

## MINUTES OF THE NHCOG MEETING OF September 13, 2018

### Members or Representatives in Attendance:

Barkhamsted, Don Stein	Cornwall, Gordon Ridgway
Goshen, Bob Valentine	Hartland, Wade Cole
Kent, Bruce Adams	Litchfield, Leo Paul
Morris, Tom Weik	New Hartford, Dan Jerram
Norfolk, Matt Riiska	North Canaan, Charles Perotti
Roxbury, Barbara Henry	Salisbury, Curtis Rand
Sharon, Brent Colley	Torrington, Elinor Carbone
Warren, Craig Nelson	Washington, Mark Lyon
Winchester, Bob Geiger	

### Others in Attendance:

Deirdre DiCara, FISHNWCT; Nancy Cannavo, CHH; Catherine Awwad, NWRWIB; Felicia Jones, NorthwestConneCT; Ellen Graham, Sen. Richard Blumenthal's office; Kathryn Dube, COST; Mike Muszynski, CCM; Sara Radasci, CT DOT; Steve Silver, Eversource; Ella Clark, Sharon; Gertrude O'Sullivan, Foundation for Community Health; Maria Horn, candidate for State House; Bill Turley, DEHMS; Priscilla Pavel, Cornwall; John Dunham, CTDOT; Jay Case, CT State Representative; Jocelyn Ayer, Joanna Wozniak-Brown and Rick Lynn, NHCOG staff; Media Representatives

### Call to Order and Opportunity for Public Comment. Bruce Adams, Chairman.

The meeting, held at the NHCOG office, was called to order by Chairman Bruce Adams at 10:05 a.m.

Bruce Adams welcomed members and invited public comment.

Bill Turley introduced himself as he will be serving as the interim DEHMS Region 5 coordinator now that Tom Vannini has retired.

Maria Horn introduced herself as a candidate for state representative for Connecticut's 65<sup>th</sup> District.

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

Leo Paul said Litchfield has made progress on the potential movement of the town hall. Renovating Bantam Annex into affordable housing will also be on the upcoming referendum. He also announced a COST Conference on environmental issues on October 23 and invited other members to attend.

Wade Cole announced that Hartland is hoping to open the Peck Orchard bridge soon.

Bob Geiger stated that the Holabird Avenue bridge project should finish by the end of October. They are also hoping to rehabilitate the school. Bruce Adams congratulated the Winchester team on their progress in the past year.

Don Stein explained that Barkhamsted hopes to connect the sewers from Winsted into the shopping center at the town line. The town will have a ribbon cutting for a newly renovated store on Route 44.

Mayor Carbone announced a couple of grant awards, a Community Connectivity Grant for downtown enhancement and an East Main Street Corridor Management Study. She thanked NHCOG members for

their support of the grant applications. The city will be seeking bond approval at an upcoming referendum for road maintenance and the regional animal control facility.

Curtis Rand announced that Salisbury also received a Community Connectivity grant to connect the school to the town shelter and add signs for the fire department exit. They finished the Rural Collector program for Twin Lakes Road despite programmatic challenges. They will be looking for bids for phosphorus improvement in the water treatment facility. In lieu of his later agenda item, he announced the upcoming Household Hazardous Waste Day on October 13 at 107 Arthur Street in Torrington. He asked for members to volunteer for the event.

Charlie Perotti announced the recent hire of a town attorney and the partnership with CivicLift to create a municipal website. Beer made by the new brewery in town will be available for Fall Festival on October 27.

Matt Riiska explained they are working through bids for bridge work, updating their POCD, and a traffic calming study. Norfolk Foundation is funding a charrette for downtown improvements. The affordable housing units run by Foundation for Norfolk Living are now at full capacity. The Foundation is looking for a mix of additional affordable and market rate buildings to purchase.

Gordon Ridgway explained that three bridges, including the covered bridge, were under repair. There was an increase in elementary school enrollment this year. He also informed members that COST is offering a ½ membership price for small towns and that it is a helpful way to participate in state policy affecting small towns.

