

MINUTES OF THE NHCOG MEETING
February 10, 2022 held via Zoom

Members or Representatives in Attendance:

Canaan, Henry Todd	Colebrook, Christopher Johnstone
Goshen, Todd Carusillo	Harwinton, Michael Criss
Kent, Jean Speck	Litchfield, Denise Raap
Morris, Tom Weik	New Hartford, Dan Jerram
Norfolk, Matt Riiska	North Canaan, Charlie Perotti
Salisbury, Curtis Rand	Torrington, Elinor Carbone
Warren, Greg LaCava	Winchester, Josh Kelly

Others in Attendance:

Hedy Ayers, Eversource; John Field, DEMHS Region 5; Betsy Gara, COST Executive Director; Leonardo Ghio, Rural Healthcare Resource Coordinator, Catherine Awwad, NRWIB; Dan Bolognani, Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area; Thomas Kirk, MIRA President

NHCOG Staff: Rob Phillips, Janell Mullen, and Sarah Better

Call to Order and Opportunity for Public Comment. Leonardo Ghio, Rural Healthcare Resource Coordinator, introduced himself and looks forward to working with everyone.

Report of the Executive Director. Janell Mullen is taking her talents to the private consulting within the region. Her last day is February 24. Good luck to Janell! Regional Service Survey will be going out to COG members. Asking for your input of the core services that the COG provides. This will help guide the COG through next fiscal year. Want to see what's important to our members so we can better serve them. This survey is critical to where the COG is going and how to staff moving forward. Training on March 31 at the Litchfield Inn for DEMHS Region 5 ECO's. Original endorsement of \$900.00 contribution but it has increased to no more than \$1845.00 per COG. Funds will be used for speaker, facilities, breakfast, and lunch.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill – Mark Boughton, Commissioner of CT Department of Revenue Services, reviewed the new grant money that will be available within the next year. He suggested the towns talk to town engineers and town planners and get ready for the new funding. Waiting for guidance to come out from the government within the next year as to how to apply.

Municipal Forum – Henry Todd and Wayne Hileman, Chairman for the Northwest Connect Board, discussed the need for a broadband service. It appears that a public/private partnership is going to be necessary to accomplish this. Northwest Connect was approached by Google to discuss a potential collaboration within the local region. This is just a conversation at this point. For more information contact Wayne at hilemanwe@gmail.com

Outlook for Legislative Session Emerging Priorities of Council of Small Towns. Betsy Gara, COST Executive Director, 2.85 billion in new funding, impending closing of MIRA and discussed the future trash issue. Broadband and infrastructure funding is in the Governor's budget, along with education needs, juvenile crime, opioid abuse, and mental health concerns facing children. There is a concern with the issue of car tax. Feel free to contact Betsy with any questions at bgara@CTCOST.org

Updates on Activities of the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board (NRWIB) Catherine Awwad from NRWIB will present her updates at the next NHCOC Monthly Meeting on March 10 due to another meeting.

Western New England Greenway - Dan Bolognani from the Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area presented update Western New England Greenway bike project that connects Norwalk to Canadian boarder. Looking to achieve designation with signage through American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials -AASHTO. Rout 7 is the designated bicycle rout that passes through New Milford, Kent, Cornwall, Canaan, North Canaan and Salisbury. Looking to erect signage in the towns that have the direct route. Federal funds have been obtained to fabricate, purchase and delivery. May ask municipalities to help with installation.

Update on Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority (MIRA) – Thomas Kirk, MIRA President – Connecticut is in a waste disposal crisis and the window to refurbish the facilities has passed. What do we do in the immediate future and what cane we do as a state to properly dispose of our waste. Possibilities include trucking waste to western Pennsylvania or other areas. Issues are with volume of tonnage to be managed. Options are very limited. Capabilities of the plant as is now not functional as is. Need manpower and skilled works and this is a challenge currently. Facilities are closing all across the Northeast. What is warranted is policy review and legislative action. A town meeting is planned for early March.

DEMHS Update - John Field, DEMHS Region 5 Supervisor, 8 total pods of Covid test kits and masks, FEMA is starting to reach out to towns regarding long term plans, masks in schools being left up to superintendents. DEMHS is still looking to hire new people. Grants unit is trying to Cyber Security tool kits coming out soon CEO training for the end of March.

Committee Updates – Michael Criss – legislative committee meeting. MIRA is a big topic and need to focus on special meeting Priority. Town taxes are going to be an issue trying to control taxes need to work together legislative survey is going to be sent out by each town.

Administrative Items

a) ACTION – Recommendation NHCOC Local Dues for FY 22-23 – Henry Todd moved to approve annual dues Michael Criss seconded motion. The motion passed unanimously.

b) ACTION – Approval of Minutes from January 13, 2022 (Attachment B) Michael Criss moved to approve the minutes Charlie second the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

c) ACTION – Approval of Financial Statement for December 2021 (Attachment C) Michael Criss moved to approve the Financial Statement. Charlie seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 12:012 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah B. Better
NHCOC Financial/Office Manager

