

## Meeting of the Western Connecticut Council of Governments

**December 17, 2015 – 12:30 p.m.  
Weston Town Hall, 56 Norfield Road, Weston, CT 06883**

### Agenda

1. **MEETING CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL:** Hon. Matthew Knickerbocker, Chairman
2. **FEATURED GUESTS:**
  - Ted Bromley (Secretary Merrill's office) – Regional Election Monitors
  - Dept. of Public Health, and Consultants – Water Utility Coordination Committee Process
3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
4. **ACTION ITEMS:**

a) Approval of November 19, 2015 Minutes	Attachment 4.a, pp. 1-3
b) Treasurer's Report for the month of October, 2015	Attachment 4.b, pp. 4-11
c) Resolution Authorizing Execution of Agreements with State of CT to Perform Regional GIS Service	Attachment 4.c, pg. 12
d) Legislative Priorities	
e) Preliminary Approval of Bylaw Amendment re. Council Officers	Attachment 4.e., pg. 13
f) Office Consolidation	Attachment 4.f., pp. 14-15
g) Preliminary Assessments	Attachment 4.g., pp. 16-17
5. **INFORMATION ITEMS:**

a) Legislative Breakfast	
b) CEDS Update	
c) RPPIP Grants	Attachment 5.c, pg. 18
d) Regional CRS Program, CIRCA Grant Award	Attachment 5.d, pg. 19
6. **STAFF PRESENTATION:**
  - Long Range Transportation Plans
7. **NEXT MEETING:** January 21, 2016 at the Ridgefield Library
8. **ADJOURNMENT**

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# Western Connecticut

## COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



11/19/2015 DRAFT MINUTES

## WESTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

MEETING AT DANBURY CITY HALL

155 DEER HILL AVENUE, DANBURY, CT 06810

Chairman Matthew Knickerbocker / Vice Chairman Jayme Stevenson

Secretary Susan Chapman / Treasurer Position Vacant

### MEMBERS ATTENDING

Bethel	First Selectman Matthew Knickerbocker
Bridgewater	First Selectman Curtis Read
Brookfield	Absent
Danbury	Mayor Mark Boughton
Darien	First Selectman Jayme Stevenson
Greenwich	First Selectman Peter Tesei
New Canaan	First Selectman Robert Mallozzi
New Fairfield	First Selectman Susan Chapman
New Milford	Absent
Newtown	First Selectman Patricia Llodra
Norwalk	Absent
Redding	Absent
Ridgefield	First Selectman Rudy Marconi
Sherman	First Selectman Clay Cope
Stamford	Development Director Thomas Madden (non-voting)
Weston	First Selectman Nina Daniel
Westport	First Selectman James Marpe
Wilton	Absent

### OTHERS ATTENDING

State Representative Gail Lavielle, from the Connecticut Green Bank Emily Basham and Isabelle Hazlewood, Roxane Fromson of CT DOT, Richard Schreiner and Stephanie Scavelli of HARTtransit, Charles Burnham and Tracy Alston of Eversource, Margaret Wirtenberg of Weston, Susan Doskon of Johnson Controls, WestCOG Director Francis Pickering and staff.

### CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:35 P.M. by Chairman Matthew Knickerbocker. He also welcomed new member Nina Daniel. He is recognizing the contributions of the four departing members with certificates of appreciation from the Council, he said.

Mark Boughton then welcomed the Council to Danbury. He presented each member with a book on the History of Danbury and a souvenir mug with the City logo.

#### **REMARKS BY CONNECTICUT GREEN BANK**

Matt Knickerbocker welcomed Emily Basham and Isabelle Hazlewood of the Connecticut Green Bank. They then gave a presentation on how affordable financing can make green energy solutions practical for residential and commercial properties.

The Green Bank also assists municipalities with upgrading their municipal policies and application formats for renewable energy projects, including provision of a list of certified equipment vendors. The staff will be pleased to attend meetings with building department and other officials.

The presentation was followed by discussion. Rob Mallozzi, Thomas Madden and Jim Marpe stated that Connecticut Green Bank services had been successfully utilized in their communities. Matt Knickerbocker then thanked the presenters for their informative visit.

#### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

On behalf of the League of Women Voters of Weston, Margaret Wirtenberg thanked the Council for recent GIS mapping assistance.

Charles Burnham and Tracy Alston of Eversource distributed information on changes to electricity rates.

#### **ACTION ITEMS**

##### **Approval of 10/22/2015 Minutes**

After review and on a motion made by Mark Boughton and seconded by Jim Marpe, the minutes of the meeting of 10/22/2015 were unanimously approved, with an abstention by Peter Tesei.

