



NOTICE OF REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING (REMOTE ONLY)

Leave today's REMOTE meeting with:

- *Municipal Facility Fiber Connections via the CEN Network*
- *Status of the Region's Current Workforce*
- *A Continuation of the MSW Strategy*

DATE: Wednesday, February 7, 2024

TIME: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

ZOOM LINK: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82793995052?pwd=bElXZ2JCQTVYcnR4V0IyenBuY2wwZz09>

Meeting ID: 827 9399 5052

Passcode: 459173

Call-in Option: 1-646-558-8656

AGENDA

(Chairman Dan Jerram; Vice Chairman Mike Criss; Secretary Patrick Roy; Treasurer Tom Weik)

- 10:00 AM Call to Order and Opportunity for Public Comment **Dan Jerram, Chair.**
- 10:05 AM Report of the Executive Director, **Rob Phillips**
- ED Activity Log – December (*Attachment A*)
 - Legislative Breakfast Recap – Monday, Feb 5th
 - 5th Thursday Land Use Training Zoom – February 29th
 - Road Supervisors Meeting – February 13th
 - R5 REPT Full Board Meeting – February 26th
 - Last Full Remote NHCOC Meeting – March 14th
 - FY23 Year End Audit Completion
 - CEDS Timeline
- 10:10 AM Connect your Municipality to the CEN Network Through a Free Fiber Build Which Utilizes ARPA Funds, **Wendy Rego and Paul Tarsa, CEN.**
- 10:30 AM MSW Subcommittee Update, **Dan Jerram, Chair**

Motions recommended to the board from the most recent subcommittee meeting:

- a) To authorize the Executive Director to issue a non-binding letter of intent to the MIRA-DA expressing interest in the Torrington Transfer Station and requesting any existing environmental data associated with the site.
- b) To authorize the Executive Director to seek counsel to explore drafting ordinances, based on CGS 7-273, pursuant to the creation of a potential regional resource recovery authority, and associated action on behalf of NHCOG.

10:45 AM Welcome Back and DEMHS Update, **John Field, DEMHS Region 5**

10:55 AM Update from the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board (NRWIB), **Catherine Awwad, President and CEO.**

11:10 AM Transportation Planning, **Kathryn Faraci**

- a) **ACTION** - STIP Amendments - New Projects to provide funding for Replacement of the Route 47 retaining wall between Moody Bridge Road E and School Street in Washington, and construction of additional retaining walls to facilitate widening of Route 47 to standard, replacing guiderail and minor roadway realignment.

11:15 AM Administrative Items:

- a) **ACTION** - Approval of 2024 NHCOG Regional Legislative Priorities (*Attachment B*)
- b) **ACTION** - Recommendation for NHCOG Local Dues for FY 24-25 (*Attachment C*)
- c) **ACTION** - Approval of the Regular Meeting Minutes for the January 11, 2024, Regular Meeting (*Attachment D*)
- d) **ACTION** - Approval of Financial Statements for December (*Attachment E*)

11:20 AM Open Discussion and Advisement for the Benefit of the NHCOG Membership
Meeting Adjournment.

Next NHCOG Regular Monthly Meeting – Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 10AM – FULL REMOTE



ATTACHMENT A

MEMORANDUM

To: NHCOC Board
From: Robert A Phillips, Executive Director
Date: February 5th, 2024
Re: Meeting Activity Log of the Executive Director

Please find the Executive Director's general activity log for meetings and discussions relating to the noted topics **since the January 11th Board Meeting of FY23-24**. If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please contact me at rphillips@northwesthillscog.org or via phone at 860-491-9884.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Coordinated with Rista and SHI, the consultant on our CEDS.
- Met with the NWCT ED Collaborative on the CEDS Development Process multiple times.
- Met with Lisa Mercurio of AdvanceCT to discuss partnership and data needs.

LAND USE PLANNING/PRESERVATION/CONSERVATION

- Coordinated with member and adjacent towns on land use regulation referrals.
- Attended Housing and Conservation Workshop hosted by Litchfield County for Housing Opportunity.
- Attended Housatonic River Association (HRC) meeting.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



- Met with ESF 7 Management team.
- Attended quarterly CT DEMHS Coordination Meeting

TRANSPORTATION/PUBLIC WORKS

- Met with DOT to discuss the RITS program funding.
- Continued to advocate for the advancement of the TRIP program.
- Resolved issues with DOT grant billing and tracking.

