

DRAFT

MINUTES OF THE NHCOG MEETING OF FEBRUARY 11, 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
Salisbury, Curtis Rand	Colebrook, Tom McKeon
Kent, Bruce Adams	Salisbury, Curtis Rand
Winchester, Laurie Besette	Norfolk, Sue Dyer
Hartland, Wade Cole	New Hartford, Dan Jerram
Torrington, Elinor Carbone	

Others in Attendance:

James P. Redeker, ConnDOT	Patrick Zapatka, ConnDOT
Richard Lynn, NHCOG Staff	Jocelyn Ayer, NHCOG Staff
Joanna Wozniak-Brown, NHCOG Staff	Sara Radasci, CTDOT RPO Coordination Unit
Steve Silver, Eversource	Carol Gould, FHI
John & Catharine Wallace Harding	Jim O'Leary
Tammy Williams, Northwest Transit District	Gertrude O'Sullivan
Heidi Kearns	Bernie Harrington
Mike Muszynski, CCM	Valerie Cooper, Mental Health Connecticut
Debra Lauzier, Mental Health Connecticut	Media Representatives
Other members of public	

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

The meeting held at the NHCOG office was called to order at 10:02 a.m. John and Catherine Wallace Harding, of 138 Popple Swamp Road, Cornwall Bridge, provided testimony expressing concern regarding the proposed HouBike Trail that would cross their property. Jim O'Leary, Chairman of the Public Safety Task Force, announced dates for emergency management training opportunities for senior officials. Debra DeSantis-Lauzier and Valerie English Cooper from Mental Health Connecticut, described early intervention mental health training.

ConnDOT Commissioner James P. Redeker. Topic: Connecticut's Ambitious Program to Address Transportation Needs and Update on Major Projects in the Northwest Hills Region.

Commissioner Redeker discussed the current needs of Connecticut infrastructure, state funding concerns, and departmental changes. He summarized the LetsGoCT Plan which calls for \$100 Billion to be spent over the next 30 years to improve Connecticut's transportation infrastructure. He stated such a hefty investment is needed because Connecticut has historically under-invested in transportation and substantial improvements are needed for rail lines, bridges, roads, and trails. The Plan is based on asset management principles, utilizing an economic model to justify priority projects and a positive return on investment. Commissioner Redeker expressed support for the transportation lockbox to protect funding for transportation enhancements. COG members

inquired about particular projects and practices of the Department including the I-84 Waterbury reconstruction, winter road treatment, pavement contractor performance, and state budget concerns. Gertrude O'Sullivan asked about a mobility ombudsman from the State for western Connecticut. Wade Cole expressed concern about ConnDOT's road paving practices, which are not holding up in Hartland. Roads repaved 2 years ago are falling apart according to Wade, and he invited the Commissioner to Hartland so that he could show him firsthand the deteriorating pavement. Wade also expressed concern about the corrosive impact of ConnDOT's deicing chemicals on motor vehicles and the adverse impact on water quality. Bob Valentine requested that the Commissioner return at a later date to the NHCOCG to discuss specific project and procedural issues and the Commissioner agreed. Additional discussion followed.

Regional Transportation Planning

- a. Introduction of Sara Radasci, Connecticut DOT's New Liaison to the NHCOCG. Don Stein welcomed Sara Radasci as NHCOCG's new ConnDOT liaison.

- b. Overview of ConnDOT's Community Connectivity Program. Patrick Zapatka, Program Manager. Patrick Zapatka presented PowerPoint slides on ConnDOT's new Community Connectivity Program. This Program offers Road Safety Audits at no charge to municipalities, and will be used as a basis for ConnDOT funding selected projects in the future. The deadline for municipalities to apply is March 1, 2016. Discussion followed.

- c. Regional Transportation Plan Update. Rick Lynn provided a brief update on the progress being made in preparing the Regional Transportation Plan. He encouraged those town officials that had not yet reviewed and commented on the wish list of projects for their community to please do so. Three forums have been scheduled: public transit forum (March 22), bicycle and pedestrian forum (March 22), and rail forum (April 7). Our consultants are preparing flyers for the forums and COG members are asked to please post in town halls and to distribute to interested parties.

