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MINUTES OF THE NHCOG MEETING

February 9, 2023

Members or Representatives in Attendance:

Barkhamsted, Donald Stein Burlington, Douglas Thompson (remote)

Canaan, Henry Todd Colebrook, Christopher Johnston

Cornwall, Gordon Ridgway (remote) Goshen, Todd Carusillo

Hartland, Magi Winslow (remote) Harwinton, Michael Criss (remote)

Kent, Jean Speck (remote) Litchfield, Denise Raap

Morris, Tom Weik New Hartford, Dan Jerram

Norfolk, Matt Riiska (remote) North Canaan, Charles Perotti

Roxbury, Patrick Roy Salisbury, Curtis Rand

Sharon, Brent Colley (remote) Torrington, Elinor Carbone (absent)

Warren, Greg LaCava (remote) Washington, Jim Brinton (remote)

Winchester, Josh Kelly (remote)

Others in Attendance: Leo Ghio, Rural Resource Coordinator, Jocelyn Ayer, Director of Litchfield Housing Opportunity, and John Field, DEMHS Region 5 Coordinator.

NHCOG Staff: Robert Phillips, Emily Hultquist, Kathryn Faraci, and Sarah Better

Call to Order - Chairman Todd called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM.

Public Comment – none

Report of the Executive Director – Robert Phillips stated that NHCOG is currently working on a preliminary budget and are hopeful that we will be awarded the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant. This will provide the COG with $1.2 over 4-year period. NHCOG is working with the other statewide COGs to increase Regional Services Grant (RSG) funding as well as increasing Unified Planning Work Program funding.

Update from the Litchfield County Center for Housing Opportunity – Jocelyn Ayers shared a PowerPoint on the Center for Housing Opportunity Litchfield County. Please click link for full presentation - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XB3aLqs2u1g>

Annual Report of the Rural Health Resources Coordinator – Leo Ghio shared a PowerPoint on the 2022 Annual Report. Please see click for full presentation - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XB3aLqs2u1g>

Community and Economic Development Update – Emily Hultquist shared the NHCOG is currently working on the CEDS update. The EDC Executive Committee has met twice in the last month and is working toward a spring stakeholder meeting which will likely be conducted as a charrette. The group is looking to launch a data collection effort to inform the CEDS update and stakeholder meetings. A sub-group of the EDC will meet to discuss the creation of a business retention and expansion effort region-wide. NHCOG staff will also be working to revive attention on the Discover Litchfield Hills website and social media platforms.

Transportation Planning Update – Kathryn Faraci shared information on proposed 2025-2028 STIP amendments for line striping and pavement markings for all four maintenance districts (including NHCOG District 4) funded by the STPA program. Motioned made to approve the STIP Selectman Speck and second by Motion passed unanimously. A reminder was also mentioned that there are still several towns that need to complete their ADA assessment. Also, a Road Supervisors Meeting was held on February 3rd. Some of the topics discussed included the public works equipment collaborative, cooperative bidding, future crack seal bidding, and navigating through the latest grant opportunities. Selectman Criss shared additional information received by CTDOT regarding the local bridge program status and that temporary pause to the program has been lifted.

DEHMS Update – John Field stated the new local emergency operations plan is due January 1, 2024. Emergency Management Performance Grant Program (EMPG) funding is supporting this initiative. DHEMS is in the process of updating their grant management system. Currently working on a Region 5 Strategic Plan and training. DHEMS is looking to participate in the meetings that Eversource is having with municipalities.

They will be working with school safety and security regarding security assessments in the near future.

Report of the NHCOG Legislation Committee – Selectman Criss stated that he is currently monitoring 118 different bills that would affect the NHCOG region. Bill 5003 for Education Funding as currently stated is temporary and does not appear to cover the cost for inflation. The Bill does not address the increase flexibility for schools applying for waivers in the NBR to better leverage ECS funding. Without this flexibility, in NBR, the ECS will further decrease. Bill 60553 regarding OSHA compliance for Fire Departments and making them responsible for reporting on maintenance and operations which would burden many towns that have volunteer Fire Departments with undo and unnecessary costs. Also H.B. 5251 and H.B. 5491 proposes designating dispatchers for PTSD coverage which would in turn increase the LCD costs. Since volunteer EMTs are not currently allowed to use blue lights H.B. 5256 will allow them to use these colored lights which will provide for quicker response time. S.B. 136 proposes to increase Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements back to the ambulance departments and EMT agencies. In the Governor’s budget there was discussion regarding Town Aid Road (TAR) funding remaining flat however, costs of paving and repairing roads are increasing. This program needs to take inflation into account and is underfunded. No increases to STEEP funding in 2024 however, there is $30 million budgeted for FY 2025. They are looking to maintain the car tax at 32.46 and budgeting $150 million for school district infrastructure improvements. Raised Bill 910 is proposing of providing a pension plan for permanent and volunteer Fire Department staff and EMTs. Proposed Bill 122 covers the replanting of trees where Eversource had cut them down.

Selectman Rand, Chairman of the Recycling Advisory Committee, recommended to the Board to approve their recommendation of Clean Harbors for the 2023 HHW season. Formal approval was conducted under the Administrative Items.

Administrative Items

1. **ACTION –** To Authorize the Executive Director to Establish an OPIOID Response Fund Consisting of Participating Municipal Settlement Awards for the Purpose of OPIOID Prevention within the NHCOG Region. Selectman Stein made the motion to approve and seconded by Selectman Jerram. Motion passed unanimously.
2. **ACTION** – To Authorize the Executive Director to Enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection Services with the Selected Vendor for the Period Covering 2023 and 2024*.* Selectman Stein made the motion to approve and seconded by Selectman Raap. Motion passed unanimously.
3. **ACTION** - Recommendation for NHCOG Local Dues for FY 23-24. Selectman Rand made the motion to approve and seconded by Selectman Weik. Motion passed unanimously.
4. **ACTION** - Approval of Meeting Minutes for January 12, 2022. Selectman Todd made the motion to approve and seconded by Selectman Stein. Motion passed unanimously.
5. **ACTION** - Approval of Financial Statement for December, Selectman Todd made the motion to approve and seconded by Selectman Stein. Motion passed unanimously.
6. **ACTION** – To Authorize the Executive Director to Enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Greater New Haven Transit District (GNHTD) as an Option for Procurement of Vehicles being Purchased by the GNHTD through the Statewide Small Vehicle Joint Procurement Program. Selectman Speck made the motion to approve and was seconded by Selectman Raap. Motion was passed unanimously.

Other Business – none

The meeting adjourned at 12:07pm

Respectfully submitted,

NHCOG staff