

## MINUTES OF THE NHCOG MEETING OF October 10, 2019

### Members or Representatives in Attendance:

Barkhamsted, Don Stein	Burlington, Ted Shafer
Canaan, Henry Todd	Cornwall, Gordon Ridgway
Goshen, Bob Valentine	Kent, Bruce Adams
Litchfield, Leo Paul	North Canaan, Charlie Perotti
Norfolk, Matt Riiska	Roxbury, Barbara Henry
Salisbury, Curtis Rand	Sharon, Brent Colley
Torrington, Elinor Carbone	Warren, Craig Nelson
Washington, Mark Lyon	Winchester, Bob Geiger

Others in Attendance: Fran Stoffer and Sandy Zielinski of the [Women's & Girls Fund](#); Katherine Dube, COST; Hedy Ayers, Eversource; John Tarrant, First Selectman Candidate for the Town of Litchfield; Robert Rubbo, Torrington Area Health District; Janell Mullen, Jocelyn Ayer, 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 Bruce Adams at 10:03 a.m.

Bruce Adams asked for Public Comment regarding items not on the agenda.

Fran Stoffer and Sandy Zielinski of the [Women's & Girls Fund](#), a fund of the Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation, introduced themselves and handed out pamphlets. The Women & Girls Fund awards grants to develop economic self-sufficiency for women by means of education (such as coding for a cause), financial literacy, workplace skills, and social services. They awarded 10 scholarships this year.

Hedy Ayers of Eversource announced the Home Energy Solutions Program offered by [Energize CT](#) that is available this time of year. She also reviewed the storm safety checklist.

Bruce Adams asked about the insulation rebate program. He had received one and now a constituent was not able to get one. Hedy Ayers said she would look into it.

### Toast of Appreciation to Bruce Adams, Mark Lyon, and Leo Paul for their years of Public Service as First Selectman and NHCOG Members.

The toast was led by Barbara Henry. Each of the retiring members offered their remarks with fond comments offered to the NHCOG.

### Presentation on Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) by Robert Rubbo, the Torrington Area Health District Director.

Robert Rubbo presented on the topic of Eastern Equine Encephalitis or "triple E" as a few cases have showed up in the state. EEE is transmitted through mosquitos. The Litchfield County area is not as susceptible as other parts of the state, such as the Southeastern Region, as shown on a [map provided](#).

A memo from the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) was sent out to schools advising superintendents not to cancel twilight activities, such as after school sports. Robert Rubbo mentioned that mosquitoes do no bite at 50 degrees or lower. The concern is expected to go away within a week or two when a hard frost occurs.

Ted Shafer asked what efforts the State is trying to take in face of his outbreak. The speaker reported that 15 additional trapping and testing stations would be installed in Connecticut next year.

Leo Paul asked if EEE has always been an issue in the state. Robert Rubbo said yes, but this year it was garnering a particular amount of attention because of the number of cases in the state. EEE gets people's attention because of the fatality rate in its cases, which is 60%.

Addressing CT's Waste Crisis: Overview of Zero Waste Project by Attorney Kevin Budris of [Conservation Law Foundation \(CLF\)](#)

Attorney Budris of CLF introduced himself and began the presentation by stating that municipalities are faced with "a waste crisis" and will need to shift the approach from outdated methods of waste removal to a proactive approach that tackles how waste is reduced in the first place.

Attorney Budris introduced statistics, such as 2.8 million tons of waste is produced in the state of CT per year. About 1/3 of that is organic/food waste while 40% involves glass. Single-stream recycling used to be profitable for municipalities, but it is not anymore due to material contamination and declining markets. MSW tip fees now range from \$60-\$90 per ton, and single stream recycling is approaching \$20-\$50 per ton for disposal.

Attorney Budris spoke in support of an enhanced [Bottle Bill](#) which would increase the deposit to \$0.10. At the current level of \$0.05, CT has a return rate of 48%. In states where the deposit is \$0.10, return rates improves to about 90%.

Attorney Budris also encouraged an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) approach which shifts the burden onto the producer to pay for disposal or recycling. This has been applied in Connecticut for electronics, paint, and mattresses. Attorney Budris mentioned the plastic bag ban and how some towns have passed their own ordinances to go beyond the state restrictions. For example, Norwalk has become the first municipality in CT to ban polystyrene, better known as Styrofoam.

Ted Shafer asked about what is being done to reduce the plastics problem. Attorney Budris suggested minimizing the use of single-use plastic containers, and amending the Bottle Bill to strengthen recycling efforts.

Overview of Regional and Statewide Solid Waste Solutions by Kristen Brown, the VP of Municipal Partnerships, Waste Zero which is under contract to DEEP.