Tom Weik announced the Tour Des Farms, a fundraiser for Connecticut Resource Conservation & Development (CT RC&D). The bicycle tour stops at several farms in the region with van support to courier your purchases to the final stop. There will also be a pie event at the finish.

Bob Valentine explained that Goshen is updating its employee job descriptions, payroll matrix, and evaluation process. He thanked Bruce Adams for the recommendation of a consultant. They are concluding several paving projects and agreed with earlier comments about the high cost of the Rural Collector program. He relayed the town's high score from the Yankee Institute as they prepare for the yearly audit with a positive fund balance. New safety signs have been installed at the rotary.

Mark Lyon announced the completion of three bridge projects and two successful arts and culture experiences in town.

Craig Nelson relayed that Warren lost its last operating dairy farm in town. The town finished paving and chip sealing for this year, and purchased a new truck.

Dan Jerram said the town has new trucks and a tractor and is also doing paving and bridge work. They recently replaced four employees. He explained some challenges working with different divisions of ConnDOT. The town also renovated the town garage and installed new courts at Callahan Park.

Barbara Henry noted the zoning commission allowed the town's first package store. They are working on their POCD and looking forward to the first annual jazz festival. The town is sharing a Resident Trooper with Bridgewater. She asked for input regarding International and Freightliner trucks.

Brent Colley announced two successful events, an art walk and an archaeology talk presented by Craig Nelson. The town is actively following HealthQuest's management of Sharon Hospital's maternity ward.

The Challenge of Homelessness in the Northwest Hills. Rep. Jay Case; Deirdre DiCara, FISHNWCT; and Nancy Cannavo, CHH.

Rep. Jay Case introduced Deirdre DiCara of FISHNWCT and Nancy Cannavo of The Gathering Place. He explained that the contributing factors for homelessness are many and that there is a significant homeless population in the region. There are only two homeless shelters in the region, Torrington and Winchester. Rep Case stated that at the moment, housing agencies typically serve larger geographic areas but redefining those boundaries to the COG boundaries would increase efficiency. Challenges to housing in the region include: awareness and education, transportation, housing for animals, and lack of affordable housing. These agencies could use donations of food, business clothes, sleeping bags, laundry detergent, and toiletries. Arethusa Farms donates milk on a weekly basis.

Nancy Cannavo shared the available homelessness statistics and Deirdre DiCara explained the conflicting federal definitions of homelessness. They both explained the various programs that help the homeless population including FISHNWCT, The Gathering Place, 2-1-1, and the Susan B. Anthony project.

The Gathering Place, a nonprofit founded in 2014, serves as the CAN for Litchfield County to help those facing homelessness. It receives funding from the Draper Fund and is staffed by volunteers from other agencies. People from all towns throughout the region are using these organizations.

The speakers expressed gratitude for the support they received and welcomed NHCOC members to tour their facilities. There will be several events in November including the Rally Day to End Hunger and Homelessness on the Saturday before Thanksgiving with an open-house, coat drive, pasta lunch, and cardboard box sleep-out.

A discussion followed about the role Winchester and Torrington play as the urban areas in the region without access to support received by large urban areas in the state.

Members applauded Deirdre DiCara and Nancy Cannavo for their tremendous work.

Update on Intergovernmental Agreement for the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board. Catherine Awwad, NWRWIB Executive Director.

Catherine Awwad from NWRWIB brought the updated and re-drafted agreement for municipalities. Members had previously expressed concern about the ambiguity of liability within the contract language. All 41 towns must commit to the contract for the federal grant to remain in place. She offered to attend any local meetings should it help. Don Stein asked for an electronic version of the red-lined contract. In reference to the earlier presentation, she explained that NWRWIB had piloted a "secure jobs" program that is specifically designed to help avoid homelessness, which was funded by Melville Charitable Trust.

Request for Endorsement of Municipal Applications for Funding under ConnDOT's LOTCIP and Rural Collector Funding Programs.

a. LOTCIP

- 1) Torrington West Street, Torrington
- 2) Holabird Avenue, Winchester
- 3) George Washington Tpke, Burlington

b. Rural Collector Program

- 1) Bulls Bridge Road Rehabilitation, Kent
- 2) Fern Avenue Rehabilitation, Litchfield

On a motion duly made and seconded, these applications were unanimously endorsed.

