

MINUTES OF THE NHCOG MEETING OF February 8, 2018

Members or Representatives in Attendance:

Barkhamsted, Don Stein	Canaan, Henry Todd
Harwinton, Michael Criss	Kent, Bruce Adams
Litchfield, Leo Paul	Tom Weik, Morris
Norfolk, Matthew Riiska	North Canaan, Charles Perotti
Roxbury, Barbara Henry	Salisbury, Curtis Rand
Sharon, Brent Colley	Torrington, Elinor Carbone
Warren, Craig Nelson	Winchester, Bob Geiger

Others in Attendance:

Anthony Lorenzetti, UConn; Dena Castricone and Brad Davis, Murtha Cullina LLP; Matthew Gereg, PMSI; Felicia Jones, NWConneCT; Wiley Wood, Norfolk; Mike Muszynski and Zachary McKeown, CCM; Kathryn Dube, COST; Bernie Harrington, League of Women Voters of Litchfield County; 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 Vice-Chairman Bruce Adams at 10:06 a.m.

Bruce Adams invited audience members to introduce themselves and they did so.

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

Most chief elected officials reported that they are working on their municipal budgets.

Don Stein reported that the state increased the overhead rate for the resident trooper program, raising the total cost to \$220,000 per year. The town is seriously concerned about losing this public safety official. If they lose the resident trooper, they will also lose the town constable.

Bob Geiger said he appreciated the attendance and support at the renovated mill building for the recent Economic Summit.

Elinor Carbone announced that the city Board of Education decided to close one of the elementary schools. They are also having public hearings about the connection of the Woodridge Lake Sewer District to the Torrington sewer program. Connecticut state agencies, the Department of Health and the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, have been involved.

Bruce Adams thanked Jocelyn Ayer for coordinating the recent Economic Summit and said he was impressed with the renovated Mad River Lofts. He also noted the large influx of tourists to see the frozen and blocked Housatonic River and expressed appreciation to Rep. Brian Ohler for his efforts as the Public Information contact for the ice/flooding issue.

Cybersecurity Issues and Risk Management Strategies for Municipalities in the Northwest Hills.

Brent Colley introduced Brad Davis and Dena Castricone from Murtha Cullina LLP, Attorneys at Law and stated that towns should be mindful of cyber security risks, especially with the increased use of wireless networks.

Dena Castricone explained the common issues of hacking: malware (e.g. ransomware), hacking, denial of service, and business email scams (wire transfers and W-2 phishing). Municipalities are often targets

because of the large financial transactions, employee data, and vendor/subcontractor payment obligations. She also explained that in the event of a security breach, municipalities have certain obligations under CT Statute 36a-701b.

To reduce risk, municipalities should train staff, conduct a vulnerability assessment, and create a security and interruption plan. The best defense is a frequent and effective back up plan. Hiring an IT Security professional may reduce costs. The municipal IT vendor may or may not be qualified to do the security assessment and planning. If towns utilize CIRMA's insurance, they may have cyber coverage.

Barbara Henry commented that CIRMA will visit your town and discuss this topic with the municipal staff if requested.

Brent Colley asked about IT security when dealing with outside vendors. Attorney Castricone suggested that the town create a questionnaire with IT specific questions for the vendor to answer such as how they store their sensitive information. She also said to check on vendor/contractors that have automatic renewals to make sure they submit answers to the questionnaire. Towns may also require vendors/subcontractors to have cybersecurity insurance.

Rick Lynn asked if there is specialized training or credentialing to look for during the selection of IT security professionals. Attorney Castricone suggested recommendations from other towns, asking the IT professional if they have experience with municipalities/government agencies, and their trusted vendors.

Considerations in the Municipal Acquisition and Use of "Your Speed Is" Signs. Tony Lorenzetti, with Introductory Comments by Bruce Adams.

At the request of other Kent selectmen, Bruce Adams started to research the cost and desirability of responsive "Your Speed Is" signs. He stated that Raz Alexe from Litchfield's DPW has already conducted similar research. Since a number of towns in the region have expressed interest in possibly purchasing such signs, Bruce Adams encouraged Tony Lorenzetti PE, from UCONN Technology Transfer Center to attend today's meeting.

Tony Lorenzetti stated that as part of the Technology Transfer Team at UConn, he assists municipalities with the implementation of road safety strategies to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on local roads. He explained that these responsive signs are a proven technology to reduce speeds. These signs can be solar-powered and set up to wirelessly check the battery levels and collect the speed data. Installations along state roads require state permits.

Don Stein asked about advantages/disadvantages of permanent vs. mobile sign locations. Tony Lorenzetti responded that research has indicated continued effectiveness of the stationary signs. Signs should be placed at approximate one minute driving intervals. Responsive signs can also be set to stealth mode and acquire information without flashing to drivers.

Bob Geiger said the signs entering Winsted have been effective, especially on the wider entrance from Route 44. The signs are set to flash very brightly at excessive speeds.

Mike Criss commented that Harwinton has three permanent and one mobile speed sign. In addition to the signs, an enhanced level of enforcement is needed, particularly during the summer months.

Tony Lorenzetti stated ConnDOT will require traffic data for municipal requests for a lower speed limit. The UConn Technology Transfer has an equipment loan program and traffic counters as does NHCOCG. Other equipment like a ball-bank indicator will assess appropriate speeds on a curve. Towns can install

advisory/warning sign on local roads without state approval but they can no longer install the rapid flashing beacons.

