



Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WCCOG)

November 20th, 2014 - 12:30 pm

Wilton Town Hall

238 Danbury Road, Wilton, CT 06877

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES (on 1/22/15)

In Attendance:

Wilton	William Brennan, First Selectman & WCCOG Acting Co-Chair
Bethel	Richard Straiton, Selectman [for Matthew Knickerbocker]
Bridgewater	Curtis Read, First Selectman
Brookfield	[Absent]
Danbury	Wayne Shepperd, Chief of Staff [for Mayor Mark Boughton]
Darien	Jayne Stevenson, First Selectman
Greenwich	Peter Tesei, First Selectman
New Canaan	Robert Mallozzi, First Selectman
New Fairfield	Susan Chapman, First Selectman
New Milford	Patricia Murphy, Mayor
Newtown	Patricia Llodra, First Selectman
Norwalk	[Absent]
Redding	Julia Pemberton, First Selectman
Ridgefield	Rudy Marconi, First Selectman
Sherman	Clay Cope, First Selectman
Stamford	John Louizos, Chair, Stamford Board of Finance [for Mayor David Martin]
Weston	Gayle Weinstein, First Selectman
Westport	James Marpe, First Selectman
WCCOG:	Craig Leiner, Executive Director

Agenda:

- 1) **Meeting Call to Order**
WCCOG Acting Co-Chair Hon. William Brennan (Wilton)
- 2) **Public Participation**
- 3) **Action Items - Administrative**
 - a. **Approval of Minutes of first WCCOG meeting on 10-13-2014.**
 - b. **Nominating Committee Report and Election of Officers.**
 - c. **As per bylaws, appoint a subcommittee to make recommendations on the organizational structure, need, functions and benefits of a Regional Planning Committee.**
- 4) **Action Items – Financial Operations**
 - a. **Endorse signing authority resolution for State contracts.**
 - b. **Endorse banking institutions, authorize accounts and signing authority resolution.**
 - c. **Approval for FY2015 HVCEO and SWRPA membership assessments to be directed to WCCOG, and for assessments for FY2016 to remain unchanged from FY2015.**
 - d. **Adopt FY2015 WCCOG Budget to consist of the combination of the FY2015 SWRPA and FY2015 HVCEO budgets for period 1/1/15 to 6/30/15.**
 - e. **Resolution for the WCCOG credit card.**
 - f. **Calendar of 2015 COG Meetings.**

- 5) **Action Items – Activate WCCOG Employment Practices**
 - a. **Adopt recommended Employee Handbook to be effective 1/1/2015.**
 - b. **Adopt PASI, LLC Recommended Pension Plan to be effective 1/1/2015 and assign Chairman, Treasurer and Executive Director as pension trustees.**
 - i. **Summary of Employer Retirement Plan (401s).**
 - ii. **Summary of Elective Employee Retirement Plan (457b).**
 - iii. **Resolution naming Executive Director, Chairman, and Treasurer as Pension Trustees.**
 - 6) **Action Items – Other**
 - a. **Proposed Stamford Transit Oriented Development (TOD) application.**
 - 7) **Inter-municipal Considerations**
 - a. **Legislative Policy Subcommittee Report: Mayor Boughton, First Selectmen Pemberton and Weinstein**
 - i. **Legislative Breakfast: Priorities list**
 - b. **Discussion of Municipal Preparation and Response to the threat of Ebola**
 - 8) **Other Business**
 - 9) **Next Meeting: Date and location of next meeting**
 - 10) **Adjournment of COG Meeting**
 - 11) **Convene SWRMPO and HVCEO-MPO Meetings**
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Prior to the official start of the meeting, Hon. Brennan acknowledged the presence of recently hired WCCOG Executive Director Craig Leiner and welcomed him. Mr. Leiner offered a few remarks about his background and his desire to quickly meet with each Council member to gain a better understanding of the COG's goals and needs. Mr. Leiner is currently residing in Massachusetts but will transition to Connecticut shortly.

- 1) Meeting Call to Order - WCCOG Acting Co-Chair Hon. William Brennan (Wilton)

The meeting was called to order by Hon. Brennan of Wilton at 12:32 p.m. Hon. Brennan greeted all present to the second official meeting of the WCCOG and asked each representative to introduce himself / herself. He explained that Co-Chair Hon. Knickerbocker was unable to attend the meeting and sent alternate, Mr. Richard Straiton, Bethel Selectman in his stead.