##### **Quarterly Financial Report thru 9/30/2015**

Staff member Patricia Payne reviewed agenda attachments relating to the quarterly financial report. There was discussion of these items.

Then on a motion made by Jayme Stevenson and a second by Jim Marpe the quarterly financial report was unanimously approved.

##### **Nominating Committee for Election of Officers**

Matt Knickerbocker noted that the bylaws require officers to be elected at an annual meeting, the next date for which is January 21, 2016. Towards that end he needs four members to serve on a Nominating Committee. Volunteers were Clay Cope, Curtis Read, Susan Chapman and Peter Tesei.

##### **Meeting Dates for 2016**

Members reviewed an agenda attachment providing a meeting schedule for 2016, the location to be the Ridgefield Library, luncheon at noon with the monthly COG meeting to start at 12:30 PM. A discussion followed as to the advantages and disadvantages of eventually folding into the COG meeting the two monthly MPO meetings.

After further discussion and on a motion made by Rob Mallozzi and a second by Jim Marpe, the 2016 dates and location for the monthly meetings were unanimously approved.

#### **INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION:**

##### **Office Consolidation**

Francis Pickering discussed the current negotiations for office space.

#### **Annual Legislative Meeting**

The WestCOG legislative Committee met and is preparing a draft legislative agenda for member review. A date for the meeting with legislators will be selected shortly.

#### **Upcoming Grant Opportunities**

On a motion made by Susan Chapman and a second by Rudy Marconi it was voted unanimously to add this item to the agenda. Francis Pickering reviewed various upcoming grant opportunities.

However an immediate problem is the proposed Congressional change to Federal Transit Administration capital grant criterial from a formula base to a discretionary process, with a potential loss to Connecticut of \$25 million annually. Stamford, Norwalk and Danbury based transit systems would be hurt.

Director Pickering presented a draft letter from the Council opposing this change, as embodied in the Herrera-Beutler Amendment to the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act. There was discussion and the wording of the draft letter was slightly revised.

Then on a motion made by Matt Knickerbocker and a second by Susan Chapman, a letter for the Chairman's signature opposing the Herrera-Beutler Amendment was authorized for transmittal to federal representatives.

#### **Presentation on Road Safety in the Region**

Staff members Rob Sachnin and Michael Towle then made a presentation entitled "Road Safety in the Region." The importance of the analysis of safety statistics in order to attract improvement funding was emphasized.

Staff capability is available to extract data from various sources and combine it with GIS mapping and photo logs to pinpoint and document the magnitude of safety problems, they said. Examples where shown of past and potential uses in project development for WestCOG communities.

Francis Pickering stated that in the past municipal applications to the federal Local Road Accident Reduction Program had been limited due to the safety data analysis challenges to municipal staff, and that this work can be transferred to WestCOG.

There was discussion. Clay Cope said he would like a copy of the presentation for his Sherman Traffic Safety Working Group. As other members would also like a copy, it will be forwarded to all members and the SWRMPO TTAG.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS / NEXT MEETING / ADJOURNMENT**

Pat Llodra stated that each municipality had been offered an opportunity to comment upon the draft Northeast Rail Corridor improvement plan and that it is preferable for comments to be generated regionally by the WestCOG staff.

Matt Knickerbocker noted that the next WestCOG meeting will be hosted by Weston on Thursday, December 17, 2015.

There being no further business, on a motion made by Susan Chapman and seconded by Jayme Stevenson, the meeting was adjourned at 1:40 PM.

# Western Connecticut COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



December 7, 2015

TO: Matthew Knickerbocker, Chairman  
 FROM: Patty Payne, Senior Financial Manager  
 RE: October 2015 Financial Reports

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Attached are the October 31, 2015 WestCOG financial reports. These reports will be provided in the COG packet for December 17<sup>th</sup>, although there is NO Quarterly Treasurer's Report scheduled for this meeting (for information only). I would like to recommend that the financial reports be distributed on a quarterly basis instead of monthly basis because it seems prudent to have them included only when the Treasurer gives an oral report, unless of course there is some other reason to point attention to the financials.

#### Operating Statement Comments:

- Revenue Section
  - Although our budget indicates our OPM SGIA Funding to be \$125,000; the total will is actually \$544,567.50. The new WestCOG Treasurer can make the decision to amend the budget here and in other places if he/she desires.
- Expense Section
  - We are currently showing an \$89,920 surplus at the conclusion of our first quarter. We are accruing this surplus due to the increased funding from OPM. We are able to use the SGIA from OPM for matching funds on some of our projects which would otherwise have to be matched with local funding. This allows us to bank the municipal dues for future Council-determined projects or decisions.
  - Some of the service agreements are “in-out” and part of certain grants, so these are direct costs, which are not broken out on the Operating Statement.

