

## MINUTES OF THE NHCOG MEETING OF December 8, 2016

### Members or Representatives in Attendance:

Barkhamsted, Don Stein	Canaan, Patricia Allyn Mechare
Colebrook, Thomas D. McKeon	Cornwall, Gordon Ridgway
Goshen, Bob Valentine	Hartland, Wade Cole
Harwinton, Michael Criss	Kent, Bruce Adams
Morris, Tom Weik	Norfolk, Sue Dyer
New Hartford, Dan Jerram	North Canaan, Doug Humes
Roxbury, Barbara Henry	Salisbury, Curtis Rand
Warren, Craig Nelson	Washington, Mark Lyon
Winchester, Candy Perez	

### Others in Attendance:

Eric McPhee, CT DPH; David Murphy, Milone & McBroom; Jeffrey Kitching, EdAvance; Carol Deane, Northwestern CT Transit District; Gertrude O'Sullivan and Jessica Wilcox, Foundation for Community Health; Rep. David Wilson and Senator Craig Miner; Laurie Bissette, Winsted; Zachary McKeown, CCM; Henry Todd, Falls Village; Jocelyn Ayer, Joanna Wozniak- Brown, and Rick Lynn, NHCOG staff; Media Representatives

### Call to Order and Opportunity for Public Comment.

The meeting, held at the NHCOG office, was called to order by Chairman Mark Lyon at 10:03 a.m. No public comment was offered.

### Town by Town Issues and Updates by COG Members.

Craig Nelson reported that Warren's Veteran's Memorial enhancement project is moving along. Barbara Henry asked if other towns have had marshals evicting people and leaving the person at the town hall. Discussion followed. Tom Weik said Morris has 18 families and 40 children in need and the town is accepting donations for toys and food baskets. There will be a food drive on Saturday at the transfer station. Tom McKeon said the lawsuit with the wind turbine is ongoing. Don Stein said they are finishing a culvert under a state grant, after a short delay. Pat Mechare reported that the emergency services facility construction is progressing. They had a tree lighting on Sunday and the town is accepting donations for local children. Canaan has a hearing tonight on removal of a silver maple on the town green that might present a safety hazard. They are also considering an extension of the village sidewalks. Michael Criss reported that Harwinton is doing a toy and food drive, recently finished a VoIP communications system to connect town buildings, are re-doing a couple of bridges, and focusing on blight with a draft ordinance. Harwinton has a library project starting in February and is looking at a 78 acre parcel for senior housing through a public-private partnership. They hope to start two projects in the spring, construction on a Veteran's Memorial and moving the tennis courts. Wade Cole reported that Hartland is starting bridge work in spring. Candy Perez noted a number of projects in Winchester including bridges, water mains, and drainage. They were also conducting a community visioning process on Wednesday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm. Gordon Ridgway noted that Cornwall installed a big box culvert, would be starting another façade grant program with STEAP funding, and is conducting a wastewater study in West Cornwall. He also stated that the long-term brush fire was finally under control with special thanks to all of the community fire departments that lent aid. Bruce Adams thanked NHCOG staff for the work they've done for the region, especially for grant applications, WUCC-designation advice, and the salary survey. Dan Jerram seconded Bruce's comments. Mark Lyon said they have some upcoming holiday events in town and the town is ordering salt for the winter. He also noted that the social services programs were in full swing. Bob Valentine reported that the town of Goshen enacted a stonewall ordinance where walls abut town roads to assist with town boundaries. He thanked Michael Criss for the sample ordinance. He also noted that Goshen is working on their Rural Collector project and is pushing back on some program guidelines that are onerous. General

town updates were provided by other COG members

Exclusive Service Area Implications for NHCOC Towns under the Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) Planning Process. Eric McPhee, Supervisor, CT Department of Public Health – Drinking Water Section. Eric McPhee introduced the WUCC process and discussed the Exclusive Service Area (ESA) process. He explained that the ESA process is to assign an entity that could best service water to a potential growth area. Candy Perez asked if an ESA holder is required to provide water to all new industries such as the Niagara bottling company. She is concerned about the long-term viability of holding an ESA. WUCC consultant Dave Murphy noted that the WUCC process is designed to help ensure long-term water supply and Eric McPhee added that the WUCC process will not drive development but instead identify the most responsible party for water provisioning. Curtis Rand asked who is responsible to installing water mains. Eric said there is some flexibility in installation as ESA holders are not required to extend water mains if it is not feasible. Individual developers could install wells for their project but the ESA-holder would operate it. Dave Murphy provided an example of a development that was reduced in size to match the quantity of water available from their well-source. Don Stein said that most of NHCOC towns will not be installing systems so what are the various options in the ESA process? Eric McPhee said that there are other options, including being exclusive unassigned such as the towns from the previous WUCC process including Roxbury, Colebrook, Hartland, Barkhamsted, and New Hartford. He also said that if towns are completely silent, it is possible for an external provider to claim an ESA. Bob Valentine said that Goshen has 5 acre zoning and would not want to hold an ESA. David Murphy and Eric McPhee stated all systems currently in place would remain regardless of new ESA assignments. Eric McPhee said that a Designated ESA holder would need to be a viable water operator. He also said that if a town anticipates specific growth, it should have a designated ESA provider in that area. Curtis Rand asked when the deadline is for municipal response. Dave Murphy said that the Western WUCC has already extended the deadline for ESA declarations to Monday, December 12 but would still receive letters on Tuesday, December 13. Bob Valentine asked who makes final decisions on the ESA designations. Eric McPhee explained that the WUCC starts with the conflict resolution process. If the need arises, the WUCC gets technical input from the CT Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA). If still unresolved, the Commissioner of CT DPH will review the conflict. DPH feels very strongly that municipalities should have a strong influence over the final decision.

