

MINUTES OF THE NHCOG MEETING
September 9, 2021 held via Zoom

Members or Representatives in Attendance:

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

Others in Attendance:

Hedy Ayers, Eversource; Cindy Harrison; Manny Barreto, McCall Center; Patia Fox; John Field, Region 5 Coordinator; Daly Reville; Felicia Jones; Media Representatives
NHCOG Staff: Rob Phillips, Jocelyn Ayer, Janell Mullen, and Darlene Krukar

Call to Order and Opportunity for Public Comment. The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Don Stein at 10:04 am. There were no members of the public that wished to speak.

Report of the Executive Director. Rob Phillips began by mentioning Darlene's retirement and his recruitment plan. He is targeting the month of October to advertise the position. There has been talk about hiring a bookkeeper. Once finalized by a formal MOU, Janell Mullen, NHCOG Regional Planner, will begin conducting planning consulting on a private basis to free up some of her hours for the regional work.

Overview of the COVID-19 Assistance for Community Health Program. Manny Barreto, McCall Center began his presentation by touching upon how COVID-19 has changed the lives of many, especially seniors. In June 2020, the COACH program began with funding assistance from the state. Providers are working with the older adult population to assist with connection to services such as treatment services, mental health, rental assistance, disability benefits, and other ways. To learn more about the COACH program, one can access the following website: <https://ctstronger.org/>.

Chairman Stein asked if Manny had any data regarding the number of individuals that he helped in each Town. Manny said that he could come up with that data and that they had worked with about 2,000 individuals this past year.

Regional Transportation Planning- Update on the Status of LOTCIP, STIP Actions and RCP Projects in the Region. Rob Phillips mentioned that only six (6) of the NHCOG towns are eligible for the LOTCIP Program. He stated that the action for this item would simply add the Bridge over Still Brook to the STIP Amendment. Henry Todd moved to approve the STIP Amendment as presented, Ted Shafer seconded. The motion passed. There were two (2) abstentions.

Overview of OSWA Grant Applications including Salisbury, Sharon, and Winchester. Curtis Rand was available to speak about the Salisbury parcel which would adjoin the Girl Scout Camp and is being made available to the Land Trust for a below-market price. Josh Kelly was available to speak on the Winchester parcel which is a 60 acre plot that would fall into the ownership of the Winchester Land Trust. The Board of Selectmen have endorsed this project. The projects were bundled for the vote. Henry Todd moved to

approve the three (3) letters of support, Jim Brinton seconded. The motion passed. There were two (2) abstentions.

DEMHS Update and Status of Region 5 Long Term Recovery Committee. John Field, DEMHS 5 Coordinator, began by updating on the COVID situation. The Delta variant and Mu are causing complications. He mentioned that his division has been extremely busy due to the recent storms in the area.

Status of Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day for Oct 9th. Curtis Rand, Chairman, Recycling Advisory Committee. The event will take place on Columbus Day weekend on October 9th at the Torrington Middle School. One change this year is that the contractor is asking about staggering an entrance. He mentioned that towns should stagger their timing at the entrance. This will help the vendors. This is a continuing cost that keeps increasing. Bob Valentine asked about who we should contact regarding volunteers. Rob Phillips mentioned that he should be emailed along with Darlene. Tom Weik asked if smoke detectors will be taken at this event. He was notified that they will.

Regional Animal Facility Update. Mayor Elinore Carbone mentioned that they are still in the waiting game. Representative Jahana Hayes was not able to visit the site. They are trying to reschedule her to come out to the area. They are trying to finalize the budget.

NHCOG Action on Applications Received for Funding under ConnDOT's 5310 Program. Rob Phillips mentioned that all applications from 2019 have been funded. Today the action item is an endorsement letter for the approved the August 2021 application round.

Henry Todd moved to approve the endorsement. Bob Valentine seconded. The motion passed. There was one abstention.

Update on CEDS Consultant Contracts and support for new EDA Grant Application. Jocelyn Ayer mentioned the upcoming Economic Development Summit. She mentioned submitting applications to DECD this Friday regarding economic development proposals. Don Stein added that the key issue is what the state will support considering that it often supports more urban areas along the Route 91 corridor.

Jocelyn shared some slides and mentioned that Kim Maxwell had joined the call to give an update on the Broadband Initiative. Kim mentioned that a Torrington Engineering Study was conducted last spring with CARES Act funding. It gave him a picture of what the cost would be for a town the size of Torrington, which is based upon the road miles and housing density. Kim mentioned Optimum should be building a better network than the one that is being proposed. He will be sharing the numbers via email to all of the Chief Elected Officials. He mentioned other action steps that he has taken including reaching out to Optimum, Frontier, and State Representatives such as Maria Horn.

Bob Valentine asked a question about Goshen regarding underground installations around Woodbridge Lake.

Jocelyn Ayer concluded the presentation on the agenda item by addressing the Consultant Recommendation on the Broadband Initiative. A Request for Qualifications circulated and at this time the recommendation of the Executive Committee is to select Katherine Kiefer as the Broadband Consultant. Barbara Henry asked about connecting her school to the network. Don Stein suggested talking to Connecticut Education Network. Don Stein emphasized the importance of the Town ownership of the cable.

Henry Todd moved to approve the selection of Katherine Kiefer. Jim Brinton seconded that motion. The motion passed. There was one abstention.