#### Balance Sheet Comments:

- We are in balance; however, we will establish the correct amounts for “Fund Balance Designated” and “Fund Balance Undesignated” after the June 30, 2015 audit is complete, which will be by the end of December. The undesignated amount will become the amount that WestCOG can use to dedicate match money to new projects, capital expenditures, or by Council vote use as deemed necessary.
- Accounts Receivables are very high due to a delay in the AG’s office on our transportation contracts. All other contract reimbursements are being executed in a timely fashion.
- Again, worthy of mention: The accrued pension amount appears as a negative number, which really means it is an asset. By way of explanation, this is because of an audit adjustment that will be further adjusted by the end of the audit. It appears as a negative balance as a liability, which really means it is an asset. When SWRPA closed out its defined

benefit pension plan, and after disbursements, it was found to be overfunded. The amount of \$95,590 was returned to SWRPA (now WestCOG). In this first adjustment, it is credited to the pension expense. The amount will be further adjusted after we know what the first employer contribution will be for the new WestCOG 401(a) pension plan in December after census information is compiled.

- The “Due to/from HVCEO and SWRPA” are amounts that are still in audit process; these will disappear through a final audit adjustment in December.

**Audit Comments (January 1, 2015 to June 30, 2015):**

- Our auditors (*Henry, Raymond & Thompson*) are still working on this audit. The final stub audits for the SWRPA and HVCEO period July 1 – December 31, 2014 have been completed, sent to the State and have been approved. The combined fund balance from SWRPA and HVCEO that is transferred to WestCOG is **\$1,022,964** (net position @ 12/31/14).

**Budget Comments:**

- **FY15-16 Budget Adjustment Considerations:**
  - Due to a new Associate Planner position in September, the salary, payroll taxes, pension, and fringe benefit expense line items would need adjustment. This position was unknown at the time of the budget approval.
  - We have received our full SGIA funding; therefore, we could increase this revenue line item.
  - It is not necessary to adjust the budget (*we can show negative variances*), however, if the Council elects to, I can easily correctly adjust this mid-year, as of 12/31/15.
- **FY16-17 Draft Budget:**
  - We are preparing the draft budget. Although there are many unknowns, the municipal dues structure is the most urgent requirement so we can help the municipalities know what to place in their budgets.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Regards,

Patty Payne  
Sr. Financial Manager

cc:      *Francis Pickering, Executive Director*  
          *Josephine Harvey, Financial Manager*

**Western CT Council of Governments**  
**Operating Statement**  
**For the Four Months Ending October 31, 2015**

	Current Month Actual	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance Variance	Annual Budget
<b>Revenues</b>					
SWRMPO FHWA/PL Trans	51,266	190,171	284,933	(94,762)	854,800
HVMPO FHWA/PL Transp	31,613	137,173	141,430	(4,257)	424,289
Local Municipal Dues (SW)	10,166	40,666	40,666	0	121,997
Local Municipal Dues (HV)	12,299	49,196	49,196	0	147,589
Haz Mit Plan Update (SW)	0	0	4,898	(4,898)	14,694
Haz Mit Plan Update (HV)	0	4,609	7,500	(2,891)	22,500
LOTCIP (SW)	0	0	49,720	(49,720)	149,160
LOTCIP (HV)	0	5,154	34,154	(29,000)	102,461
DEMHS CERT Grant	1,086	2,416	1,000	1,416	3,000
RPI GIS Grant	7,502	20,483	108,333	(87,850)	325,000
Stamford Bus & Shuttle Stud	46,694	124,321	56,250	68,071	168,750
Wspt Rail Parking Study	0	0	112,500	(112,500)	337,500
OPM SGIA Funding	50,241	155,653	41,667	113,986	125,000
Ridgefield TOD Contract	37,545	61,572	50,340	11,232	151,020
Ridgefield TOD Municipal	4,693	7,697	0	7,697	0
Rte 7 Impl-Phase 3	0	505	25,000	(24,495)	75,000
Interest Income	69	307	600	(293)	1,800
HRRA Rental Income	525	2,100	2,100	0	6,300
HV DEMHS Reg 5 PL	1,600	2,900	5,807	(2,907)	17,422
HV Public Health Planning	800	800	4,833	(4,033)	14,500
Total Revenues	<u>256,099</u>	<u>805,723</u>	<u>1,020,927</u>	<u>(215,204)</u>	<u>3,062,782</u>