MSW

- Met with Mark Daley of MIRA DA, Brian Bartram of RRDD1, Ray Drew and Mayor Carbone of Torrington, Don Stein and Curtis Rand to discuss various MSW topics.

OTHER NHCOCG TOPICS

- Held a MSW Subcommittee kick-off meeting.
- Held a Legislative Committee Planning Meeting.
- Participated as a panelist on the Leadership Northwest: Corporate Leadership Panel for the Torrington Chamber of Commerce
- Attended CTCOG and OPM Legislative Planning Meeting
- Met with CIRMA to discuss organizational crime policy renewal.
- Participated in state GIS Flyover Data Verification meeting.
- Met with staff of MY OFFICE, LLC for bookkeeping and grants mnngt architecture purposes.
- Attended CCAPA, CAZEO and CT BAR Legislative planning meeting.
- Participated in multiple phone conversations with the state, towns, residents, and other stakeholders in the region on demand.

ATTACHMENT B

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Regional Legislative Priorities – 2024 Session

The following constitutes the Legislative Priorities, Positions and Recommendations of the NHCOC for the 2024 Legislative Session set to convene on February 7th. The 21 towns comprising NHCOC have a collective population of approximately 113,000 which is very nearly equivalent to the population of Waterbury, placing the region as a Top-5 most populated area demarcation in the state to just below that of the Capitol of Hartford. With that said, communities in the region have unique opportunities and challenges consistent with the nature of smaller communities unlike those of full-service towns.

Municipalities within the region share many of the same opportunities and challenges such as economic recovery concerns, rising energy costs including fuel and utilities, and logistical and inflation impacts on the cost of living of many residents, particularly those on fixed incomes. Many of the costs incurred by our towns are not being covered by federal and state programs, and municipal revenues continue to decline or are limited due to a lack of supporting and diversified tax bases. Therefore, support from our area legislators is more critical than ever as we seek more regionally based services, cost efficiencies and protection of quality of life in the Northwest Hills.

ENVIRONMENT:

- ◆ Address waste management, particularly due to the closure of MIRA. Outsourcing MSW to adjacent states is not a financially feasible alternative or long-term environmental solution.
- ◆ Support and help efforts by the council of governments to regionalize and operate former MIRA transfer stations.
- ◆ Eliminate out-of-state landfill diversion by providing recycling incentives and by developing source reduction technologies and innovations. These include but are not limited to packaging reduction, food waste diversion, organic food source reduction and anaerobic digestion technologies to reduce residual MSW. Additionally, the state must develop a plan to develop MSW technologies and facilities that will dispose of the remaining solid waste in an energy-efficient and environmentally sound manner.

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- ◆ Increase funding to assist municipalities in testing and remediating soil and wells contaminated in sodium chloride, magnesium chloride and PFAS and further investigate and assist municipalities in finding an alternative road treatment away from current harmful practices.

HOUSING

- ◆ Refrain from any proposals that would impact local control over planning and zoning.
- ◆ Continue support of the municipal housing trusts and seek ways to implement affordable housing options to secure the future of our workforce and present options for our aging life-long residents of the region so they can remain in the Northwest Hills.
- ◆ Support new or existing, non-deed restricted, accessory apartments to be included in the town's affordable housing computation and explore tax incentives for property owners to incentivize accessory apartment creation.
- ◆ Amend 8-30g, the Affordable Housing Appeals Process, to provide towns with greater flexibility to address local planning & zoning issues, i.e., adjust the 10% threshold for towns under 10,000 in population to 4-5%. Support local housing plans as submitted.
- ◆ Reject efforts to impose state-mandated affordable housing requirements on municipalities or penalize municipalities by making them ineligible for discretionary grants.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- ◆ Develop a formula for an allocation to communities, for tree management, including Ash Trees and other tree species.

BUDGET & PROPERTY TAXES

- ◆ Refrain from adopting any proposed elimination of car tax that would significantly burden municipalities and directly increase property tax further burdening our homeowners and businesses.
- ◆ Refrain from adopting any new or expanded property tax exemptions or caps shifting greater burden onto homeowners and businesses.
- ◆ Increase municipal aid to keep pace with inflation allowing municipalities to fund and complete projects promptly.
- ◆ Reduce or eliminate municipal match requirements and allow federal funding or in-kind contributions to meet match requirements in order to assist municipalities in using leverage on state and federal infrastructure funding.

EDUCATION

- ◆ The current mechanism to provide education funding does not meet the needs of Connecticut's student population and is overly reliant on local property tax revenue. The cost for public

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education in our state is over \$12.3 billion with local property taxpayers are burdened with more than 50% of that amount.

