

APPROVED 11/19/2015 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 HARTransit, 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 criteria 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 were 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.