**Direct Contract Expense**

Project Consultants (SW)	54,764	140,138	399,980	(259,842)	1,199,940
Project Consultants (HV)	50,173	86,706	107,024	(20,318)	321,071
Health Dept-Consultant	800	1,840	4,000	(2,160)	12,000
HV Shelter Study	0	4,919	3,333	1,586	10,000
Reproduction Expense	0	0	833	(833)	2,500
Direct Ads/Legal Notic Expe	0	0	667	(667)	2,000
Maintenance Agmnt Expense	3,252	12,252	14,000	(1,748)	42,000
Direct Travel/Mtg. Expense	893	5,267	3,173	2,094	9,520

**Personnel Expense**

Salaries-Regular	74,890	295,256	293,013	2,243	879,040
Pension 401(a) ER Contrib	7,813	25,138	23,100	2,038	69,300
Employer Payroll Taxes	5,893	23,348	23,722	(374)	71,167
Fringe Benefits	14,782	49,139	53,380	(4,241)	160,140

**General Overhead Expense**

Payroll/Acct Services	192	779	833	(54)	2,500
Audit/Legal Expense	0	0	6,667	(6,667)	20,000
Other Contracted Services	0	0	1,000	(1,000)	3,000
Rent	4,914	19,720	20,151	(431)	60,453
Utilities	1,598	4,872	5,123	(251)	15,370
Service Agreements	4,238	15,544	8,380	7,164	25,140
Reproduction	0	221	167	54	500
Office Supplies	726	2,587	4,667	(2,080)	14,000
Travel/Conf/Mtg Expense	186	376	6,600	(6,224)	19,800
Membership dues/Subscripti	1,106	4,425	4,425	0	13,275
Postage	24	350	1,333	(983)	4,000
Liability Insurance/Bonding	1,292	5,965	4,115	1,850	12,345
Software Expense	1,185	1,250	0	1,250	0
Copier/Equipment Lease	1,372	6,577	6,478	99	19,434
Telephone/Internet	1,699	6,821	7,175	(354)	21,525
Ads/Legal Notices	0	0	333	(333)	1,000
Depreciation	333	1,333	1,333	0	4,000

**Western CT Council of Governments**  
**Operating Statement**  
**For the Four Months Ending October 31, 2015**

	<b>Current Month Actual</b>	<b>Year to Date Actual</b>	<b>Year to Date Budget</b>	<b>Variance Variance</b>	<b>Annual Budget</b>
Misc.	339	980	2,500	(1,520)	7,500
Total Expenses	232,464	715,803	1,007,505	(291,702)	3,022,520
"SURPLUS/<DEFICIT>"	\$ 23,635	\$ 89,920	\$ 13,422	\$ 76,498	\$ 40,262

**Western CT Council of Governments**  
**Balance Sheet**  
**October 31, 2015**  
**ASSETS**

**Current Assets**

Bank of America Checking	\$ 592,753.84
Bank of America Money Market	800,276.63
Union Savings Checking	124,049.56
Petty Cash	401.85
Accounts Receivable	450,129.42
Prepaid Liability Ins Premiums	11,951.19
Prepaid Rent	3,761.00
Prepaid Service Agreements	5,741.22
Prepaid Transit Benefit	730.03
Prepaid Dues/Subscriptions	6,184.66
Prepaid Medical Benefit	6,000.00
Due from SWRPA Merger	61,295.40
Due from HVCEO in Merger	(12,563.34)
 Total Current Assets	 2,050,711.46
 <b>Property and Equipment</b>	 
Fixed Assets	161,554.51
Allowance for Depreciation	(144,405.04)
 Total Property and Equipment	 17,149.47
 <b>Other Assets</b>	 _____
Total Other Assets	0.00
 Total Assets	 \$ 2,067,860.93

**LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL**

**Current Liabilities**

Accounts Payable	\$ 68,249.63
Due to/from HVCEO	241.56
Due to/from SWRPA	86,335.27
Deferred Rev-RPI GIS Grant	19,159.36
Deferred Rev-Wspt Rail Prk	8,268.40
Deferred Rev-Local Dues SW	74,761.32
Deferred Rev-Local Dues HV	98,391.64
Deferred Rev-LOTCIP SW	72,462.50
Deferred Rev-LOTCIP HV	61,109.88
Deferred Rev-OPM SGIA	302,656.14
Deferred Rev-Tick Illness Ed	(165.00)
Deferred Rev-Health Depts	26,257.13
Deferred Rev-Ridgef. TOD Match	18,498.38
Accrued Vacation	25,226.34
Accrued Pension	(43,784.34)
Accrued payroll taxes	38.67
Accrued audit	12,000.00
 Total Current Liabilities	 829,706.88

