

MINUTES OF THE NHCOC MEETING OF January 14, 2021

Members or Representatives in Attendance:

Barkhamsted, Don Stein	Burlington, Ted Shafer
Canaan, Henry Todd	Colebrook, Tom McKeon
Cornwall, Gordon Ridgway	
Goshen, Bob Valentine	Hartland, Magi Winslow
Harwinton, Michael Criss	Kent, Jean Speck
Litchfield, Denise Raap	Morris, Tom Weik
New Hartford, Dan Jerram	Norfolk, Matt Riiska
North Canaan, Charlie Perotti	Roxbury, Barbara Henry
Salisbury, Curtis Rand	Torrington, Elinor Carbone
Warren, Tim Angevine	Washington, Jim Brinton
Winchester, Bob Geiger	

Others in Attendance:

Rep. Maria Horn; Sara Radacsi, CTDOT; Brian Mattiello, Charlotte Hungerford Hospital; Joe DeLong & Mike Muszynski, CCM; Steve Silver & Hedy Ayers, Eversource; John Simoncelli, Greenwoods; Marty O'Connor; John Field, DEMHS Region 5; Jim O'Leary; Paul Gibb; Jennifer Kelly, FHWA; Rick Lynn, Jocelyn Ayer, Janell Mullen, and Darlene Krukar, NHCOC staff; General Public; Media Representatives

Call to Order and Opportunity for Public Comment. Don Stein called the meeting to order at 10:04 am. Brian Mattiello, Regional Vice President for Strategy & Community Development at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, opened the public comment period with news on the distribution to the COVID-19 vaccine. He began by explaining the chain of command in the state with the Department of Health (DPH) taking the lead. He mentioned that the State of Connecticut could perhaps accelerate the vaccine distribution. Brian mentioned that there are currently three pre-registration sites set-up where one can register for the vaccine online:

1. State of Connecticut
2. Torrington Area Health District
3. Hartford Healthcare

Registration for those aged 75 and older can be made online. He also mentioned that the state wishes to set up a 211 Line for those who do not have online access or would prefer a phone office. Brian mentioned that Hartford Healthcare will soon open a facility in Torrington to administer the vaccine. This facility will be opened by 1/25. He added that those with a history of allergies should not consider a remote clinic, but rather a location like Charlotte Hungerford Main Campus.

Barbara Henry and Bob Valentine asked Brian to expand on this allergy concern. He mentioned that some have had anaphylactic reactions to the vaccines.

Don Stein asked if the "essential employees" definition included town employees that work with the public like the Town Clerk, etc. Brian responded that clarification has been asked for regarding this.

Curtis Rand asked about who he should be submitting the VAMS (Vaccine Administration Management System) forms to. Brian mentioned that he would follow-up with Curtis directly regarding this and how he should contact his employees. Mike Criss added that he submitted Harwinton's VAMS forms directly to TAHD, and John Field, Regional Coordinator Region 5 DEMHS, added that towns can submit their VAMS forms regarding essential employees to TAHD as of today.

Barbara Henry asked about the roll-out of the 211 number. She had heard that it would be available by the end of this week for those to call in to make appointments. Brian Mattiello added that this line will be available during business hours (8:00 am-4:30 pm) to receive calls.

Don Stein mentioned that TAHD and Farmington Valley Health District are not proceeding in the same fashion, which leads to some confusion. John Field added that it is a complicated process that is changing by the minute.

Outlook for the Legislative Session and Priorities of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities. Joe DeLong, CCM Executive Director and CEO, opened by introducing what CCM is gearing up for this legislative session. He emphasized that this is subject to change based on what transpires at the Capitol. Joe mentioned that his starting point is to ensure there are no tax increases or cuts to municipal services. CCM plans to work closely with COST to review recent Executive Orders to see what should get codified into Statute. Joe mentioned that land use reform will also be a focal point of the legislative session due to the DeSegregate CT initiative which promotes land-use reform in Connecticut for reasons including equity and social justice. He plans to monitor what land-use reforms are specifically proposed. From his perspective, the most important issue is the continued funding of state aid programs (Education Cost Sharing (ECS), Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP), Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP) and our economic recovery after the pandemic. He emphasized that the problem of unfunded pension liability and ECS Funding will keep coming back until we address it in the long-term.

Chairman Stein mentioned that accessing this legislative session virtually will be new for everyone. Joe added that there will be a webinar on the virtual aspect of this legislative session and to stay tuned for those details from the General Assembly.

Dan Jerram added that he appreciates Joe's assessment of the situation in Hartford. He noted that most towns in the NHCOC region have seen their ECS funding cut and the real estate taxation is not adjusting for inflation.

Bob Valentine asked if hearings are currently taking place. Joe added that what is currently happening is administrative and the hearings have yet to begin.

Michael Criss stated that it is critical for COG members to pay attention to the legislature this session given the funding, land-use reform, and property tax issues. He mentioned that the NHCOC member towns need to continue to work together.

Don Stein asked about Executive Orders and the upcoming budget session. He would like to know what towns should expect relative to virtual vs hybrid meetings for the budget process. Mike Muszynski responded that hearings will likely begin within the next month or so. All the meetings will be done via Zoom and will be organized by a lottery system for public input. They are looking into the option of pre-recording testimony.

Maria Horn was on the call and was asked by Chairman Stein to add any comments. Maria responded that the Governor did make a proposal to improve broadband. It is in the early stages, but she believes it does include the "one step, make ready" provision.