Kristen Brown began her presentation by emphasizing the need to reduce the amount of waste in the state as initiated by the [SMART Program](#). Similar to Attorney Budris' point, she mentioned that the cost of waste disposal is paid by residents and is getting increasingly more expensive. Connecticut relies heavily on outdated incinerators.

Kristen Brown mentioned that unit-based pricing is a way to incentivize a reduction in overall household waste. She said that when consumers are not paying for their waste, they are not thinking about it. She mentioned witnessing behavioral changes as a result of policy changes. The only example in CT of a town that has gone to the unit-based pricing is Stonington. Mansfield has a pseudo-system in place.

Kristen Brown proposed shifting to unit-based pricing on the regional scale. Under this program, consumers purchase bags intended for household trash in local supermarkets for a fee of about \$1.75.

Leo Paul mentioned that the biggest issue for curbside pick-up communities is that the citizens are already paying for their waste disposal through tip fees and curbside pick-up and would see unit-based pricing as an added cost. He asked if they were to take a regional approach, how would the towns see the money returned?

Curtis Rand added that Salisbury is already at a 33% recycling rate. Residents could possibly see this as Salisbury subsidizing the other towns that are less inclined to recycle.

Craig Nelson added that Warren is comprised of 25% weekenders from New York. He said they don't always

participate in the recycling scheme that is in place. He also imparted that a difficulty of regionalizing waste disposal is that the waste town-by-town is getting hauled to different destinations.

Gordon Ridgway mentioned that the single area where the budget increased overtime in Cornwall has been sanitation and disposal costs so there might be opportunity to rethink our ways.

Kristen Brown summarized and concluded her presentation by stating that the main goal of the SMART program is to reduce waste costs.

#### Introduction of Melissa Evans, the Safety Circuit Rider of UConn's Training and Technical Assistance Center and Summary of Program Assistance Available to COG member towns.

Melissa Evans introduced herself and mentioned that the training and technical assistance center is back up and operating. Melissa Evans has taken the place of Tony Lorenzetti. Further information about the center is on the [T2 site](#). The equipment loan program is in full-swing. She mentioned there were trainings coming up and to email her topics for 2020.

#### Update by DEMHS on Key Steps for Municipal Officials in Severe Weather Preparedness and Overview of "Local Emergency Management Director and Municipal Office Handbook" by Region 5 Coordinator, John Field.

John Field pointed to the updated [Local Emergency Management Director & Municipal Official Handbook version 3.1](#), which was updated August 2019. He mentioned that it includes a lot of information to guide local authorities during emergencies. One of the major updates addresses where to put debris after storm events. DEEP has had a lot of input and requires that debris management sites get pre-approved.

Another topic of the Handbook is cyber security and the reporting process that a municipality should take should there be a breach in their system's security.

John Field mentioned [CT Rises](#), which is an organization that gets involved after incidents. They provide an online toolkit that assists with long-term recovery after disasters. A lot of work has been done with schools for emergency preparedness.

#### Regional Transportation Planning Update by Rick Lynn.

- A. Following a brief discussion, and on a motion duly made and seconded, the NHCOCG unanimously approved extending the agreements to the existing providers of the Rural Independent Transportation Service (RITS).
- B. A handout on the status of the LOTCIP and Rural Collector Projects in Region was briefly reviewed.
- C. Following a brief discussion, the NHCOCG unanimously voted to authorize consultant negotiation and contract execution for the Torrington East Main Street Corridor Management Project.

#### NHCOCG Member discussion on OPM Request on Shared Services.

Rick Lynn referenced a Memo to the COG Board prepared by Janell Mullen on OPM's request for COG input on various shared services. Members agreed that our region already has a regionalized PSAP through Litchfield County Dispatch along with a number of other regionalized programs. Additional shared service priorities for future implementation include a Regional Animal Facility, a new Regional Transit Center, and implementation of a regionally coordinated fiber-optic network expansion in the area. Action on this item was tabled until the next COG meeting to consider other regional opportunities

#### Administrative Items

- a. Approval of Minutes for Meeting of September 26, 2019. On a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes were unanimously approved.
- b. Approval of Financial Statement for 8/2019. On a motion duly made and seconded, the financial statement was unanimously approved.
- c. Election of NHCOCG Officers and Executive Committee for unexpired terms in FY 2019. Craig Nelson, the Nominating Committee Chairman, recommended the following slate for the

balance of FY 2019-2020:

Chairman: Don Stein

Vice Chair: Bob Valentine

Secretary: Craig Nelson

Treasurer: Michael Criss

Additionally, per Nominating Committee recommendation, Matt Riiska and Henry Todd are to serve as at-large members on the Executive Committee . On a motion duly made and seconded, the slate of officers and at-large members for the unexpired terms in FY2019-2020 were unanimously approved.

Town by Town Issues and Updates by COG Members.

This item was tabled due to time constraints.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:17 p.m.