**Long-Term Liabilities**

Total Long-Term Liabilities	0.00
 Total Liabilities	 829,706.88

**Western CT Council of Governments**  
**Balance Sheet**  
**October 31, 2015**

**Capital**

Fund Balance Designated	2,435.60
Retained Earnings	1,147,296.55
Net Income	88,421.90
	<hr/>
Total Capital	1,238,154.05
Total Liabilities & Capital	\$ 2,067,860.93
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**Western CT Council of Governments**  
**Statement of Cash Flow**  
**For the four Months Ended October 31, 2015**

	Current Month	Year to Date
<b>Cash Flows from Operating Activities</b>		
<b>Net Income</b>		
	\$ 23,153.10	\$ 88,421.90
Adjustments to Reconcile Surplus/Deficit to Net Cash:		
<b>&lt;Increase&gt; Decrease in Assets</b>		
Allowance for Doubtful Account	0.00	0.00
Accounts Receivable	91,728.95	554,893.66
Prepaid Liability Ins Premiums	1,291.70	6,131.40
Prepaid Rent	0.00	0.00
Prepaid Service Agreements	2,095.00	8,380.00
Prepaid Transit Benefit	652.75	2,611.00
Prepaid Dues/Subscriptions	1,106.25	4,425.00
Prepaid Security Deposits	0.00	47.00
Prepaid Medical Benefit	750.00	3,000.00
Due from SWRPA Merger	0.00	0.00
Due from HVCEO in Merger	0.00	35,232.97
<b>Increase &lt;Decrease&gt; in Liabilities</b>		
Accounts Payable	(29,688.39)	(37,438.65)
Due to/from HVCEO	0.00	2,650.00
Due to/from SWRPA	0.00	93,214.67
Lease Payable	0.00	0.00
Deferred Rev-RPI GIS Grant	(7,501.52)	22,924.48
Deferred Rev-Wspt Rail Prk	0.00	0.00
Deferred Rev-Local Dues SW	(10,166.42)	81,331.32
Deferred Rev-Local Dues HV	(12,299.09)	98,391.64
Deferred Rev-LOTCIP SW	0.00	0.00
Deferred Rev-LOTCIP HV	0.00	(40,387.41)
Deferred Rev-OPM SGIA	(50,241.40)	(155,653.24)
Deferred Rev-Tick Illness Ed	0.00	0.00
Deferred Rev-Health Depts	2,200.00	2,200.00
Deferred Rev-Ridgef. TOD Match	(4,693.12)	18,498.38
Accrued Audit Exp.	(8,585.00)	(13,000.00)
Accrued Vacation	0.00	0.00
Accrued Pension	5,775.00	23,100.00
Total Adjustments	<hr/> <hr/> (17,575.29)	<hr/> <hr/> 710,552.22
Net Cash Provided or <Used>	<hr/> <hr/> 5,577.81	<hr/> <hr/> 798,974.12
<b>Cash Flows from investing activities</b>		
<b>Used For</b>		
Fixed Assets	0.00	(516.76)
Net cash used in investing	<hr/> <hr/> 0.00	<hr/> <hr/> (516.76)
<b>Cash Flows from financing activities</b>		
<b>Proceeds From</b>		
Investment in Fixed Assets	0.00	0.00
Fund Balance Designated	0.00	0.00
Fund Balance Undesignated	0.00	0.00
Beginning Balance Equity	0.00	0.00
Unnamed account	0.00	0.00
Unnamed Account	0.00	0.00
<b>Used For</b>		

**Western CT Council of Governments**  
**Statement of Cash Flow**  
**For the four Months Ended October 31, 2015**

	Current Month	Year to Date
Investment in Fixed Assets	0.00	0.00
Fund Balance Designated	0.00	0.00
Fund Balance Undesignated	0.00	0.00
Beginning Balance Equity	0.00	0.00
Unnamed account	0.00	0.00
Unnamed Account	0.00	0.00
 Net cash used in financing	 0.00	 0.00
 Net increase <decrease> in cash	 <u>\$ 5,577.81</u>	 <u>\$ 798,457.36</u>

**Summary**

Cash Balance at End of Period	\$ 1,517,481.88	\$ 1,517,481.88
Cash Balance at Beg of Period	(1,681,899.84)	(1,555,182.16)
 Net Increase <Decrease> in Cash	 <u>\$ (164,417.96)</u>	 <u>\$ (37,700.28)</u>

# Western Connecticut COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



December 9, 2015

## RESOLUTION OF THE WESTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF AGREEMENTS WITH THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT TO PERFORM THE REGIONAL GIS SERVICE

The Regional GIS Service is a joint service of Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG) and eighteen municipalities to deliver new GIS data and related information technology applications. The Regional GIS Service is funded by a \$2.15 million Regional Performance Incentive Program grant awarded by the Connecticut Office of Policy Management (OPM) in 2012. In order to extend the grant and continue the service, OPM requires that WestCOG execute an amended Notice of Grant Award.