- 2) Public Participation

Mr. Russell Cornelius from the HV Tick-borne Illness Committee introduced himself and wished to note their active ongoing involvement within the Housatonic Valley region communities directed toward educational and public awareness activities in schools, etc. with regard to the dangers and prevention of tick-borne illnesses and hopes his group can be of assistance to other communities of the newly merged region.

- 3) Action Items - Administrative
 - a. Approval of Minutes from October 23, 2014 COG Meeting.

MOTION: A motion was set forth by Hon. Mallozzi to approve the COG minutes of October 23, 2014. Hon. Marconi seconded.

Hon. Brennan called upon Deputy Director Dave Hannon to brief the group on a legal opinion regarding voting privileges during the transitional period of the COG formation according to State Statute. Mr. Hannon explained that HVCEO Attorney Daniel Cassagrande rendered an opinion that representatives from all municipalities within the Western Connecticut planning region may vote on COG matters until December 31, 2014. Hon. Stevenson asked that in the future an attendance sheet pre-populated with all official members and their alternates be provided to take roll call more efficiently. The WCCOG staff will prepare this.

Motion passes. 14-0-2 (Abstentions by Wayne Shepperd and John Louizos)

b. Nominating Committee Report and Election of Officers

MOTION: Hon. Brennan moved to accept the report of the Nominating Committee and called for a vote on the following candidates. Hon. Marpe seconded.

Hon. Brennan noted that the Nomination Committee consisted of Hon. Murphy of New Milford, Hon. Llodra of Newtown, Hon. Chapman of New Fairfield, Hon. Tesei of Greenwich, and Hon. Mallozzi of New Canaan. Hon. Llodra personally spoke to each individual to gain their approval willingness to serve. She then advanced the following four names for officer positions of the COG whose terms would be effective from November 20, 2014 through December 30, 2015 when new elections would take place.

- Hon. Matthew Knickerbocker, Chairman [*Bethel*]
- Hon. Jayme Stevenson, Vice-Chairman [*Darien*]
- Hon. Gayle Weinstein, Treasurer [*Weston*]
- Hon. Susan Chapman, Secretary [*New Fairfield*]

Elections were held by a show of hands, and the slate of officers were unanimously selected.

The motion carried unanimously. 16-0-0.

c. Subcommittee to explore a Regional Planning Commission

MOTION: Hon. Brennan moved to establish a Regional Planning Sub-committee. Mr. Straiton seconded.

Hon. Brennan explained the need for a subcommittee to explore and make recommendations on the organizational structure, need, functions and benefits of a Regional Planning Committee. Since both the SWRPA and HVCEO regions have handled the matters of regional planning differently, and because the WCCOG Bylaws state that within sixty days of the first Council meeting, a committee needed to be formed to discuss how the new organization would address regional planning issues, he called for volunteers. The goal of the Committee would be to serve as an advisory committee to the full Council by condensing complex planning issues. Hon. Mallozzi noted that the former SWRPA practice was to include their municipal planning directors as members of a Planning Directors' meeting. A short discussion ensued to gain a full understanding of the purpose for the Committee, and concern was expressed that it may be another layer of bureaucracy, which few really desire. WCCOG Executive Director would participate as an ex officio member. Four Council members volunteered to form the sub-committee: Hon. Mallozzi; Hon. Rudy Marconi; Hon. Marpe; and Hon. Murphy.

The motion carried unanimously. 16-0-0.

4) Action Items – Financial Operations

a. Endorse Resolution to name Authorized Signers for State Contracts

MOTION: Hon. Brennan made a motion to add and approve the Resolution as stated naming two of the newly elected officers: Chairman, Hon. Knickerbocker; Vice Chairman, Hon. Stevenson; and WCCOG Executive Director Craig Leiner as authorized signers on State contracts. Hon. Murphy seconded.

Upon the vote, the motion carried unanimously. 16-0-0.

b. Endorse Banking institutions, authorize accounts and signing authority resolutions

MOTION: Hon. Brennan made a motion to accept the WCCOG Banking Resolution as stated naming three of the newly elected officers: Chairman, Hon. Knickerbocker; Vice Chairman, Hon. Stevenson; Treasurer Hon. Weinstein; and WCCOG Executive Director Craig Leiner as authorized signers on the accounts. Hon. Llodra seconded.

The motion carried unanimously. 16-0-0.

