



MINUTES OF THE NHCOC MEETING

January 11, 2024, 10:00a

REMOTE

Member/Representative Attendance (86%):

(R = Remote attendance)

	Barkhamsted , Nick Lukiwsky	✓	Harwinton , Michael Criss	✓	Roxbury , Patrick Roy
	Burlington , Doug Thompson	✓	Kent , Marty Lindenmayer	✓	Salisbury , Curtis Rand
✓	Canaan , David Barger	✓	Litchfield , Denise Raap	✓	Sharon , Casey Flanagan
✓	Colebrook , Bradley Bremer	✓	Morris , Tom Weik	✓	Torrington , Elinor Carbone
✓	Cornwall , Gordon Ridgway	✓	New Hartford , Dan Jerram	✓	Warren , Greg LaCava
✓	Goshen , Todd Carusillo	✓	Norfolk , Matt Riiska	✓	Washington , Jim Brinton
✓	Hartland , Magi Winslow	✓	North Canaan , Brian Ohler		Winchester , Bob Geiger

Others in Attendance:

NHCOC Staff: Sarah Better, Kathryn Faraci, Leo Ghio, Rista Malanca, Rob Phillips, Jean Speck.

Guests & members of the public: **Betsy Gara, Michelle Gorra, COST | Randy Collins, CCM | Andrew Shields, Marc Byrnes, Olivia Rozutto, DOT | Commissioner Katie Dykes, Chris Nelson, Emma Cimino, Ethan Van Ness, DEEP | Wendy Rego and Paul Tarsa, CEN | Henry Paszczuk, DEMHS Region 5 | Ellen Graham, Senator Blumenthal's office | John Wardzala, the Kennedy Collective | Rob Rubbo, TAHD | Jessica Brackman | Jocelyn Ayer, LCCHO | Jesse Bunce, North Canaan BoS | Rachael Collard**

Call to Order and Opportunity for Public Comment: called the meeting to order at 1001. Tim Waldron gave brief update from Eversource.

Report of Executive Director: Rob Phillips gave an update on a number of initiatives and capacity-building efforts in the last month:

- ED Activity Log – December
- Capacity Building for Grant Acquisition Assistance – developing a job description and will be looking to hire a Grant Specialist
- Legislative Breakfast has been scheduled for Tuesday January 23rd (*rescheduled for February 5*)
- Update on Transportation Rural Improvements Program (TRIP) – DOT has sent information to the governor's office and hope to hear back next week.
- MIRA Dissolution Authority finance meeting – the chair asked for an update on this recent meeting. Rob reported the audio had poor quality so could not hear clearly but will follow up with the committee on what was covered.
- Audit – the chair asked for an update – Rob reported we have an extension through the end of January (due to a number of staffing changes, the hiring of a consultant, change in bookkeeper) and will follow up and report back next month.

Discussion of Regional Infrastructure Projects for the draft CEDS Update: Economic and Community Development Director Rista Malanca presented an update on the CEDS process. [REFERENCE RESOURCES: click to open slide deck presented at meeting.](#)

Outlook for the Upcoming 2024 Legislative Short Session and Emerging Priorities:

Betsy Garra from COST gave an update on a number of legislative topics COST is considering as they develop their 2024 legislative platform. Priorities include municipal matches to state grants; improving opportunities to utilize shared services; assuring timeliness of delivery of state services; keeping an eye on the task force that has been looking at repealing the car tax; issues relative to move forward with fully funding the education cost-sharing formula and ensuring small towns are held harmless from cuts in funding due to changes in the ECS formula; issues relative to rising costs of special education; improving minimum budget requirement flexibility; digital equity; MIRA dissolution issues; increasing funding for testing for PFAS contamination; facilitating advocacy for numerous housing issues; legal notices; MERS issues; continuing to work to increase/sustain Medicaid reimbursements for ambulance transports; opioid crisis; vehicle crimes; resident state trooper program viability; workforce development. Member towns will be voting on the platform at the February 8th at Aqua Turf and encouraged CEOs to attend the meeting.

REFERENCE RESOURCES: [Register for COST annual town meeting](#)

Randy Collins from CCM provided an update on their legislative priorities, many of which match COSTs. MSW and trash-to-energy challenges, increase in special education funding and reduce long-term burden to MBR; first responder recruitment and retention for volunteer fire and EMS; affordable housing issues and meeting the needs of the needs of smaller communities; increasing local siting for solar; street takeover crime. and shared the next CCM Legislative Committee meeting will be held in person Thursday February 15th at the Officer's Club at the State Armory, 360 Broad Street, Hartford from 9-11a.

Community Engagement Grant Linking Regional Land Trusts with Housing Organizations and Town Leaders to Create Shared Purpose & Mapping of Priority Areas for Conservation & Feasibility of Affordable Housing: Jocelyn Ayer provided an update on various projects they are supporting, and recent planning grant awarded to the Litchfield Hills Greenprint Collaborative/HVA to create a collaborative strategy between affordable housing and conservation. *RESOURCE REFERENCES:* [click to open slide deck presented at meeting.](#)

Summary of the State Local Bridge Program 'Post Program Overhaul' and How it Can Aid in Municipal Projects: Andrew Shields from DOT provided a presentation to inform members on the program. *RESOURCE REFERENCES:* andrew.shields@ct.gov | [CTDOT Local Bridge Program website](#) [click to open slide deck presented at meeting.](#)

Discussion and Q&A with CT DEEP on MSW: DEEP Commissioner Katie Dykes provided an update and information regarding a new Municipal Liaison position at DEEP for towns to more directly contact the agency; reported on solid waste management initiatives across the state. Members shared concern with the commissioner regarding transporting organic materials the long distances to processing facilities, Pay-As-You-Throw, MIRA and funding to assist those towns that will be effected by the dissolution.

RESOURCE REFERENCES: [Ethan Van Ness, Municipal Liaison](#) ethan.vanness@ct.gov, 959.333.8734

Connect your Municipality to the CEN Network Through a Free Fiber Build Which Utilizes ARPA Funds: Due to the lateness of the meeting, Paul Tarsa agreed to be moved to February's agenda.

DEMHS Update: Henry Paszczuk gave a brief update: notifying the members that John Field will be back next week; thanked the towns that submitted their updated LEOPs on time; alerted members to keep an eye on email for EMPG deadlines coming up on March 30th.

a) **MOTION by to Todd C./Patrick approve the Regular Meeting Minutes for the December 14, 2023 Regular Meeting,** passed unanimously.

Administrative Items:

b) **MOTION by Todd C./Tom to approve Financial Statements for November**, passed unanimously.

MOTION by Todd C./Jim Brinton to adjourn meeting, passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 1207.

Respectfully submitted,

NHCOG staff