Overview of EdAdvance (formerly Education Connection) and Potential Opportunities for Partnering with the NHCOC. Jeffrey Kitching, EdD, Executive Director with Introductory Comments by Mark Lyon. Mark Lyon introduced Jeffrey Kitching of EdAdvance and explained that the Town of Washington has utilized EdAdvance for IT support. Jeffrey Kitching highlighted that they are the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest employer in Litchfield County. They serve 33 communities in 30 different school districts. Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) offer service and support for school systems. They can serve school systems in a variety of capacities including advocacy, transportation, technology services to assess infrastructure, recommendations on networking, equipment maintenance, etc. They also provide food services and operate group homes. They also get requests for enrollment projections and how to handle the projections. Gordon Ridgway asked about school enrollment and if they see it increasing in the near future. Kitching said that the 10 year projections have been accurate but are dependent on the community's plans for development. He said if any education-related legislation comes forward, EdAdvance is willing to communicate sensible recommendations to the legislature. Mr. Kitching expressed an interest in coordinating with the NHCOC in cooperative purchasing, back-office operations, and other service sharing opportunities.

Request for Authorization to Submit Proposal to ConnDOT for the Purchase of Bus Signs for the Northwestern CT Transit District's Fixed Route System in Torrington, Litchfield and Winchester (distributed under separate cover). Carol Deane, NWTD Executive Director and Joanna Wozniak-Brown. Carol Deane provided background on the Candystriper fixed-route bus program and explained that the current system of 'wave and stop' is dangerous. She stated that establishment of a bus signage program has been a priority of the Transit District for a number of years. Rick Lynn noted that this bus signage plan is

specifically recommended in the NHCOC's 2016 Regional Transportation Plan. Joanna Wozniak-Brown showed NHCOC members the proposed bus stop sign design, utilizing the Northwest Transit District's new logo design. On a motion made by Don Stein and seconded by Barbara Henry, the authorization was unanimously granted.

#### Administrative Items

- a. Approval of Minutes for Meeting of November 10, 2016. On a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes were unanimously approved.
- b. Approval of Financial Statement for 10/2016. On a motion duly made and seconded, the financial statement was unanimously approved.
- c. Approval of Neighbor-to-Neighbor Grant Agreement with the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation. Sue Dyer, seconded by Bob Valentine, made a motion to approve the agreement. This program is funded by the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation for the towns in their service area and the book-keeping will be administered by Darlene Krukar of NHCOC. Following discussion, all voted in favor of approving the Agreement.
- d. Acceptance of FY 2015-16 NHCOC Audit. This item was tabled until January. Bob Valentine asked if there were any management recommendations. Rick said there were no major issues needing to be addressed and the audit shows the NHCOC to be in good financial shape.

#### Preliminary Discussion of Legislative Priorities for Upcoming Legislative Session; Structure and Role of NHCOC Legislative Committee; and Format for Regional Legislative Breakfast Meeting.

Don Stein reported that a recent COST legislative meeting stressed the bleak state fiscal projections over the next year including possible elimination of funding for road repairs, ECS funding, STEAP grants etc. This could result in significant financial strains on the municipalities. Don suggested that municipalities and NHCOC should do some serious coordination in anticipation of these challenges. Don mentioned that both he and Bob Valentine were nominated to be on the COST Board. Gordon Ridgway noted the legislative session will be starting very soon (January 4) so the COG's Legislative Committee should get together to discuss legislative priorities before the holidays. Gordon also suggested that the Legislative Committee involve the state legislators in their meetings. Michael Criss suggested moving Legislative Committee meetings to the Capitol on occasion in order to enhance attendance by legislators.

Discussion about the number of priorities ensued and will be discussed further in the upcoming Legislative Committee meeting. Zachary McKeown from CCM stressed the importance of a municipal presence in Hartford especially by testifying on proposed legislation.

Bob Valentine urged a continued relationship between NHCOC and NECCOC. Mark Lyon agreed, saying the regions share strong similarities and interests. Other members expressed agreement. Rick Lynn reported that CTCOC is also looking at developing legislative priorities and he would share them with the Legislative Committee and COG members when available.

Don Stein encouraged more COG members to participate in the upcoming CT DPH regionalization meetings on December 12 and 14.

#### Other Business as Raised by Members and Adjournment.

Reporting on the Regional POCD process, Jocelyn Ayer announced that as of that morning Kent was in the lead for survey responses with 133 residents. So far, 800 residents in the region have participated but 1,000 residents would be ideal before the closing date at the end of January. Jocelyn Ayer also encouraged NHCOC members to 'Save the Date' for Monday, January 30 at 6:30pm for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual NW CT Economic Development Summit at the Litchfield Community Center. The target audience for this Summit are local EDCs and Chambers of Commerce.

No other business was raised and the meeting was adjourned at 11:53 a.m.