**MINUTES**

**NHCOG SPECIAL MONTHLY MEETING**

**April 21, 2022**

**Members or Representatives in Attendance:**

Barkhamsted, Donald Stein

Canaan, Henry Todd Colebrook, Christopher Johnstone

Cornwall, Gordon Ridgeway (via Zoom) Goshen, Todd Carusillo

Harwinton, Michael Criss Kent, Jean Speck

Litchfield, Denise Raap Morris, Thomas Weik

Norfolk, Matthew Riiska North Canaan, Charles Perotti

Roxbury, Patrick Roy Sharon, Brent Colley (via Zoom)

Torrington, Elinor Carbone Washington, Jim Brinton (via Zoom)

**Others in Attendance:**

Catherine Awwad, NRWIB (via Zoom); John Field, DEMHS Region 5 REPT (via Zoom); Brian Mattiello and John Simoncelli, Hartford Healthcare -Charlotte Hungerford Hospital

**NHCOG Staff:**

Rob Phillips

Call to Order and Opportunity for Public Comment – Chairman Stein called the meeting to order at 10:03AM. Hedy Ayers from Eversource shared that the ERP Annual meetings will be held virtually - Western Region is on April 28th from 10am-12pm, State Meeting on 27th from 6pm-8pm. Eversource is in the process of hiring new Community Relations Specialist. More transitions to come.

Report of the Executive Director – Office I still short staffed. Rob and Sarah still on a learning curve as the typical year progresses and it’s been a challenge over the past couple of months being a staff of two. Interviews for new candidates were conducted and the Executive Committee will meet to discuss an offer to a candidate. CAMA Data needs to be submitted to the COG by May 1, 2022. Some towns still need to submit their Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan local approval. Please do so as soon as possible. Update to the COG office expansion: Hoping to start expansion work as soon as possible. The contractor was to submit cost adjustments due to inflation and logistical supply issues. More importantly, the roof needs to be replaced before we can proceed with the expansion.

Municipal Forum – Generally, annual budgets are a concern for most towns at this time of year. Specific reports by town are as follows:

* Barkhamsted – Interested in potential coordination effort with Northwest Connect and interested towns for broadband partnership. Will attempt to schedule a working meeting. Town budget is flat for next FY.
* Morris – Flat budget also.
* Litchfield – Motor vehicle tax is up, Grand List is up. Litchfield HS may become Region 20 school system. Working on ARPA allocations.
* North Canaan – Region 1 budget difficult for town. Town has lowest employee pay in region.
* Canaan/FV – Budget should pass. Second smallest town in state so good surplus. Affordable housing still a popular topic with residents. Trying to obtain a Small Cities Grant.
* Colebrook – Region 7 cost is up. There hasn’t been increases in local budget for years so it is growing problem.
* Norfolk – 3.5% increase in budget. A lot of bridge work ongoing in town at once. Affordable Housing still being discussed. Has an ARPA group looking at options. 5MW solar facility in the works.
* Torrington – Received Brownsfield Grants for two key blighted properties. Affordable housing issues continue. Was wondering if anyone else may be impacted by proposed motor vehicle tax cap. BOE budget is a large increase so overall budget passing is a concern. Cannabis legislation still a hot topic in town.
* Kent – Budget was sent back to BOS from BOF for cuts. EMS models need to be reconsidered as they are too costly for Kent. Streetscape project may start in a couple months after many years of planning/delay.
* Goshen – Region 6 enrollment is down. ARPA funds went to lost revenue.
* Roxbury – Nothing of significance to report.
* Harwinton – Going through mill rate cutting process. Burlington got the bigger share of Region 10 so that is good for Harwinton’s budget.
* Cornwall – Nothing of significance to report.
* Washington – Enrollment increase made the budget difficult, however the same mill rate is expected. EMS and Fire too big for one building now so looking at options. Bridge work is ongoing.

Updates on Activities of the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board (NRWIB) - Catherine Awwad from NRWIB shared that they provide services to both employers and job seekers, including trainings, recruitment events, job fairs and individual training. Working on the Career ConneCT project through the state. Also, provide ARPA training for providers. Catherine can be reached at Catherine.awwad@nrwib.org ,

203-574-6971 [www.NRWIB.org](http://www.NRWIB.org)

Discussion on Funding to Benefit Children’s Behavioral Health in the Region – Brian Mattiello, Hartford Healthcare – Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, discussed the crisis involving youth mental health in the region and the need to address it. A partnership with supportive funding was requested from each town to provide a support service along with a program lead position to administer the service. Members found some value and will consider further.

DEMHS Update - John Field, DEMHS Region 5 Supervisor reports that we are still working on Coronavirus long term recovery. Working with FEMA on this too for things such as jobs and childcare. Region 5 Cyber Security work group will be reaching out to the municipalities. They have a small amount of money, so they won’t be able to get to everyone, first come first serve. New State EMD William Turner from Pennsylvania. Meet and greet set for May 10th in Watertown at 2pm and an evening meeting as well. Working on improving communication. Working on purchasing radios. Coordinators will be meeting with Massachusetts Emergency Management team.

Committee Updates –

* Legislative Committee - Michael Criss reports that he has been watching 78 bills at this time. Will contact Rob at the COG if he sees any big problems that need to be addressed. MIRA discussion on how towns plan on moving forward was discussed.
* Nominating Committee Appointment - Donald Stein appointed the nominating committee of Jim Brinton, Jean Speck (Chair), and Chris Johnstone for the upcoming slate of officers and at-large members of the Executive Committee in 2022-2023.

Administrative Items:

a) Amendments to the 2021 STIP: Henry Tood moved to approve the amendments as presented. Jean Speck seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

b) Approval of Minutes for March 10, 2022: Mike Criss moved to approve the minutes with the spelling correction to Denise Raap’s last name. Charlie Perotti seconded the motion. The motion of the amended minutes was pass unanimously.

c) Approval of Financial Statement for February 2022: Michael Criss moved to approve the March Financial Statement. Jean Speck second the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

d) PWEC 2022 Rates: Jean Speck moved to approve the 2022 rates as presented. Henry Todd seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

e) Authorization to Bid - Full Depth Reclamation Bid and Chip Seal Bid: Mike Criss moved to approve the two bid authorizations. Chris Johnstone seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made (Weik), seconded (Johnstone), and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 12:05PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah B. Better

NHCOG Financial/Office Manager