

MINUTES OF THE NHTCOG MEETING OF May 11, 2017

Members or Representatives in Attendance:

Barkhamsted, Don Stein	Burlington, Ted Shafer
Canaan, Pat Mechare	Goshen, Bob Valentine
Hartland, Wade Cole	Harwinton, Michael Criss
Kent, Bruce Adams	Litchfield, Leo Paul
Roxbury, Barbara Henry	Washington, Mark Lyon
Winchester, Laurie Bessette	

Others in Attendance:

Carol Deane, Northwest Connecticut Transit District; Timothy Abbott and Ryan Williams, Housatonic Valley Association; Ellen Graham, U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal's office; Joel W. Jones, Falls Village; Gertrude O'Sullivan, Foundation for Community Health; Bernie Harrington, League of Women Voters of Litchfield County; Tom Vannini, DEMHS; Jocelyn Ayer, Joanna Wozniak- Brown and Rick Lynn, NHTCOG staff; Media Representatives

Call to Order and Opportunity for Public Comment

The meeting, held at the NHTCOG office, was called to order by Chairman Mark Lyon at 2:07 p.m.

Tom Vannini, Coordinator of DEMHS Region 5, asked towns to consider registering for the upcoming CEO training and equipment demonstration on June 14. At the training, they'll discuss the new template for local emergency operations plans, the regional emergency services plan, the mutual aid process, and procedures for declaring an emergency. There will also be a display of regional emergency equipment purchased through the Homeland Security Grant program. DEMHS Region 5 is also in the process of reviewing the local emergency operations plans for all 41 towns in Region 5 and will be distributing feedback soon.

Ellen Graham from Sen. Blumenthal's office introduced herself, and welcomed NHTCOG members to reach out to her with any concerns.

Mark Lyon delivered an announcement from Steve Silver of Eversource regarding a regional demonstration on electrical safety that will be hosted by Eversource. One display simulates contact with a live wire and is a powerful visual.

Mark Lyon also announced the upcoming FOIA training available to NHTCOG member towns and commissions. It will be held on May 30 from 7:00pm to 8:30pm at the Harwinton Town Hall. He encouraged local commission members to attend. Tom Hennick from the state FOIA Commission will deliver the training.

Town by Town Issues and Updates by COG Members.

Barbara Henry announced that Roxbury is adding bathrooms and a kitchen to the municipal pavilion. She also stated that the town was successful in obtaining a CHRO waiver for a local road project; however, the waiver was contingent upon one contractor completing all of the work. Bob Valentine briefly reported on the meeting in Hartford that morning. He also said Goshen's budget discussions have included a variety of options including the possibilities of a supplemental bill or releasing the personal property tax bill at a later date. Michael Criss reported that Harwinton's town budget will likely result in a flat mill rate but they are considering a supplemental bill process. For Barkhamsted, Don Stein announced a 3.57% or 1 mill increase to the town budget. Wade Cole reported that Hartland's bridge project has started. Pat Mechare said Canaan's new emergency services building should get a temporary CO this week, which will fulfill the STEAP grant. The town is mulling options for the old firehouse and is also looking for a part time Parks & Recreation director for summer activities. Ted Shafer announced the start of the library expansion project. They expect the current bridge project to be completed in a month. He also noted that Burlington had a good experience with the

Hartford Marathon Foundation's recent road race and encouraged other member towns to work with them. Bruce Adams reported on his budget hearing last week. The budget does not include the proposed shift of teachers' pension to municipalities but it does include the proposed increase to the resident trooper program. He noted that the area private schools and new rehabilitation facility have promised \$20,000 per institution towards emergency services. He also noted that the welcome center and public bathroom are nearly complete and several new businesses are opening in the village center. Laurie Bessette said Winchester's budget vote will be on May 27. Mark Lyon announced Washington's budget is going to meeting next Thursday with a \$300,000 increase. Their Board of Finance is considering closing the gap with good tax collection and existing fund balance.

Request for Approval of RPI Funded Broadband Project Coordinator Consultant.

Mark Lyon explained that the Broadband Consultant Selection committee met and interviewed four candidates, eventually choosing Felicia Jones from Falls Village. While the grant funding has been allocated to NHCOC, discussion about the state budget cuts and the Governor's proposed rescissions followed. The grant is for \$200,000 and the consultant line item is \$134,000 over a 16 month period. Members discussed the merits of moving forward under uncertain budget futures. On a motion by Don Stein, seconded by Barbara Henry, the NHCOC unanimously voted to support the selection of the consultant but to wait for funding confirmation before executing the contract and to permit the Executive Committee to finalize the agreement.

Potential Projects for Submission to OPM for Funding Under the Responsible Growth and Transit Oriented Development Grant Program. Since OPM has requested another round of applications for funding under this program, Rick Lynn asked if Council members wished the COG staff to re-submit applications that were not funded in the previous round including a) construction funding for the Regional Animal Shelter, and b) Regional Food Hub implementation. Following a brief discussion, and on a motion by Leo Paul, seconded by Bruce Adams, the NHCOC voted unanimously to develop and re-submit the two applications.