This resolution will authorize the WestCOG Chairman, Vice Chairman or Executive Director to act on behalf of WestCOG in negotiating and executing all appropriate and necessary contractual agreements with the State of Connecticut to perform the Regional GIS Service.

### **Text of the Resolution:**

I, Susan Chapman, Secretary of the Western Connecticut Council of Governments (hereinafter "WestCOG") certify that the following is a true copy of the vote of WestCOG at its meeting on December 17, 2015 in Weston, Connecticut, a quorum being present:

**RESOLVED**, that Chairman Matthew Knickerbocker, Vice Chairman Jayme Stevenson, or Executive Director Francis Pickering with approval and consent of the Chairman or Vice Chairman, are hereby authorized to negotiate and execute all appropriate and necessary agreements with the State of Connecticut to perform the Regional GIS Service.

This resolution is in full force and effect as of December 17, 2015.

Dated at Weston, Connecticut on this Seventeenth Day of December, 2015.

# Western Connecticut

## COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



TO: WestCOG Council Representatives  
 FROM: Francis R. Pickering, Executive Director  
 DATE: December 14, 2015  
 RE: Bylaw Amendment re Council Officers

Per WestCOG bylaws, each “Representative on the Council who shall be the chief elected official” of the respective Member. The bylaws also provide for four Officers of the Council, namely the Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. The bylaws, however, do not require that officers aside from the Chair be a Council Representative As a consequence, former Mayors and First Selectman may continue to act as Officers, even though they are no longer entitled to a vote on the Council. An Officer in this situation may resign. Per the bylaws, however, until a Nominating Committee is convened, proposes a successor, and that successors is approved by the COG, the office is vacant.

To ensure that Officers are Council Representatives, and that the loss of a Council Officer does not prevent the discharge of the duties of that position, the following amendments are proposed to the WestCOG bylaws:

1. Under Article VII (Officers), Section A (Title and Terms):  
*Officers of the Council shall include a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson, a Secretary, and a Treasurer who shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Council. Officers shall be the Chief Elected Official of their Member municipalities and shall serve until their successors have been elected.*
2. Under Article VII (Officers), Section D (Vacancies):  
*In the event any vacancy occurs in any office during the year, a successor shall be proposed by the Nominating Committee and elected by the Council to serve the unexpired term. In the interim between the occurrence of the vacancy and the election of a successor, the Executive Committee shall designate one of the remaining Officers additionally to assume the responsibilities of the vacated position. Such service under this section shall not constitute a calendar year of service as specified in Article VII, Section A.*

# Western Connecticut

## COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



TO: WestCOG Council Members  
 FROM: Francis R. Pickering, Executive Director  
 DATE: December 14, 2015  
 RE: **Office consolidation**

Over the last several months, staff have been evaluating locations for a single WestCOG office. Consolidation to one office, which all other COGs in the state have completed, is expected to improve performance and reduce costs (by at least \$400,000 over a ten-year period).

### Process

As part of the search process, staff conducted a desk review of every commercial office space available in the 18-municipality region with a square footage between 3,000 and 5,000 feet. (Combined, WestCOG's Brookfield and Stamford offices total 4,750 square feet. However, the sharing of space with other tenants, as well as its awkward configuration, mean that an estimated 1,500 square feet are either unusable or marginally usable by the COG.) WestCOG staff worked with 8 commercial leasing agents to tour all properties that met minimum requirements (acceptable condition and no more than \$15 per square foot). In total, 25 properties were toured by the Executive Director and a second employee. Based upon the site visits, the 25 properties were reduced to a shortlist of four. To solicit additional input, all four properties were toured, separately, by half of WestCOG staff and by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee and staff both identified property as significantly preferable over the other three. Based on this, the Executive Director was directed to enter into discussions with the respective leasing agent and property owner.

### Status

An offer resulting from those discussions is attached. The offer is for a 10-year lease beginning at a rate of \$12.75 per square foot, subject to 2% annual increases and no more than \$40,000 in fit-out expenses covered out of the \$125,000 in OPM bonus funds given to WestCOG for merger costs. (If WestCOG does not expend these funds by June 30, 2016, OPM will claw them back. None have been spent to date.) Utilities, interior cleaning, and fire insurance would be COG responsibility; others would be that of the property owner.

The offer has been reviewed by the Executive Committee and agency counsel, and is the result of two months of discussion. The offer represents a reduction in the asking price from \$15 per square foot to \$12.75, a 20% reduction in increases, and a reduction in tenant responsibilities. At \$12.75, the property is among the most affordable in the region. Given its condition and amenities, which are superior to any other property at that price point, it is the assessment of the Executive Director that it represents the best value the COG is likely to obtain at present. Should the COG decide to advance this offer, the Executive Committee, Executive Director, and agency counsel will draw up

a contract for review and potential approval at the January COG meeting. Approval of the contract at January meeting would permit a move-in date of May 1.