- c. Approval for the FY2015 HVCEO and SWRPA membership assessments to be directed to WCCOG, and for FY2016 assessments to remain unchanged from FY2015

Hon. Brennan explained that the Merger Committee had discussed the need for a uniform dues structure for WCCOG, since the two former agencies used different methods to calculate municipal dues. It was ultimately decided that this issue would be tabled until next year so that other more pressing matters could be worked upon. The Merger Committee proposed that the following dues structure remain unchanged until after FY2015:

Municipality	FY 2014-2015
Darien	\$ 7,003
Greenwich	\$ 23,314
New Canaan	\$ 8,747
Norwalk	\$ 23,497
Stamford	\$ 34,232
Weston	\$ 6,136
Westport	\$ 9,797
Wilton	\$ 9,271
Bethel	\$ 14,969
Bridgewater	\$ 3,180
Brookfield	\$ 14,281
Danbury	\$ 32,354
New Fairfield	\$ 13,047
New Milford	\$ 18,272
Newtown	\$ 17,465
Redding	\$ 11,092
Ridgefield	\$ 19,486
Sherman	\$ 3,439
TOTAL	\$ 269,582

MOTION: Hon. Brennan made a motion to approve the level of municipal dues remain unchanged until after FY2015. Hon. Marconi seconded.

The motion carried unanimously. 16-0-0.

- d. Adopt FY2015 WCCOG Budget to consist of the combination of the FY2015 SWRPA and FY2015 HVCEO budgets for period 1/1/15 to 6/30/15

MOTION: Hon. Brennan made a motion to approve the 6-month WCCOG budget. Richard Straiton seconded.

A brief discussion ensued which included the changes from the draft budget provided at the October 23rd COG meeting. Patricia Payne and Josephine Harvey, WCCOG financial staff, addressed the questions and assured that the monthly financial reporting would provide full transparency and staff will facilitate reviews by Treasurer Weinstein. Mr. Leiner noted he anticipates that the Executive Committee will meet on a regular basis and will be afforded a regular briefing on the budget and financial reports; as well, the Executive Committee will discuss future protocols, administrative matters, and any changes/amendments to the budget for presentation to the full Council.

MOTION: The motion carried unanimously. 16-0-0.

- e. Resolution for WCCOG credit card

MOTION: Hon. Brennan made a motion to approve the issuance of a WCCOG credit card through Bank of America, naming Executive Director Craig Leiner. Hon. Weinstein seconded.

A question was raised as to how the credit card expenditures would be reflected on the financial statements (i.e., are they separate or embedded), to which Patricia Payne replied that each expense would be shown in the appropriate budgeted line item.

MOTION: The motion carried unanimously. 16-0-0.

f. Calendar of 2015 COG meetings

MOTION: Hon. Brennan made a motion to approve a 2015 calendar of scheduled WCCOG meetings. Hon. Hon Stevenson seconded.

Hon. Brennan called attention to the draft schedule of meetings for 2015 provided in the meeting packet that kept the pattern of the third Thursday of each month for a 12 noon luncheon and 12:30 p.m. meeting, although it was duly noted there would be no meeting in December 2014. Hon. Stevenson proposed that in order to familiarize the group with the entire region, each meeting could be hosted by a different municipality. There was general support for this idea, and the following municipalities volunteered to hold the 2015 COG meetings:

January	Sherman
February	Darien
March	New Milford
April	Greenwich
May	Newtown
June	Stamford
July	Bethel
August	New Canaan
September	Redding
October	Westport
November	Danbury
December	Weston

The motion carried unanimously. 16-0-0.

5) Action Items – Activate WCCOG Employment Practices

a. Adopt Recommended Employee Handbook effective January 1, 2015

MOTION: Hon. Brennan made a motion to adopt the draft WCCOG Employee Handbook. Hon. Marconi seconded.

Hon. Brennan noted that a great deal of work went into establishing the new policies and procedures by the Merger Committee. He then recognized Mr. Robert Byrnes, past Chairman of SWRPA, in his human resources lead role on this Committee. Hon. Weinstein echoed the group’s sentiment and presented Mr. Byrnes with a thank you gift and the group provided a round of applause.

The motion carried unanimously. 16-0-0.

b. Adopt PASI, LLC Recommended Pension Plans to be effective January 1, 2015 assigning Chairman, Treasurer and Executive Director as pension trustees: 1) 401(a) Employer defined contribution plan, and 2) 457(b) Employee contribution plan.

MOTION: Hon. Brennan made a motion to adopt the proposed WCCOG Employee Pension Plans, as prepared by pension consultants PASI, LLC., naming Chairman, Hon. Knickerbocker; Treasurer, Hon. Weinstein; and Executive Director Craig Leiner as Pension Trustees. Hon. Cope seconded.

