



DRAFT

MINUTES OF THE NHCOCG MEETING OF JANUARY 14, 2016

Members or Representatives in Attendance:

Barkhamsted, Donald Stein	Canaan (Falls Village), Patricia Allyn Mechare
Burlington, Theodore Shafer	Warren, Craig Nelson
Cornwall, Gordon Ridgway	Goshen, Robert Valentine
Litchfield, Leo Paul, Jr.	Morris, Tom Weik
North Canaan, Doug Humes	Roxbury, Barbara Henry
Curtis Rand, Salisbury	Colebrook, Tom McKeon
Sharon, Brent Colley	Sharon, Jessica Fowler
Kent, Bruce Adams	Washington, Mark Lyon
Harwinton, Mike Criss	Salisbury, Curtis Rand
Winchester, Laurie Besette	Norfolk, Sue Dyer
Hartland, Wade Cole	

Others in Attendance:

Richard Lynn, NHCOCG Staff	Jocelyn Ayer, NHCOCG Staff
Mike Muszynski, CCM	Joanna Wozniak-Brown, NHCOCG Staff
State Representative Craig Minor	Scott Jackson, OPM
Carol Gould, Fitzgerald & Halliday	Ruth Fitzgerald, Fitzgerald & Halliday
Other members of public	Media Representatives

Call to Order and Opportunity for Public Comment. Don Stein, Chairman

The meeting held at the NHCOCG office was called to order at 10:12 a.m. Don Stein and Rick Lynn congratulated Darlene Krukar on 20 years of service to the region. There was no other public comment offered.

Overview of Municipal Programs Available through the CT Office of Policy and Management and Emerging Trends in Regionalism. Scott Jackson, OPM Undersecretary, Intergovernmental Policy Division.

Regional trends, funding/granting streams, and budget processes were discussed. Undersecretary Jackson stated that there is a growing interest in voluntary regionalism to enhance government efficiency and increased funding is planned for COGs to facilitate such efforts. He stated that OPM is seeking ways to provide more direction for STEAP program applications and agrees with local officials that there is a need to better define the selection criteria. Brent Colley expressed concern about the hospital funding cuts, which is having a major impact on the region's hospitals. Bob

Valentine encouraged more timely release of information regarding state aid so that towns can better plan their local budgets. Barbara Henry suggested that STEAP be administered like LOCIP where each town receives a set dollar amount. Additional discussion followed.

Presentation and NHCOC Action on Proposed 2016 Legislative Priority List. Barbara Henry and Leo Paul, Legislative Committee Co-Chairs. Leo Paul and Barbara summarized the recent meeting of the COG's Legislative Committee and the proposed legislative priorities for the upcoming session. Bob Valentine urged COG members to attend hearings in Hartford to emphasize local government views on proposed legislation. Following additional discussion, and on a motion by Leo Paul and seconded by Craig Nelson, the proposed legislative priorities were approved.

Mike Muszynski then reported on CCM's efforts to finalize the legislative priorities for this year. One priority of CCM this session will be to fix the municipal spending cap adopted by the legislature last year. Several COG members commented that the cap is inappropriate and should be eliminated or significantly modified. Discussion followed.

Leo Paul reminded COG members of the upcoming Legislative Breakfast on January 21<sup>st</sup> and encouraged everyone to attend.

#### Proposed Responsible Growth and TOD Program Grant Applications

Rick Lynn and Jocelyn Ayer introduced the six proposed projects for the new "Responsible Growth" program funding. Projects include:

- Regional Animal Control Facility
- Regional Food Hub planning
- Trail design Naugatuck River Greenway
- Trail design for Still River Greenway
- Route planning for the Houbike Trail
- West Cornwall public water/wastewater system study

On a motion by Curtis Rand and seconded by Mike Criss, the NHCOC voted unanimously to provide conceptual support for these six proposed projects with the possibility for additions. A formal resolution of endorsement will be requested at the COG's February meeting once the applications have been made available for review.