DEHMS Update.

- a. Approved REPT Spending Plan for the 2018 Homeland Security Grant. Mark Lyon said the spending plan was approved by the REPT board. Bruce Adams inquired about a matching grant for the purchase of a flat-bottom boat. Bill Turley explained that grants are for regional assets and Bruce Adams indicated it could be used by other municipalities. Further discussion about DEHMS grants followed.
- b. Request for Authorization to Sign the MOU for the 2018 Homeland Security Grant. Rick Lynn said this is necessary for the NHCOC to serve as the fiduciary for Region 5. On a motion made by Leo Paul, seconded by Barbara Henry, the COG unanimously voted to approve the proposed MOU.

Transportation Planning Update: Torrington's East Main Street Corridor Management Study and Community Connectivity Grant. Mayor Carbone.

Mayor Carbone said her previous update on City activities addressed this agenda item.

CEDS Implementation Update. Jocelyn Ayer.

- a. New Jobs Hub and Event Website Launched. Jocelyn Ayer announced that the new CEDS plan is available on the Northwest CT Chamber of Commerce website. The region is moving forward on several of the tasks including the regional website called DiscoverLitchfieldHills.com, created by Civic Lift, which is now available. She asked towns to review the distributed video that explains the benefits of the website and share with potential interested residents. She asked that towns assist with populating the events and business listings. Key features of the website include restaurants, hotels/B&Bs, the regional interactive trails map, and a jobs hub. Business owners can click on "Places" then click "Submit a Place".

Canaan (Falls Village) is using the Civic Lift platform to re-do their municipal website. Henry Todd conveyed via Jocelyn Ayer that he's had a pleasant experience working with Civic Lift. Cornwall chose a stand-alone website, created by Civic Lift, which will coordinate with the regional website.

The new regional website will be marketed broadly using EDA funding. Due to time constraints, Jocelyn asked the COG Board to consider authorizing the Executive Committee to approve the Selection Committee's recommendation for the consultant of the new marketing campaign. On a motion by Leo Paul, seconded by Wade Cole, the motion passed unanimously.

- b. Northwest ConneCT – cell phone dead zone mapping and resident survey

Jocelyn Ayer encouraged members to submit their maps showing known cell phone dead zone areas. She also invited residents to take the survey for service. She will share the link to the survey again.

She also announced an informative session on Agri-Tourism for towns to take place on October 17 at the COG with speakers from the CT Farm Bureau.

Status of Natural Hazard Mitigation Plans in the Northwest Hills Region and Request for

Authorization to Submit Grant Application. Joanna Wozniak-Brown.

Joanna Wozniak-Brown announced the availability of disaster preparedness grants through FEMA, with applications due on October 17. Towns are required to have a current Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan to qualify for selected grants. She explained that the former nine Northwest CT towns should consider applying for a FEMA planning grant to update their Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan so that their Plan does not expire. She asked the applicable towns to sign the previously distributed commitment form if they had not done so already. The former Litchfield Hills towns will need to apply in 2020. Joanna stated that she will pursue the development and submission of a planning grant application on behalf of those towns that sign the commitment form.

Administrative Items

- a. Approval of Minutes for Meeting of July 12, 2018 and August 22, 2018. On a motion duly made and seconded, all voted in favor.
- b. Approval of Financial Statement for June and July 2018. On a motion duly made and seconded, all voted in favor.

Committee Reports and Updates

- a. Public Works Equipment Cooperative. Wade Cole said the Sharon catch basin cleaner is scheduled to be replaced and the road supervisors will be meeting soon for a demonstration of the recommended model.
- b. Regional Animal Facility. Torrington will be seeking bonding approval for construction of the facility in November.
- c. Recycling Advisory Committee. Don Stein said selection of the MIRA replacement is moving slowly and asked if MIRA should be on the next agenda. Members agreed with inviting Tom Kirk to an upcoming meeting for an update on MIRA..

Other Business as Raised by Members and Adjournment

There was no other business raised and the meeting was adjourned at 11:57 a.m.