



## MINUTES OF THE MARCH 12, 2020 MEETING

### Members in attendance:

Don Stein, (Chairman) Barkhamsted  
Gordon Ridgway, Cornwall  
Wade Cole, Hartland  
Jean Speck, Kent  
Tom Weik, Morris  
Brent Colley, Sharon  
Charlie Perotti, No. Canaan  
Elinor Carbone, Torrington Mayor  
Bob Geiger, Winchester Town Manager

Henry Todd, Canaan  
Bob Valentine, Goshen  
Michael R. Criss, Harwinton  
Denise Raap, Litchfield  
Matt Riiska, Norfolk  
Curtis Rand, Salisbury  
Barbara Henry, Roxbury  
Jim Brinton, Washington  
Timothy Angevine, Warren

### Others in attendance:

Rick Lynn, Janell Mullen and Jocelyn Ayer, NHCOC Staff  
Rufus DeRham, Warner Theatre  
Steph Burr & Maddie Stenson, NWCT Arts Council  
Hedy Ayer, Eversource  
John Field, DEMHS  
Brian Ohler & Brian Mattiello, Charlotte Hungerford Hospital  
Maria Horn, State Representative  
Amy Tobin & Bernie Harrington, Members of Goshen EDC  
Ellen Graham, Senator Blumenthal's Office  
Betsy Gara, COST  
Media Representatives

Call to Order and Opportunity for Public Comment. Don Stein, Chairman called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM. No one from the public chose to speak.

Update on the Coronavirus Situation and Preparation in the U.S. and CT in the Event it Escalates. Robert Rubbo, MPH, Director of Health, and Leslie Polito, Public Health Nurse, Torrington Area Health District. Robert Rubbo and Leslie Polito opened by informing us that the situation is constantly changing. As of today, there have been 128,000 cases. The mortality rate is 3.4%. Ninety (90%) of the cases have been mild. The virus incubates from 2-14 days. The coronavirus mortality rate for those 80 and older is 14.8%.

In the US, there have been 1,336 cases and 38 deaths. Fifteen (15) people have recovered. Washington state, CA, and NY have been hardest hit at this point. There has been "sustained community transmission" in Southwestern CT. In CT, as of the meeting, there were 3 confirmed cases. 2 in Fairfield, 1 in Litchfield County. Currently, CT has the capacity to test 40-60 tests per day. The state epidemiologist, Matthew Carter, is currently predicting that 20-30% of people in CT will contract the coronavirus in the next 6 weeks. It is important that those with mild cases don't overwhelm the hospitals.

Public Health and EMDs (emergency management directors) have scheduled weekly calls to assess the situation. It is the Governor's recommendation in CT not to attend gatherings of more than one-hundred (100) people.

Leslie Polito mentioned the Community Guidance on the CDC's (Center for Disease Control) website that municipal leaders can use as a guide.

John Field of DEHMS (Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security) discussed the partnership with Public Health Districts. He mentioned the weekly conference calls as well as the Joint Information Center (JIC). He stated that we are out of the planning phase and into the response phase of the pandemic.

Bob Valentine asked questions about how towns can best plan for the pandemic as there are so many unknowns. He was wondering how to address planning for large upcoming events such as the Goshen Fair.

COST Legislative Priorities and Proposed Bills of Municipal Interest or Concern. Betsy Gara, Executive Director, Council of Small Towns. Betsy Gara discussed legislative efforts to respond to the coronavirus. There has been discussion of budget timelines as well as prioritizing items for the short legislative session. Betsy did mention that the municipal aid bond package should pass next week. She was under the impression that waste management and the Bottle Bill were not going to go anywhere. Maria Horn added that passing of the budget has become a very partisan issue. The legislature might not go back into session. There are currently no public hearings at the Capitol.

Recent Staff Changes at the Warner Theatre and NWC Arts Council and Update on Recent Activities. Rufus De Rham, Executive Director, Warner Theatre and Steph Burr, Executive Director, NWCT Arts Council. Rufus De Rham introduced his move to the Warner Theatre and the promotions from within at the NWCT Arts Council. The new executive director, Steph Burr, announced a few initiatives on the horizon such as the Discover Litchfield Hills co-branding and establishing cultural districts in Towns. Maddie Stenson mentioned upcoming programming including [Make Music Day](#) and [Litchfield Hills Creative Festival](#).

CEDS Implementation Activities. Jocelyn Ayer. Jocelyn mentioned the postponement of a few events. First, the workshop on Affordable Housing Plans which was scheduled for March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020 will be rescheduled. She noted that the State is now taking applications from towns for up to \$15,000 grants (first come first served) to help create municipal affordable housing plans. She is happy to help any interested municipality with the application. The 2020 NWCT Economic Development Summit planned for April 29<sup>th</sup> is now on hold.

a) Broadband Outreach and Technical Assistance. Ben Paletsky gave a brief overview of what he will be doing over the coming months to assist towns that are interested in starting to plan for how they can meet their current and future high speed broadband needs. . He suggested that member-towns create a team for their town if they do not have one already to consider the deployment of fiber options. Jocelyn passed around a sheet so each member-town could name a point person for the initiative for their town. Ben will be holding zoom video conference calls over the coming months with these point people.

b) Preparation of Regional Visitor Guides. Tim Good. Next Tim discussed the passport program which is intended to bring tourism to the region. He plans to prepare a regional booklet and 5 themed booklets to distribute 50,000 copies. Good will be visiting local businesses as a part of this effort to make them aware of the opportunity to advertise in these booklets.

Request by ConnDOT for NHCOC Endorsement of Amendments to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program Pertaining to Asset Management, Bridge Management, and Pavement Management (see Attachment A). Sara Radacsi, ConnDOT Liaison to the NHCOC. Bob Valentine motioned, Todd seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

#### Administrative Items

a. Approval of Minutes for Meeting of February 13, 2020 (see Attachment B). Don Stein motioned, Todd seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

- b. Approval of Financial Statement for January 2019 (see Attachment C). Bob Valentine motioned, Wade Cole seconded, the motion passed unanimously.
- c. Approval of Proposed 2020 Rental Rates for Public Works Equipment Cooperative (see Attachment D). Wade Cole motioned, Henry Todd seconded.
- d. Selection Committee Representatives for Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan Update. Henry Todd, Don Stein, and Jean Speck volunteered to be on the selection committee.

Town by Town Issues and Updates by COG Members.

- Chairman Don Stein of Barkhamsted announced that they were planning to move the town website from the Civil Plus platform to the more local Civic Lift platform and that he was happy to be using a more local and user friendly vendor for his municipal website.
- Bob Valentine mentioned the need for a singular community message when locally updating his community about CoVID 19.
- Jean Speck of Kent asked NHCOCG to look into the utility of applications like Asana for sharing documents.
- Chairman Don Stein cautioned about FOIA and the confluence of new technologies like Asana.
- Gordon Ridgway of Cornwall felt that we should explore the ability to teleconference into the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:59 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Janell M Mullen