#### **About the property**

The property is located at 1 Riverside Road, Sandy Hook. The property has excellent access to I-84 (traffic is minimal, even during rush hour, and no turns are required) and is extremely easy to find. (It is prominently located in the center of Sandy Hook) Sufficient parking is available on-site, with on-street parking available as well as large overflow across the street.

The building has 3,995 square feet over two stories. WestCOG would be the sole tenant. It has a mixture of private, shared, and open offices, as well as a meeting room that can accommodate groups of up to 18. (To minimize travel time for CEOs, as well as to facilitate more participation, COG meetings will be held at the Ridgefield Library.) The offices are laid out in a way that promotes efficient use and teamwork, while allowing for discretion when needed. The meeting room can be accessed through a separate entry and has an adjacent restroom so that disruptions can be minimized during meetings. A shower is available to clean up after fieldwork or to freshen up before meetings. High-speed broadband Internet access (fiber) is available to the property.

The top floor of the building is newly renovated, with hardwood floors, recessed LED lights, and modern wiring. The first floor of the building will be updated to the same standards, with an ADA-compliant entrance and restroom, prior to WestCOG moving in. The facility is bright and airy, with plentiful natural light as well as ventilation. (Windows are large and can be opened.)

The village of Sandy Hook is walkable, with several delis and lunch shops and several nearby parks. The building is handsome and would project a respectable image for the COG and its members.

The owner has no plans to sell the property.

# Western Connecticut COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



TO: WestCOG Council Members  
 FROM: Francis R. Pickering, Executive Director  
 DATE: December 14, 2015  
 RE: **Preliminary assessments**

Per WestCOG bylaws, “in December of each year preliminary assessments for all participating Members shall be established by the Council.” As WestCOG did not open its doors until January 1, 2015, this is the first time the Council will have the opportunity to establish assessments (dues). COG dues are largely used as a required local share to grants. For example, for every \$1 WestCOG spends on transportation, the federal and state governments match it with \$9.

The bylaws state that “preliminary assessments shall be determined by comparing the Member’s population to that of the aggregate population of all Council Members.” This population basis is consistent with the practice of the 8 other COGs in the state.

To avoid penalizing cities and towns with larger populations, some COGs incorporate a fixed ‘base’ amount in assessments; above a given population threshold, a per capita component is also added. Doing so ensures that responsibility for funding the COG is distributed equitably among members of different sizes. (A city of 100,000 does not use 100 times the services of a town of 1,000.)

The question before WestCOG now is one that all other merger regions in the state faced: how to harmonize two different assessment structures? To date, all other consolidated regions in the state have successfully answered this question and adopted new, region-wide formulas.

Following the request of the Executive Committee to develop an equitable proposal, WestCOG staff computer-tested tens of thousands of combinations of base amounts and per capita rates. The purpose of this analysis was to identify a simple and transparent formula that minimized the negative impacts of a move to a uniform assessment structure. The formula that emerged was a \$5,000 base, plus 35¢ per capita for any persons in excess of 5,000 (5-35 dues).

While a consistent formula is desirable, discussions with the Executive Committee suggested that a hybrid between the current assessments and those produced by a consistent formula might be the most acceptable, at least in the near term. WestCOG tested a large variety of hybrid models; the formula that produced the best results would move assessments *towards* those under 5-35, but cap increases to \$2,500 and decreases to \$2,250.

Such a model would markedly reduce the differences in assessment rates among municipalities but avoid any sharp increases.

Current year (FY16) assessments, assessments under the 5-35 proposal, and assessments under the hybrid proposal are shown on the next page.

Municipality	FY16 dues	5-35 proposal	Hybrid proposal
Bethel	\$14,969	\$10,030	\$12,719
Bridgewater	\$3,180	\$5,000	\$5,000
Brookfield	\$14,282	\$9,219	\$12,032
Danbury	\$32,354	\$32,574	\$32,5
Darien	\$7,0	\$10,841	\$9,5
Greenwich	\$23,314	\$25,164	\$25,164
New Canaan	\$8,747	\$10,360	\$10,360
New Fairfield	\$13,048	\$8,202	\$10,798
New Milford	\$18,272	\$12,866	\$16,022
Newtown	\$17,466	\$13,103	\$15,216
Norwalk	\$23,497	\$34,101	\$25,997
Redding	\$11,092	\$6,508	\$8,842
Ridgefield	\$19,486	\$12,072	\$17,236
Sherman	\$3,	\$5,	\$5,000
Stamford	\$34,232	\$48,147	\$36,732
Weston	\$6,136	\$6,886	\$6,88
Westport	\$9,797	\$12,8	\$12,297
Wilton	\$9,27	\$9,792	\$9,792
Total	\$269,586	\$272,762	\$272,170

