

MINUTES OF THE NHTCOG MEETING OF October 8, 2020

Members or Representatives in Attendance:

Barkhamsted, Don Stein	Canaan, Henry Todd
Cornwall, Gordon Ridgway	Goshen, Bob Valentine
Hartland, Magi Winslow	Harwinton, Michael Criss
Kent, Jean Speck	Litchfield, Denise Raap
Morris, Tom Weik	Norfolk, Matt Riiska
North Canaan, Charlie Perotti	Roxbury, Barbara Henry
Torrington, Elinor Carbone	Washington, Jim Brinton
Warren, Tim Angevine	

Others in Attendance:

Steve Silver and Hedy Ayers, Eversource; Dale Spencer, BSC Group; Val Ferro; Good Earth Advisors; Sara Radacsi, CTDOT; April Chaplin, Kennedy Center; Gertrude O'Sullivan; Anne Green; Ellen Graham; Emily Armstrong; Darlene Brady; Caroline Nastro; Jennine Lupo, Congresswoman Hayes office; John Field, DEMHS Region 5; Marty Connor, ESF-14 Chair; Rick Lynn, Jocelyn Ayer, Janell Mullen, and Darlene Krukar, NHTCOG staff; Media Representatives

Call to Order and Opportunity for Public Comment. The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Don Stein at 10:02 am. Steve Silver of Eversource said that if any town leaders need to speak with him about recovery after Storm Isaias or about any other concerns, he is available.

Caroline Nastro then spoke of broadband capacity in the region. She referenced a recent letter to the editor that she sent into the Lakeville Journal. Don Stein, Chairman, responded to some of her comments and Jocelyn Ayer, NHTCOG staff, did so as well by clarifying the efforts the NHTCOG has made towards affordable high-speed broadband access in the region.

Regional Transportation Planning.

a) Update on East Main Corridor Study in Torrington. Mayor Carbone began the update by mentioning her involvement in a recent Virtual Town Hall involving the transportation study. Janell Mullen followed by outlining the project boundaries by sharing her screen to display a PowerPoint presentation. She mentioned that the project team had been working on assessing existing conditions and would soon move into the phase of identifying problem areas as a part of the corridor management study. Dale Spencer, Traffic Engineer of BSC Group, followed by highlighting the project goals, which include congestion management and increased safety. Val Ferro, Good Earth Advisors, mentioned how she had been tasked with the outreach and that this month and next would be heavily involved with gathering public input. She mentioned the [online interactive survey](#) and encouraged anyone to submit their input.

b) Request for COG endorsement of Revised Kent Streetscape Project. Jean Speck mentioned the regular meetings of the streetscape committee in town and her enthusiasm to get the project started. Michael Criss moved to endorse the project with the following motion: *The NHTCOG has confirmed that the Town of Kent has the additional funds that may be needed for the local match of the Phase 2 Kent Streetscape Project based on ConnDOT's Guidelines for federally funded projects and continues to support the project with the increased cost estimate.* Henry Todd seconded the motion. The motion to endorse the project passed unanimously.

c) Request by ConnDOT for COG Endorsement of Statewide Transportation Improvement Project Amendment for the Fern Avenue Rural Connector Project in Litchfield. Denise Raap stated that Fern

Avenue is a highly traveled “cut through” collector road between Routes 118 and 202 and needs rehabilitation. Michael Criss moved to endorse the proposed STIP amendment and Tom Weik seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

d) Request for Authorization to Pursue the Purchase of Replacement Traffic Counters with ConnDOT Planning Funds and Other Transportation Planning Opportunities. Rick Lynn stated that the regional transportation work program budgeted \$20,000 for consultant services which leaves the NHCOC with a few options. First, the NHCOC could replace the COG’s 10-year-old traffic counters with radar units. He noted newer units are much safer to set-up and record more robust data than the older counters. UConn has offered to provide training on the radar units. A second option has more of a planning focus and would be to set up temporary improvement measures, such as painted “bump-outs”, at a specific location for the purpose of assessing the need for roadway improvements. The radar traffic counters would cost up to \$10,000 and potential demonstration projects for roadway improvements could be further discussed at an upcoming meeting. Michael Criss moved and Barbara Henry seconded the motion to spend up to \$10,000 on the new radar traffic counters.