- ◆ Increase ECS funding to school districts and allow towns/regional school districts to adjust MBR and limit the state Board of Education's authority over MBR waivers.
- ◆ Increase funding for the Special Education Excess Cost Grant.
- ◆ Suggest developing mechanisms for regional school districts to equalize funding among member towns instead of relying solely on PPC.

REGIONAL & SHARED SERVICES

- ◆ Local governments are actively pursuing options for increasing interlocal collaboration and service sharing. The member towns of the NHCOG have long supported voluntary regionalism and have already regionalized many municipal facilities (schools, health districts, emergency dispatch) and services (cooperative purchasing, regional equipment sharing). Any new proposals should be presented as well-researched options and not state mandates.
- ◆ Further, Regional Councils of Government, particularly rural COGs are not fully funded to perform the activities most needed by their member municipalities.
- ◆ Support municipalities and remove barriers to voluntary regionalization and shared services by addressing collective bargaining and charter revision barriers.
- ◆ Support regional service needs by increasing funding allocations to the COGs from the Regional Service Grant (RSG) and Transportation Planning Funds (UPWP).

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- ◆ The economy of the Northwest Hills region is threatened by limited broadband infrastructure, limited transportation and housing options and an aging workforce. As one of the state's few federally recognized Economic Development Districts, the Northwest Hills has the opportunity to address these issues in a continually evolving Economic Development Strategy funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration; however, state support is critical to the region's efforts to bolster its economy.
- ◆ Allow towns to align with state courts and state agencies and to post legal notices on their municipal websites rather than being required to publish within physical newspapers with declining readership. This practice was proven successful during the pandemic.
- ◆ Support continued mandate relief measures. e.g., enact a higher prevailing wage threshold for renovation projects similar to what is applied for new construction.

ATTACHMENT C



Memo To: Council Members
From: Robert A Phillips, Executive Director
Date: January 22, 2024
Re: **NHCOG Membership Dues for FY 2024-2025**

Since COG dues are a component of your local budget preparation, each year at this time NHCOG’s Executive Committee reviews anticipated sources of income, expenditures and service level planning to determine the recommended annual municipal membership contributions for COG Board consideration.

Based upon this review, while using the 2021 population estimates from CT DPH (note - the 2022 estimates have been deemed faulty by DPH), the Executive Committee has recommended extending the current assessment ratio of \$0.80 per capita for FY 2024-2025. Thus, proposed dues distribution are only impacted by the change in population year over year in any given municipality as reported by DPH.

MUNICIPALITY	POPULATION			CURRENT DUES	PROPOSED - No Rate Increase
	2020	2021	DELTA		
BARKHAMSTED	3,650	3,647	-3	\$2,920.00	\$2,917.60
BURLINGTON	9,520	9,591	71	\$7,616.00	\$7,672.80
CANAAN (FV)	1,081	1,078	-3	\$864.80	\$862.40
COLEBROOK	1,360	1,357	-3	\$1,088.00	\$1,085.60
CORNWALL	1,566	1,571	5	\$1,252.80	\$1,256.80
GOSHEN	3,148	3,165	17	\$2,518.40	\$2,532.00
HARTLAND	1,900	1,891	-9	\$1,520.00	\$1,512.80
HARWINTON	5,470	5,508	38	\$4,376.00	\$4,406.40
KENT	3,014	2,984	-30	\$2,411.20	\$2,387.20
LITCHFIELD	8,165	8,170	5	\$6,532.00	\$6,536.00
MORRIS	2,250	2,259	9	\$1,800.00	\$1,807.20
NEW HARTFORD	6,652	6,668	16	\$5,321.60	\$5,334.40
NORFOLK	1,585	1,587	2	\$1,268.00	\$1,269.60
NORTH CANAAN	3,198	3,185	-13	\$2,558.40	\$2,548.00
ROXBURY	2,260	2,269	9	\$1,808.00	\$1,815.20
SALISBURY	4,191	4,112	-79	\$3,352.80	\$3,289.60
SHARON	2,675	2,675	0	\$2,140.00	\$2,140.00
TORRINGTON	35,422	35,357	-65	\$28,337.60	\$28,285.60
WARREN	1,348	1,349	1	\$1,078.40	\$1,079.20
WASHINGTON	3,644	3,633	-11	\$2,915.20	\$2,906.40
WINCHESTER	10,226	10,217	-9	\$8,180.80	\$8,173.60
TOTAL	112,325	112,273	-52	\$89,860.00	\$89,818.40

Data Source: CT Department of Public Health Estimates Ending 2021

Action on the Executive Committee’s recommendation is scheduled for our February NHCOG regular board meeting. Adoption of the NHCOG budget for FY 2024-2025 will occur at the May or June Meeting per the By-Laws.