Barbara Henry explained Roxbury installed 4 speed responsive signs but three were damaged within one week. Recently the town asked the state to install a crosswalk from town hall to the store across the street but could not meet the state requirements for the crosswalk.

Request for NHCOC Acceptance of Proposal from BL Companies for Preparation of a Regional Transit Center Connectivity Plan. Mayor Carbone explained that following a RFP process by the COG, BL Companies has emerged as the preferred consultant to conduct a regional transit center connectivity plan, a strategy recommended in the Regional Transportation Plan. The Hendy Manufacturing/Stone Container property would be the subject of the study.

Funding for the study would be carry-over funds from the COG's FTA planning allocation. On a motion by Leo Paul, seconded by Mike Criss, the proposal was unanimously approved.

Example Town Ordinance to Address Short Term Rentals. Jocelyn Ayer explained that the example ordinance provided in the Board packet is a response to local planning and zoning commission concerns about the increased rentals of apartments or rooms through online rental companies such as Airbnb. She researched this issue and prepared a white paper discussing the impacts and issues surrounding short term rentals and the ways that municipalities are dealing with them. The example ordinance addresses many of the issues that arise and could be considered as possible solutions by our member towns. The goal is to allow for tourism but still protect neighbors and encourage safety measures. The ordinance includes an annual permit fee, addresses safety concerns, and requires a contact person.

Bruce Adams asked if this ordinance addressed the concerns of some local bed and breakfast establishments about unfair competition from short term rentals which are not currently regulated in the way that they are. Jocelyn Ayer responded that such an ordinance addresses some of these fairness concerns.

Craig Nelson noted the Warren Planning & Zoning Commission is currently working with an attorney on a zoning regulation to address short term rentals and events held on these properties. The town is currently involved in a lawsuit stemming from a property used as a short term rental and wedding event location. Bob Geiger noted an increase in short term rentals around Highland Lake.

Request for Endorsement of Proposal for SustainableCT Summer Intern. Jocelyn Ayer.

Jocelyn Ayer discussed the potential for a Sustainable CT intern. If available, the intern would be paid by Sustainable CT and supervised by NHCOC. The intern would assist our interested member towns to implement their Sustainable CT certifications and other items listed in the proposal. On a motion by Barbara Henry, seconded by Curtis Rand, the proposal to accept the internship was unanimously approved.

Administrative Items

- a. Approval of Minutes for Regular Meeting of January 11, 2018. On a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes were unanimously approved.
- b. Approval of Financial Statement for 12/2017. On a motion duly made and seconded, the financial statement was unanimously approved.
- c. Approval of NHCOC Dues for FY 2018-2019. Rick Lynn stated that the Executive Committee recommends maintaining the local dues at a rate of 80 cents/capita. On a motion duly made and seconded, the dues rate was unanimously approved.

- d. Approval of Regional Service Grant Resolution. Rick Lynn explained that this resolution is needed to receive this grant. On a motion duly made and seconded, the resolution was unanimously approved.
- e. Approval of Resolution Pertaining to County Equivalency Designation. Rick Lynn explained that the NHCOC board previously endorsed this designation, but OPM requested a formal resolution. This county equivalency designation would enhance access to federal funding now reserved for counties. It will also allow the aggregation of Census data along COG boundaries. On a motion duly made and seconded, the resolution was unanimously approved.

Committee Updates

- a. Legislative Committee and Request for Adoption of Legislative Priorities for 2018. Bruce Adams expressed appreciation for Michael Criss' presentation and Rick Lynn's organization at the recent legislative breakfast. Michael Criss said he'd like to have another legislative committee meeting soon with NEECOG. A particular issue of concern is town-aid road funding and if the revocation by the state violates the state's bond agreement. Don Stein endorsed hosting the meeting in Hartford with state representation from both regions. Michael Criss asked for approval of the draft legislative priorities. On a motion by Henry Todd, seconded by Don Stein, the legislative priorities were unanimously approved.

- b. DEMHS Region 5. Bruce Adams said that his experience with DEHMS Region 5 for "Ice Jam 2018" was great. He thanked nearby towns for providing equipment and support. Rick Lynn reported that there is a meeting of the REPT on March 12. He encouraged member towns to sign their 2017 DEMHS Memoranda of Understanding if they had not done so already to ensure continued homeland security grant funding.

Jocelyn Ayer thanked NHCOC members for attending the Economic Development Summit, and announced that the Comprehensive Economic Development Plan (CEDS) is scheduled for adoption in April. The CEDS plan has initiatives that will require investment from public and/or private sources, and she suggested that municipalities consider establishing a line item for economic development as they develop their annual budgets. She can provide specific cost estimates for the projects if necessary. Some ideas include the Civic Lift (community social engagement platform) and Ben Paletsky's idea of establishing the region as a rural innovations lab.

Michael Criss asked if towns could share any ordinances or regulations they have on wood-burning furnaces. He has been contacted by CT Residents against Wood Smoke Pollution. In his experience, issues with wood smoke result from improper installations and CT DEEP inspections can help rectify them.

Mike Muszynski from CCM said the legislative session started and he will work to keep everyone informed of important issues. He also announced that CCM created an app to communicate about upcoming hearings.

Kathryn Dube noted that COST is continuing its regional school working group. They hope to receive guidance from the state Department of Education on the minimum budget requirements. She asked for towns to offer specific questions to direct towards the department.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.