Developing Guidelines for Mutual Aid by Public Works Departments During Emergencies. Paul Gibb, Special Projects Coordinator for Region 5, reviewed draft "Winter Storm Guidelines for Public Works Highway Departments Affected by COVID" He explained that mutual aid may not be available town-to-town during a regional storm and may need to come from farther away. The draft Guidelines encourage towns to

pre-arrange for private, third party assistance if more snow plowing help is needed. Paul stated that it is important for towns to declare a “State of Emergency” in requesting mutual aid so that they are covered under the State’s Intrastate Mutual Aid Agreement. The draft Guidelines will be presented to the Northwest Hills Road Supervisors Association in the near future, but Paul wanted to make the COG members aware of the draft Guidelines.

Tim Angevine asked if any towns in the NHCOC region have implemented mutual aid during recent storm events. Bob Geiger stated that Winsted has.

DEMHS Update and Status of Region 5 Long Term Recovery Steering Committee. John Field, DEMHS Region 5 Coordinator, said the recent focus has been on vaccination distribution. He anticipates that many towns will be setting up mass distribution sites. John stressed the importance of municipalities contacting the DPH before setting up a site. He added that testing will need to continue as new, more contagious variants have been discovered in CT. On positive note, he mentioned that the Disaster Declaration associated with Tropical Storm Isaias has been approved. John commented that there is still a need for PPE as well as food distribution in the region.

Marty O’Connor, Chairman Region 5 Long Term Recovery, reported that the monthly meeting of the LTR steering committee took place yesterday. He reviewed the [Unmet Needs Form](#) and the process for submitting. Some of the identified unmet needs include PPE, broadband connectivity issues, volunteers associated with food distribution, and small business concerns. Marty mentioned that this is not a case management system.

Presentation of the NHCOC Regional Map Viewer. Janell Mullen, NHCOC Regional Planner, shared her screen so that members could see the web map: [NHCOC Regional Map Viewer](#). She mentioned that the NHCOC website has stood up a webviewer for some time. It has been recently updated with the parcel data that was developed by New England GEO. Mullen noted that property owner information has not been included on this public platform but is available to member towns. She noted that other layers such as wetlands, open space, aquifer protection areas, are also available on the Map Viewer. She noted that this resource is a work in progress and further layers such as the regional trails and political boundaries will be added.

Dan Jerram asked about the parcel match on town borders. Janell added that most discrepancies were addressed by NEGEO in preparing the map.

Don Stein noted that two items should be added to the Administrative Items of the agenda: 1. Household Hazard Waste Days, and 2. Regional Collaboration on Recycling and Economic Development. Dan Jerram moved to add these two items to the agenda. Bob Valentine seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Administrative Items.

a) Approval of Minutes for December 10, 2020.

b) Approval of Financial Statement for November 2020.

These two motions were bundled together and polled electronically. Bob Valentine moved and Henry Todd seconded the approval of both items. The motion passed unanimously.

c) Household Hazardous Waste Days. Curtis Rand, Chair of the Recycling Committee, gave an update on this item. CARE Environmental has been the vendor for these events in recent years. Rick Lynn was recently notified by the IRS that CARE Environmental has not been paying its taxes for the past several years. At a recent RAC meeting there was a unanimous vote that recommended that the NHCOC terminate its current contract with CARE Environmental and re-bid the contract for Collection Days in 2021 and

2022. Henry Todd moved the recommendation to re-bid the contract and Bob Valentine seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

d) Regional Collaboration on Recycling Coordinator and Economic Development. Don Stein introduced this item by stating there has been some discussion in the state about COGs collaborating for a regional position associated with recycling and economic development assistance. Chairman Stein wanted to open up the floor for discussion on this topic. Don mentioned that he would not be in favor of doing anything until funding was provided by the state. Bob Valentine added that we need to be cautious about adding extra staff layers that are not needed. Rick Lynn mentioned that Katie Dykes would be attending an upcoming NHCOC meeting to discuss the concept of a Regional Recycling Coordinator in more detail. Curtis Rand added that the context of this is that the outlook for solid waste management in Connecticut does not look favorable. Gordon Ridgway added that we should begin looking at the amount of garbage that we are disposing and how we can work together to reduce the volume. Dan Jerram mentioned that we need to look at where the municipal solid waste will go in the long-term. Don Stein added that any new initiatives will likely take 3-5 years to come into being. MIRA currently handles 1/3 of the waste generated in the state.

Town by Town Update.

Dan Jerram mentioned that there have been a few emails circulating around health insurance plans for municipalities. Don Stein added that some municipalities are lumped into large groups because of the Board of Education size or other collaborations

Bob Valentine asked Rick Lynn when COG dues will be known for FY 2021-22. Rick stated that action on COG dues is scheduled for the February COG meeting but he believes COG dues can be maintained at \$0.80 per capita.

John Simoncelli of [Greenwoods Counseling](#) added that he is a resource for the region regarding mental health. It is a challenging time especially given the COVID19 pandemic. He welcomed member-towns to reach out to him.

Dan Jerram suggested that municipalities should include town level data to reinforce their testimony during this legislative session.

Other Business as Raised by Members and Adjournment. Chairman Stein adjourned the meeting at 11:45 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Janell M. Mullen  
NHCOC, Regional Planner