by Members and Adjournment. On a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 12:12 pm.