Hon. Brennan noted the summary of the two pension plans proposed in the meeting materials. These Plans were thoroughly examined during the work of the Merger Committee and crafted by qualified pension consultants.

The motion carried unanimously. 16-0-0.

6) Action Items – Other

a. Proposed Stamford Transit Oriented Development (TOD) application

MOTION: Mr. Straiton made a motion to adopt the resolution endorsing the Stamford Transit Oriented Development grant application. Hon. Stevenson seconded.

Mr. David Woods, Principal Planner for the City of Stamford described the proposed application, which will further the findings of the *Stamford East Main Street Transit Node Feasibility Study (2013)*, work that SWRPA performed. The *Stamford East Main Street TOD Implementation Plan* effort will build upon and advance the findings of multiple plans and studies (including bike-ped initiatives) that have been conducted by city, regional and state agencies and transportation authorities.

The motion carried unanimously. 16-0-0.

7) Inter-Municipal Considerations

a. Legislative Policy Subcommittee report – Joint Legislative Breakfast on December 11, 2014

Hon. Weinstein noted that during the past month this sub-committee decided upon the desirability of a joint regional effort to conduct an annual Legislative Breakfast Briefing with Connecticut State Legislators. The subcommittee included Hon. Boughton; Hon. Weinstein; and Hon. Pemberton. A strategy for presenting 4-5 key legislative priorities, along with a sub-listing of other noted, but important legislative initiatives be advanced. The meeting is to be held at 8 a.m. at the Prospector Theater, 25 Prospect Street, Ridgefield. Discussion ensued on the proposed top priorities, and it was determined to include 5 key legislative objectives: 1) Implement Improvements to the Danbury & New Canaan Branches; 2) Modify §8-30g Requirements to create Incentives to Develop Affordable Housing; 3) Modify Proposed Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Stormwater Regulations to Limit Undue Burden on Municipalities; 4) Prevent Cuts to Municipal Aid; and 5) Prevailing Wage Initiative (noted was the need for providing specific supporting examples and evidence).

b. Discussion of Municipal Preparation and Response to the threat of Ebola

Hon. Brennan applauded the efforts of the City of Norwalk which hosted a recent conference and presentation about the threat of Ebola to our region. Mr. Dave Hannon then introduced Ms. Donna Culbert, Newtown-Bridgewater-Roxbury Health District and Ms. Lisa King-Riley, Region 5 Emergency Support Function Chair, Danbury Health Department, who provided an overview and handout about the various actions being taken to provide “active monitoring” and isolation protocols to contain any possible threat of Ebola. Regional coordination efforts are focusing on keeping all residents and medical partners informed about actions by our public health systems. There have been no such reported cases of Ebola in Connecticut to date, however, local EMS and first responders, along with hospitals are all being trained to respond effectively in the event of a potential threat.

8) Other Business

9) Next Meeting

Thursday, January 22nd, 2015 in Sherman: 12:00pm lunch. 12:30pm meeting.

10) Adjournment of WCCOG Meeting

MOTION: Hon. Brennan makes a motion to adjourn at 2:05 p.m. Hon. Stevenson seconds. The motion carries unanimously. 16-0-0.

11) Convene SWRMPO and HVCEO-MPO Meetings at approximately 2:15 p.m.

Following the WCCOG meeting, SWRMPO and HVCEO-MPO meetings convened.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Payne
Office & Financial Administrator

Others in Attendance:

Michael Pollard, Chief of Staff, City of Stamford
Rick Schreiner, HART Transit
Stephanie Scavelli, HART Transit
David Woods, Principal Planner, City of Stamford
Roxane Fromson, Connecticut Department of Transportation
Russell Cornelius, HVCEO Tick Borne Illness Committee, Brookfield
Eileen Lavigne Flug, Westport RTM Moderator
Kevin Maloney, CCM
Robert Byrnes, SWRPA Chairman
Margaret Wirtenberg, Weston resident
Jo-Anne Horvath, Norwalk resident
Hon. Gail Lavielle, State Representative (Wilton, Westport, Norwalk)
Hon. Jonathan Steinberg, District Representative
Donna Culbert, Newtown Health District/HVR PHEP Chair
Lisa King-Riley, Region 5 ESF 8 Chair/Danbury Health Department

WCCOG Staff:

Jonathan Chew
David Hannon
Josephine Harvey
Alex Karman
Robert Sachnin
Michael Towle
Susan Prosi
Patricia Payne
Carl Zimmerman
Floyd Lapp