#### New Funding Requests.

- a. NWCONNECT Project. Don Stein reported that the Executive Committee discussed the project and has requested more information on the proposed activities. He proposed that the request be tabled for this meeting and be discussed at the next COG meeting.
- b. Consultant for Preparation of Data Needed for Regional Plan of Conservation and Development. Jocelyn Ayer explained the benefits to both the member towns and the regional POCD to utilizing CERC or another equally qualified consultant to collect, analyze, and prepare data. This was endorsed by the Executive Committee. On a motion made by Bob Valentine and seconded by Sue Dyer, the proposal for allocating up to \$25,000 of existing SGIA funding for this purpose was unanimously approved.

#### Administrative Items

- a. Approval of Minutes for December 10, 2015. On a motion by Mark Lyon and seconded by Leo Paul, the minutes were unanimously approved.
- b. Approval of Financial Statement for November 2015. On a motion by Leo Paul and seconded by Craig Nelson, the financial statement was unanimously approved.
- c. Proposed Dues for FY 2016-17. On a motion by Craig Nelson and seconded by Bob Valentine, the proposed dues were unanimously approved.
- d. Acceptance of Audit for FY 2014-15. Rick Lynn noted that the audit shows the COG to be in excellent financial shape. As with previous audits, the auditor has labeled as a deficiency the COG's reliance on the auditor to track depreciation of assets. On a motion by Mike Criss and seconded by Craig Nelson, the audit was unanimously accepted.
- e. Update on Hiring of Regional Election Monitor. Rick stated that COGS are waiting for further information from the CT Secretary of State before proceeding, including a final version of the Memorandum of Understanding and Scope of Work.
- f. STIP Amendment Pertaining to Rural Collector Program Project on Twin Lakes Road in Salisbury. Curtis Rand reported on the project and requested a motion to approve the STIP amendment. On a motion by Leo Paul and seconded by Bob Valentine, the proposed STIP amendment was unanimously approved.
- g. Request for Input on Northwest Hills Food Hub Feasibility Study. Jocelyn Ayer explained that phase 1 of Regional Food Hub Feasibility Study was completed. It included meetings, interviews, and surveys of local food producers & consumers, and other outreach. This research finds that there is enough supply and demand for locally produced food to make a physical food hub facility both financially viable and necessary. The consultants are currently working on phase 2 of this study which will include a more in-depth financial viability and business analysis. Jocelyn asked for comments and input on phase 1 of the study from NHCOC and the community. The project team will present the full study findings and next steps at the March COG meeting.

#### Workshop on Preparation of "Northwest Hills Regional Transportation Plan"

Ruth Fitzgerald and Carol Gould presented on the progress of the Regional Transportation Plan, including:

- a. Study Status Update and Accomplishments to Date.
- b. Baseline Conditions Findings and Summary of Survey Findings.
- c. Discussion of Draft Vision Statement and Major Policy Direction.
- d. Next Steps.

FHI's research has found that the Northwest Hills region is only projected to grow by 1% over the next 10 years and that the only population cohort growing is the over age 65 segment of the population. Thus there will be a growing need for services for the elderly, including the need for enhanced transportation. Ruth encouraged COG members to carefully review the draft vision statement that was distributed and the "wish list" of projects that has been generated and provide feedback to FHI on proposed changes by February 1<sup>st</sup>. Carol Gould added that projects can be added, prioritized, or removed. FHI will develop an evaluation matrix to rate the priority actions. Ruth stated that the work program calls for three public forums on topic areas (transit in general; non-motorized modes of transportation such as bicycling and walking; and rail possibilities), and that these will likely be scheduled in March. Town assistance in publicizing the events is important. Ruth stated that the Regional Transportation Plan will be very beneficial in communicating the region's project priorities to ConnDOT.

Adjournment. On a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 pm.