Thank you for your consideration.



MINUTES OF THE NHCOC MEETING

January 11, 2024, 10:00a

REMOTE

ATTACHMENT D

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

ATTACHMENT E

NHCOG				
FINANCIAL REPORT				
DECEMBER 2023 YEAR TO DATE - ACCRUAL BASIS				
	Month	YTD	NHCOG BUDGET	% Budget used
	DECEMBER		FY 2023-2024	
OPERATING INCOME				
Regional Service Grant		488,098	\$ 488,098	100%
ConnDOT SPR and Federal Transit		81,526	\$ 322,128	25%
RITS			\$ 10,000	0%
LOTICIP			\$ 7,500	0%
DEMHS	-	34,007	\$ 56,000	61%
HRSA Grant	11,728	80,172	\$ 145,758	55%
HRC Grant		3,500	\$ 1,470	238%
EDA Partnership			\$ 10,000	0%
Housatonic River Wild and Scenic NPS Fiduciary			\$ 13,500	0%
Found for Com Health-Rx Assist			\$ 3,000	0%
Bershire Taconic N2N			\$ 1,500	0%
Building Healthier Communities Produce Rx Pro		1,756	\$ 1,756	100%
Local Dues		54,026	\$ 54,026	100%
Pass through Revenue	81,251	191,761	\$ 928,350	21%
National Opioid	9,445	32,344	\$ -	
	\$ 102,424	\$ 967,190	\$ 2,043,086	
STAFFING				
Salaries - Direct	48,716	251,693	\$ 671,596	37%
Employee Benefits (Fringe & PTO) and Payroll Expenses	20,123	82,415	\$ 329,357	25%
Staffing Subtotal	\$ 68,839	\$ 334,107	\$ 1,000,953	33%
OVERHEAD COSTS				
Audit (Fiscal Services)	1,125	8,275	\$ 19,000	44%
Bonds/Property Insurance		16,826	\$ 19,000	89%
Dues, Subscriptions, Publications	-	815	\$ 3,000	27%
Equipment Maintenance	-	1,108	\$ 5,000	22%
Office Supplies	26	7,441	\$ 3,000	248%
Postage	-	242	\$ 250	97%
Printing Services, Reproduction			\$ 1,000	0%
Rent	2,640	12,944	\$ 25,692	50%
Utilities	-	1,319	\$ 6,000	22%
Telephone, Computers & Internet	173	2,554	\$ 7,000	36%
Cleaning Service/MSW Disposal	-	225	\$ 2,000	11%
Travel & Conferences	347	2,228	\$ 8,000	28%
Miscellaneous	-	951	\$ 3,500	27%
Contingency (Moving net with interest income)	745	33,505	\$ 5,000	670%
Overhead Subtotal	\$ 5,056	\$ 88,433	\$ 107,442	82%
Passthrough Expenditures (Contractual)	\$ 11,015	\$ 396,076	\$ 928,350	43%
CAPITAL AND NON-RECURRING				
Equipment (computers, furniture, hardware, etc)		-	\$ 6,341	0%
Capital and Non-recurring Subtotal	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,341	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 84,911	\$ 818,616	\$ 2,043,086	
NET	\$ 17,513	\$ 148,574	\$ -	
Bank Accounts-Balance 12/31/23				
Certificate of Deposit #1-6996		48,173		
Certificate of Deposit #2-2036		48,495		
Certificate of Deposit #3-0783		61,093		
Certificate of Deposit NWCB		220,456		
STIF - NHCOG General Fund		381,308		
TSB Checking		374,580		
Total Bank Accounts		1,134,105		
Statement of Cash Flows				
July - DECEMBER, 2023				
		Total		
OPERATING ACTIVITIES				
Net Income		148,574		
Adjustments to reconcile Net Income to Net Cash provided by operations:				
Net change in accounts receivable		178,411		
Net change in accounts payable		(158,331)		
Total Adjustments to reconcile Net Income to Net Cash provided by operations:		20,080		
Net cash provided by operating activities		168,654		
Net cash increase for period		168,654		
Cash at beginning of period		965,452		
Cash at end of period		1,134,105		