Jean Speck stated that consideration should be given to having the new traffic counters send the data to the cloud. Rick Lynn mentioned that he would explore this.

Barbara Henry asked if UConn had digital traffic counters. Rick mentioned that they did, but one would have to travel to Storrs, CT to get them. She also expressed her interest in a traffic calming demonstration project given the recent speeding truck traffic through the center of Roxbury.

The motion passed unanimously.

Request for Approval of Recommended CEDS Consultants and Update on Economic Recovery Efforts.

Jocelyn Ayer mentioned that at the last meeting the NHCOC Board had endorsed moving forward with the consultant selection process for projects that will be carried out utilizing the CARES Act funding. Requests for proposals were advertised, responses were reviewed by selection committees, and the following recommendations have been made:

American Mural Project – short videos of young workers in the region

Broadband Preliminary Engineering- Pike Telecom

Small Business Outreach- Betsy Paynter

Food Hub Sales- Megan Pabst

Jocelyn asked for NHCOC approval of the recommended consultants and authority to enter into contracts with these consultants. Henry Todd moved, and Bob Valentine seconded. the motion to approve the recommendations and the motion passed unanimously.

DEMHS Update and Status of Region 5 Long Term Recovery Committee. John Field, DEMHS Region 5 Coordinator, began the update by talking about a food distribution program, [Farms to Family Food Box](#). The State of CT has 41 trailers (there are 11,052 boxes of food in each trailer) per week of food arriving for the month of October. There is a waiting list for people to get on the list to receive this food distribution. He mentioned that Eric Oubre, ESF-6 Chair, has been instrumental in getting the regional distribution off the ground. A liaison officer from the National Guard has also been assisting with the food distribution. Additionally, John Field stated that DEMHS has been assisting with distributing masks to schools-both adult and child-sized. Phase III Opening within the state begins today. Halloween guidance has also been issued by CDC and DPH.

John Field then introduced Marty Connor, ESF 14 Chair, to update on long-term recovery initiatives which are a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Marty commented that GRI and the McChrystal Group offered a

training session to the ESF 14 Steering Committee last week. Marty mentioned that they are working on making sure duplicative work isn't taking place involving long term recovery efforts within the state. The next long-term recovery meeting is October 14th. John added that addressing unmet needs should be funneled from the local to the region to the state.

Denise Raap added that fifty (50) boxes of food and dairy that were a surplus are available to be picked up at the St. Anthony's Church, which is located at 49 South Street in Litchfield.

Chairman Stein added that the food distribution is a terrific program and commended John Field on the initiative.

Jennine Lupo from Congresswomen Hayes' office added that she would be happy to update Jahana Hayes' social media with updates about resources that are available in the region.

Update on the Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day for October 10th. Rick Lynn stated that the Collection Day is this Saturday. Fortunately, volunteers from several COG towns have agreed to help out with traffic control and registration since a record-setting crowd of over 600 participants is anticipated.

Administrative Items.

a) Approval of Minutes for September 10, 2020. Bob Valentine moved to approve the minutes of September 10, 2020 as written. Henry Todd seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

b) Approval of Financial Statement for August 2020. Bob Valentine moved and Michael Criss seconded approval of the financial statement. The motion passed unanimously.

c) Approval of Phase 2 Mapping of Critical Facilities in Region 5. Rick stated that the Regional Emergency Planning Team approved the development of standardized Parcel Mapping of all 43 towns in Region 5 to facilitate emergency management. This Phase I project is to be followed by a Phase II project to identify and map critical facilities, such as police stations, fire stations, Town Halls, and other facilities in the region. He added that this map would include a drop-down feature for facilities which would include information about the regional equipment that is housed there. The estimated cost of this work is up to \$25,000 for consulting services. Jean Speck moved to authorize the NHCOC to contract with NECEO to move forward with Phase II. Barbara Henry seconded the motion.

Jean Speck asked if the member-towns would see this data or a presentation of the information that will be mapped. Don Stein asked if the property owners' identity could be filtered out for public viewing. Rick Lynn and Janell Mullen responded that yes the data will be available for municipal use, and could be filtered for the Town's preferred purpose as well as updated by the town for their purposes.