NHCOG Direction regarding assistance with ARPA funding. Jocelyn mentioned that Towns are sharing

information with the COG about how they are using ARPA funding. The COG has been collecting this information and relaying it out to member-towns. Jim Brinton thinks it would be better off to vet ideas with their own town attorney. Barbara Henry doesn't want to utilize her Town attorney for this guidance. Don Stein mentioned that he is moving very slowly on this. The COG Staff will revisit how to best approach and determine if there is an expert on ARPA funding available for consulting services.

Administrative Items

a) Approval of Minutes July 8th Regular Meeting and August 12th Special Meeting. NHCOC staff, Janell Mullen mentioned an amendment to the minutes involving the Dial-a-Ride program which is not new. Henry Todd moved to approve the Minutes as amended. Charlie Perotti seconded the motion. The motion passed.

There were two (2) abstentions.

b) Approval of Financial Statement for June & July 2021. Bob Valentine moved to approve.

Henry Todd seconded. The motion passed. There were two (2) abstentions.

c) Approval of Amendment to COG Policies and Procedures Manual to add a section regarding Vacation Benefit with Pay

Bob Valentine moved to approve. Tom Weik seconded. The motion passed. There were two (2) abstentions.

d) Approval of MOU for COG Collaboration on 2021 Homeland Security Grant Program

Bob Valentine moved to approve. Magi Winslow seconded. The motion passed. There were two (2) abstentions.

e) Approval of Regional Service Grant Resolution

Matt Riiska moved to approve. Charlie Perotti seconded the motion. The motion passed. There were two (2) abstentions.

Town by Town Update by COG Members.

Don Stein began by stating that Barkhamsted had a successful affordable housing plan meeting last night. The event was an ice cream social and turned into a good event. It mentioned that it was hard for the public to distinguish between a particular affordable housing project versus the Town's affordable housing plan.

Ted Shafer mentioned that the Town of Burlington has acquired seven (7) acres. They are seeking multi-use development in the center of Town. Developers have been looking at the property. He also mentioned that Tavern Day is this upcoming weekend. They have put a lot of thought into this outdoor event. This evening the P&Z is having a moratorium on the cannabis legislation.

Henry Todd mentioned that the Falls Village Café and new gallery has been well received. They are trying to move through the final public hearings on the affordable housing plan.

Gordon Ridgway mentioned they are concerned about COVID in Cornwall as a visitor to the Town Hall had tested positive. They will be allowing visitors by appointment only. He mentioned NHCOC staff, Janell Mullen, has been working on the Housing Plan. A public presentation has been scheduled for October 20th.

Bob Valentine mentioned a successful Goshen Fair. He mentioned going to a Town Meeting in regard to ARPA funding before his term is up. He also mentioned the success of the Housing Plan process thanks to assistance from Jocelyn Ayer.

Magi Winslow mentioned that there is no new news in Hartland. She wishes everyone well.

Jean Speck mentioned that Kent had successfully received funding to assist with the affordable housing

plan. She also mentioned the Town is getting involved with the Broadband Initiative. There will be a 9/11 ceremony in Kent on Saturday morning.

Denise Raap, of Litchfield, mentioned that a local group had been meeting monthly to talk about ARPA funding. They are putting together a formal process for small businesses in Town to receive assistance. The Town has received the affordable housing grant from Department of Housing. She also mentioned a school consolidation plan. P&Z approved a one-year cannabis moratorium.

Tom Weik of Morris mentioned a vaccine clinic through Griffin Hospital who runs a tremendous event. FEMA awarded them with funding for last year's storm. Recreational Cannabis will be on the November ballot as a petition was received from the citizenry.

Matt Riiska of Norfolk mentioned that a steering committee was formed to make decisions around ARPA funding. Thanks to Jocelyn for assistance on the housing plan. An architectural firm was selected to build a new firehouse.

Charlie Perotti of North Canaan mentioned a COVID vaccination clinic as well as a booster clinic. He mentioned the sidewalk project has made the center of Town a mess. A bridge project on Tobey Hill has been delayed due to the heavy rains. The Town of North Canaan received its affordable housing plan funding. There are now six (6) homeless people in Town. The Town is trying to assist in ways that they can.

Curtis Rand of Salisbury mentioned that he was hoping to get an extension from OPM on their POCD. Curtis is about to appoint a Conservation Commission in addition to an Inland Wetlands Commission.

Tim Angevine of Warren mentioned that they will not be hosting a Fall Festival. Despite the fact that it has been cancelled, citizens are expressing interest in it. Tim also mentioned the progress being made on the affordable housing plan. The purchase of a farm property has gotten pretty political.

Jim Brinton of Washington mentioned that DPW is extremely busy with a lot of culvert and road work. They continue to discuss ARPA funds. There has been a lot of feedback from non-profits. They will be having a 9/11 ceremony this weekend.

Josh Kelly of Winchester mentioned that they have received a DOH planning grant for an affordable housing plan. He is concerned about COVID. There have been a lot of businesses with a lot of people congregating. No action has been taken on that at this point. His Director of Finance will be retiring. They are moving forward with finalizing their ARPA funding.

Other Business as Raised by Members and Adjournment. Rob Phillips announced that the next meeting will be October 14th. Don Stein added that they will decide about whether it will be virtual or not as the date approaches.

Respectfully submitted,

Janell Mullen
NHCOC Regional Planner