ConnDOT Municipal Aging Grant Program

a. Overview of Program and Request by the Northwestern CT Transit District. Carol Deane briefly summarized the program. Although the state budget has not been finalized, Carol requested commitment signatures from the NWTDT towns for the Municipal Aging Grant program which provides matching state grant funds to enhance the transit services at the local level.

b. Request for NHCOC to Continue to Serve as Applicant for Towns Served by Geer. Rick Lynn explained that the NHCOC has served as the official applicant for this grant in the past to facilitate the services provided by Geer. On a motion by Leo Paul and seconded by Michael Criss, the request was unanimously approved.

Presentation of Draft Regional Trail Map and On-line Map Viewer. Tim Abbott of the Housatonic Valley Association explained the ConnDOT-funded regional trails project is progressing. They are working on both an expandable PDF map and an online interactive map showing public access trails in the region along with a trails connectivity assessment. He noted the valuable input from the regional trails committee as well as concerns raised about public access and marketing of some trails. He noted that, if trail owners expressed concern, such trails will not be shown publicly. The map will not be public until NHCOC approves it. Several COG members asked if particular community members or trails had been included. Ryan Williams projected the draft ArcGIS online map of the regional trails system. The map shows publicly-accessible trails that will each have a pop-up menu. That menu will describe the trail, trail distance, known allowed uses, and a link to the trail maintainer's website. Designated by a traditional icon, the parking areas will also have a pop-up that includes a photo and notes about parking and important information. This information would also be accessible on mobile technology through an app (dependent on mobile cell service). They noted that using ArcGIS online provides long-term flexibility for hosting the web map, updating information, and access by the public. When the trails map is more complete, HVA will ask for review by NHCOC members. Barbara Henry commented that Roxbury put 911 numbers on trail heads to facilitate search and rescue operations.

Overview of High Resolution Aerial Photography Available from Recent Statewide Flight and Demonstration of Google Streetview. Joanna Wozniak-Brown provided a hand-out describing how NHCOC members can access the latest 2016 aerial photography completed last spring for the state. The new photography offers the highest resolution publically available and completed so far. The maps can be accessed via CT Environmental Conditions Online, a website through UConn. This information could be of interest to municipal commissions, especially planning and zoning. The UConn website, Map and Geographic Information Center (MAGIC), has a comparison feature to show neighborhood change over time.

Also, she reviewed the utility of Google Street View, another free web-based tool. Street View can be used to review roads, frontage, building facades, sign improvements, pedestrian safety measures, etc. A hand-out described all of the potential uses as well as the website addresses.

Regional Transportation Planning.

a. Request for Endorsement of Proposed Unified Transportation Planning Work Program for FY 2018 and 2019. Rick Lynn requested endorsement for the proposed Unified Transportation Work Program. The plan is for two years and includes transportation-related tasks such as administering the Public Works Equipment Cooperative, implementing the Regional Transportation Plan, and coordinating the regional road supervisor meetings. In addition to those tasks, the plan also includes special projects such as additional planning for the proposed regional transportation hub in Torrington, a robust website for the regional trail map, researching pavement management software and the possibility of a regionally coordinated management program. On a motion by Barbara Henry, seconded by Pat Mechare, the NHCOC unanimously approved a resolution endorsing the Unified Transportation Planning Work Program for FY 2018 and 2019.

b. Request by ConnDOT for Endorsement of Proposed Amendment to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program Pertaining to Repair of an Eroded Embankment along Lake Waramaug Brook in the Town of Warren. Rick Lynn conveyed Craig Nelson's urgency on this project. On a motion by Michael Criss, seconded by Don Stein, the amendment was unanimously approved. Barbara Henry requested that the intersection on Route 69 at the Roxbury/Bridgewater town line be added to the ConnDOT needs list.

Administrative Items

- a. Approval of Minutes for Meeting of April 13, 2017. On a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes were unanimously approved.
- b. Approval of Financial Statement for 3/2017. On a motion duly made and seconded, the financial statement was unanimously approved.
- c. Nominating Committee Recommendations for NHCOC Officers and Executive Committee Members for FY 2017-2018. Wade Cole, Nominating Committee Chairman, reviewed the Nominating Committee Memo proposing the following slate of officers: Mark Lyon, Chairman; Bruce Adams, Vice Chairman; Leo Paul, Secretary; and Bob Valentine, Treasurer; with Don Stein and Craig Nelson recommended to serve on the Executive Committee as at-large members. The NHCOC will vote on the proposed Officers and Executive Committee at the June meeting.

Committee Updates As Needed.

Michael Criss provided a description of the Legislative Committee's recent actions, including the May 10 meeting with Northeast COG and state legislators. Earlier today, COST hosted a legislative meeting in which the latest efforts on the state budget were discussed. NHCOC members discussed issues important to the small towns including unfunded mandates, the resident state trooper program, and state aid. They also discussed budget deficit reduction efforts that have been proposed including tolls, teacher pension funding responsibilities, and state layoffs.

Mark Lyon reported that he attended the public meeting at the Northwest Connecticut Community College

where CSCU President Mark Ojackian discussed the proposed administrative consolidation of the CSCU system. The President explained they are not looking to close NWCC or move the college president of NWCC, especially since it is the only college in the region. They are attempting to deal with cuts from the state by adjusting administrative operations and consolidations of some community colleges.. NHCOC members expressed interest in having President Ojackian attend a future meeting of the NHCOC.

Other Business as Raised by Members and Adjournment

No other business was raised and the meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

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