The motion passed unanimously to move forward with mapping the critical facilities in DEMHS Region 5 with consultant NECEO.

Town by Town Update.

Barkhamsted- Chairman Stein began by announcing that an agreement with Winchester has been reached to extend the sewer line from Winsted into the Town of Barkhamsted. There may be opportunity to put new housing in the sewer service area. The Town Hall remains closed.

Canaan- Henry Todd stated that the Town is in the process of selling their water company which is a lengthy process through PURA. The Town Hall remained closed.

Goshen- Bob Valentine mentioned that the Town Hall is opened to the public with precautions in place. He is continuing to work with the state to get approval for virtual Town Meetings. He hopes that an Executive Order will be soon issued to give Towns some latitude when it comes to running their Town Meetings with an option for them to be virtual. He also mentioned a recent successful town-wide recycling day.

Hartland- Magi Winslow mentioned that the Town Hall remains closed to the public. She also noted that the bear baiting issue resulted in a 4.5 hour long outdoor in-person meeting regarding the property owner's violations. She added that her Town Clerk is very overburdened given the upcoming Presidential Election.

Harwinton- Michael Criss mentioned that he is in the process of going after many grants (Connectivity, BRIC, STEAP grants) that are open at the moment. He also noted that the NHCOC Legislative Committee will soon be meeting and if anyone has any concerns, they should send them directly to Rick Lynn or himself. The Town Hall is open by appointment with extra precautions.

Kent- Jean Speck mentioned that the Kent Town Hall remains closed. She inquired about how other towns are approaching cleaning and disinfecting as that is one of her concerns if the Town Hall opens when the weather gets colder. Kent will be starting a composting pilot program at their transfer station before the end of the year.

Litchfield- Denise Raap mentioned that the Town Hall is open by appointment only. She continues her search for a Park & Rec Coordinator. She added that the Town Clerk's office is very busy and concluded her update by asking about how others dispose of smoke detectors. She was quoted \$40.00 to remove each smoke detector or \$2,000.00 to remove fifty (50).

Don Stein added that he has smoke detectors that he needs to get rid of as well. Rick Lynn has been researching this issue. The Housatonic Resource Recovery Authority has been telling residents to throw them in the garbage. He added there is a company that will accept them for disposal. Bob Valentine added that if the towns band together there is a potential for economy of scale to make their disposal more economical.

Morris- Tom Weik mentioned that South Farms, the event venue, has been the source of noise complaints. The Town Hall is open with precautions in place.

Norfolk- Matt Riiska mentioned a recent CDBG application that the town completed. Their broadband task force has been meeting 2X per month. He anticipates the Town will vote on broadband in May. Like every other town, they are preparing for elections and making sure all protocols are in place this year.

North Canaan- Charlie Perotti mentioned that the Town Hall remains open by appointment only. The renovation of the railroad track crossing is underway. Board of Selectmen meetings continue to be hosted on Zoom. They are in the process of interviewing a new resident state trooper.

Roxbury- Barbara Henry mentioned that the Town Hall is opened by appointment. All meetings are taking place by Zoom. Halloween will include a drive-in movie and a drive-thru "trunk or treat". She is curious about health insurance options since they are up for renewal.

Torrington- Mayor Carbone mentioned that City Hall is open to the public. Board members are attending meetings in person and members of the public are calling in via Zoom. The school construction referendum is on the November ballot. She added that the quality of the food boxes, mentioned earlier by John Field, is truly amazing. She is thinking ahead, trying to plan for the upcoming holidays given the COVID-19 pandemic and its challenges.

Warren- Timothy Angevine added that the Town Hall is open by appointment only and provides most of its materials online. Warren is looking for a new tax collector. The position is 8-12 hours per week. He is still

chasing Optimum to pick up some downed wires that are still in the road since the August storm.

Other Business as Raised by Members and Adjournment.

Jennine Lupo stated that FEMA has recently opened up grants for firefighters.

Chairman Stein adjourned the meeting at 11:55 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Janell M. Mullen
NHCOC, Regional Planner