Overview of Regional Elections Monitor Position and Request for NHCOCG Approval of Memorandum of Understanding with the Secretary of the State. Ted Bromley, Staff Attorney, Office of the Secretary of the State. Ted Bromley provided an overview of the new program which is focused on enhancing training opportunities and technical assistance for elections. The state has provided \$11,111 per COG for the monitor position this year. Discussion regarding the merits and challenges of the position followed. Barbara Henry commented that adding legal staff to the SOTS office would probably be more helpful than creating new positions in the regions. Ted Bromley also reported that the Secretary of State will be meeting with the Justice Department regarding their inquiry on referenda. Bob Valentine asked Ted Bromley to report to municipal officials on their conversations with the Department of Justice. Pat Mechare made a motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding. Wade Cole seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Don Stein moved to amend the motion to restrict the amount of payment by the NHCOCG for the position to \$11,111 per year based on the state grant allocation and Bob Valentine seconded. All voted in favor of the amendment with the exception of Dan Jerram who abstained. The motion was then approved by the NHCOCG with Barbara Henry and Gordon Ridgeway opposing and Dan Jerram abstaining from the motion.

NHCOCG Resolutions for Responsible Growth Program Grant Applications

On a motion by Leo Paul to approve the resolutions and seconded by Craig Nelson, the following project applications were unanimously endorsed: Construction of Regional Animal Control Facility; Northwest CT Food Hub Partnership and Location Identification; Sue Grossman Still River Greenway Extension; Alignment Study for the HouBike Trail; Cornwall Bridge to Kent Segment; Water/Wastewater Solutions to Allow Infill Development in West Cornwall, CT; Wildlife Census and Feasibility Study for Barkhamsted/New Hartford Trail; Naugatuck River Greenway Thomaston to Torrington Routing Study (in cooperation with NVCOG).

Proposal for Preparing the NHCOC's Regional Plan of C&D. Jocelyn Ayer.

Jocelyn Ayer distributed and reviewed the draft plan for creation of the regional Plan of Conservation & Development. The data being generated for the regional plan will be helpful to individual towns in preparing their municipal POCD updates. The core planning data from CERC for each town and the region is expected in July of this year.

Regional Emergency Management Update

- a. Proposed Bylaws for Northwest Hills Citizen Corps Council (see Attachment E). Paul Gibb. In the interest of time, this item was postponed to next meeting.

- b. Request for NHCOC to Purchase Domain Name and Serve as Domain Name Owner for DEMHS Region 5 Website (see Attachment F). Paul Gibb reported that DEHMS Region 5 allocated funds for creation of a more robust regional website. Purchase of the domain name would be nominal. On a motion by Craig Nelson and seconded by Wade Cole, the NHCOC unanimously approved the request to have the NHCOC purchase the domain name and serve as the domain name owner for the website.

- c. Proposed Budget Amendments for 2014 Homeland Security Grant. Rick Lynn. In the interest of time, this item was tabled to the next meeting.

Administrative Items

- a. Approval of Minutes for January 14, 2016 and January 21, 2016 meetings. On a motion duly made by Leo Paul and seconded by Craig Nelson, the minutes were unanimously approved.

- b. Approval of Financial Statement for December 2015. On a motion duly made by Curtis Rand and seconded by Ted Shafer, the financial statement was unanimously approved.

- c. Appointment of Two Additional Members to NWC EDC. Following a brief discussion, Don Stein appointed Ted Shafer and Leo Paul to represent the NHCOC and serve on the NWC Economic Development Corporation.

- d. Agreement with the Foundation for Community Health to Continue Administering the "Prescription Medication Program". On a motion by Sue Dyer, and seconded by Bob Valentine, the annual agreement was approved unanimously.

Town by Town Updates and Other Business as Raised by Members. Mike Muszynski from CCM commented on upcoming public hearings on legislative bills of interest. Don Stein encouraged members to read legislative mailings as important issues are coming up, and to consider testifying in Hartford. Curtis Rand

distributed a letter to the editor in the Lakeville Journal regarding the funding relationship between the Boards of Education and chief elected officials. Discussion followed.

Jocelyn Ayer reported that the regional economic forum held in Morris was a success with excellent participation.

Adjournment

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