# Western Connecticut COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



TO: WestCOG Council Members  
 FROM: Carl Zimmerman, Senior GIS Manager; Elizabeth Esposito, Associate Planner  
 DATE: December 11, 2015  
 RE: **RPIP Grant Applications for 2015**

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WestCOG is submitting two grant applications for the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) 2015 Regional Performance Incentive Program (RPIP). One is focused on municipal services delivery and efficiency, while the other is focused on GIS data acquisition. The RPIP provides financial assistance to the CT COGs, or municipalities acting through COG, to provide cost saving service(s) to municipalities on a regional basis. RPIP is state funding that does not require a local match and is a great opportunity for municipalities of any size. The application is due by Dec. 31, 2015.

## **Grant: Regional Snow Plow Route Study**

**Overview:** This grant application will focus on a study to analyze snow plow routes within town borders to determine if truck and plow routing can be optimized further. The goal is to determine if any cost savings could be extracted when neighboring towns share routes that intersect with their borders rather than having the plows turn around.

**Scope:** The towns of Bethel, New Fairfield, Newtown, Norwalk, Redding, Ridgefield, Stamford, and Westport are currently included in the grant application.

**Estimated Cost:** \$200,000

## **Grant: Regional GIS Services and Data Acquisition, Phase 2**

**Overview:** This grant application will focus on extending the utility of GIS data creation associated with the earlier 2012 Regional GIS Services RPIP grant. This Phase 2 effort will be utilized to acquire planimetric (e.g. roads, streets, utilities, trees, sidewalks, etc.) and topography (e.g. contours) data for the 10 towns of the Housatonic Valley that did not receive updated data. These data sets can be used in public work, planning, assessors, and other municipal departments, and in addition, are critical inputs for the WestCOG Regional GIS Mapping platform.

**Scope:** The towns of Bethel, Danbury, Ridgefield, Newtown, Redding, Bridgewater, New Milford, Brookfield, Sherman, New Fairfield.

**Estimated Cost:** \$820,000

# Western Connecticut COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



## Regional CRS Program

CIRCA's Municipal Resilience Grant Program awarded to WestCOG

» Grant award: \$23,151.65

- CIRCA is a partnership between UConn and CTDEEP
- Discussed at previous COG meetings, the Community Rating System (CRS) program provides discounts on flood insurance premiums based on flood mitigation efforts.
- This is an opportunity to incorporate non participating communities, with an emphasis on those with the highest amount of potential savings, the “Low hanging Fruit” (Marked in red).
- Below is a table of projected savings:

Community	# Policies	Premiums	Projected CRS Discount**	CRS % Discount
<b>Communities currently involved with the CRS Program</b>				
Stamford*	2,621	\$ 2,430,425	\$243,043	10%
Westport*	1,401	\$ 2,381,077	\$119,054	5%
Newtown*	84	\$ 105,448	\$5,272	5%
<b>Potential CRS communities</b>				
Norwalk	2,247	\$ 3,375,379	\$168,769	5%
Greenwich	1,739	\$ 2,578,848	\$128,942	5%
Darien	622	\$ 965,784	\$48,289	5%
Danbury	341	\$ 618,687	\$30,934	5%
Wilton	195	\$ 311,389	\$15,569	5%
New Milford	120	\$ 196,679	\$9,834	5%
Bethel	209	\$ 190,568	\$9,528	5%
New Canaan	165	\$ 165,827	\$8,291	5%
Weston	144	\$ 164,208	\$8,210	5%
Ridgefield	109	\$ 103,554	\$5,178	5%
Brookfield	66	\$ 80,399	\$4,020	5%
Redding	45	\$ 52,043	\$2,602	5%
New Fairfield	38	\$ 25,843	\$1,292	5%
Sherman	20	\$ 19,674	\$984	5%
Bridgewater	8	\$ 6,754	\$338	5%
<b>Region</b>	<b>7,553</b>	<b>\$ 13,772,586</b>	<b>\$810,151</b>	<b>--</b>

\* Currently take part in the CRS program.

\*\* Projected discounts include customized municipal open space credits, based off a preliminary GIS analysis. Actual savings may vary and are contingent upon more detailed and localized analyses.

Source: DEEP 12/31/2014

888 Washington Blvd, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Stamford, CT 06901  
162 Whisconier Rd, Brookfield, CT 06804

Visit us online at [westcog.org](http://westcog.org)  
T 203-316-5190 • F 203-316-4995