

APPROVED

1/21/2016 MINUTES

**WESTERN CONNECTICUT
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

Meeting at the Ridgefield Library, 472 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877

Chairman Matthew Knickerbocker / Vice Chairman Jayme Stevenson

Secretary Susan Chapman / Treasurer Patricia Llodra

ATTENDANCE

- Bethel First Selectman Matthew Knickerbocker
- Bridgewater First Selectman Curtis Read
- Brookfield First Selectman Stephen Dunn
- Danbury Chief of Staff Dean Esposito (non-voting)
- Darien First Selectman Jayme Stevenson
- Greenwich First Selectman Peter Tesei

- New Canaan Absent
- New Fairfield First Selectman Susan Chapman
- New Milford Absent
- Newtown First Selectman Patricia Llodra
- Norwalk Absent
- Redding First Selectman Julia Pemberton

- Ridgefield First Selectman Rudy Marconi
- Sherman First Selectman Clay Cope
- Stamford Board of Finance Chair Richard Freedman
- Weston First Selectman Nina Daniel
- Westport First Selectman James Marpe
- Wilton Absent

Also Stamford Transportation Director Joshua Benson, Weston resident Dr. Margaret Wirtenberg, Roxane Fromson of CT DOT, Richard Schreiner of HARTransit, Susan Sweitzer of the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency, Cyndy Anderson and Nancy Cooper of the League of Women Voters of Greenwich, Charles Burnham of Eversource, WestCOG Director Francis Pickering and staff.

CALL TO ORDER / PUBLIC COMMENT

The meeting was called to order at 12:30 PM by Chairman Matthew Knickerbocker. There was no public comment.

On a motion made by Matt Knickerbocker and seconded by Pat Llodra is was voted unanimously to add "Bylaw Amendment" and "Banking Resolution" to the agenda.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of 12/17/2015 Minutes: After review and on a motion made by Susan Chapman and seconded by Steve Dunn, the minutes of the meeting of 12/17/2015 were unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report for November 2015: Staff member Patricia Payne reviewed agenda attachments constituting the November 2015 financial report. There was discussion of these items including investment policy for reserve funds.

Election of Officers: The report of the Nominating Committee was given by Clay Cope: for Chairman Matthew Knickerbocker, for Vice Chairman Jayme Stevenson, for Secretary Susan Chapman and to fill the vacant Treasurer position Pat Llodra.

After brief discussion and on a motion made by Clay Cope and seconded by Rudy Marconi, the recommended slate of officers was unanimously approved.

Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP): Director Francis Pickering presented on this topic, providing an overview of state LOTICIP transportation improvement funds accessible to municipal governments thru WestCOG, the legislative intent of which is to be less burdensome in comparison to similar federal programs.

He noted that state LOTICIP funding guidelines delegate program direction to WestCOG and not to SWRMPO and HVMPO. That his request to the Council today is for a) reaffirmation of the capital programs of the two former regions, and b) endorsement of the Housatonic Valley management guidelines, which have worked well, to be the guidelines for the entire WestCOG LOTICIP program.

Towards this end he referenced two agenda attachments entitled "Project Implementation Schedules" wherein the use of state funds for municipal projects remains summarized by South Western and Housatonic Valley groupings.

He then cited the Housatonic Valley program guidelines which are to "authorize the chairman and staff to submit completed LOTICIP project applications to CTDOT for review and approval, and to authorize staff to work with applicants as they proceed through the project design process and to make adjustments to project budgets and the implementation schedule for projects."

Supplemental information was provided for members in the South Western grouping as to the upcoming solicitation process for use of the available balance of \$7,492,472.

Mr. Pickering then requested endorsement of the attached project schedules and program guidelines as presented. A discussion followed. Then on a motion made by Clay Cope and seconded by Rudy Marconi, the requested endorsements were unanimously approved.

WestCOG Representative to Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC): Francis Pickering reviewed the State's WUCC water supply planning process, referencing the presentation made at the last meeting by CT Department of Public Health Drinking Water Section Chief Lori Mathieu.

As WUCCs are convened by CT DPH with COG representatives, an appointment is needed. Curtis Read volunteered to serve in this capacity, citing his numerous qualifications in water quality and supply issues. There was discussion.

The consensus was that Mr. Read would represent WestCOG well and was thanked by the members. Also that staff member Michael Towle would attend WUCC meetings as a non-voting observer to provide technical support.

Rudy Marconi repeated his concern that affordable housing appeals not be used to override local zoning that protects water supply watersheds, and Clay Cope again noted problems with high sodium concentrations in the water supplies of municipal buildings. Pat Llodra stated her view that the WUCC process is of significant value to municipalities.

Amtrak Northeast Corridor Draft EIS: Francis Pickering made a summary presentation of the Federal Railroad Administration's comprehensive planning process to define a package of future investments to support rail service along the corridor from Washington to Boston.

He noted that this is one of the busiest rail corridors in the world and of long of vital concern to the WestCOG region through which it passes. His PowerPoint presentation proceeded thru the major service options being evaluated, from minimal investment to more expensive and highly ambitious new corridors to supplement Connecticut's coastal service.

There was discussion of the options reviewed. The consensus was that rather than a Council endorsement of just one of the options, the interests of our area are better served by supporting favorable components from several options.

Discussion continued. It was agreed that Francis Pickering would draft a response that best represents member views as expressed at this meeting, circulating a draft for review and comment prior to submission to the Federal Railroad Administration.

Bylaw Amendment on Status of Officers: Francis Pickering reviewed the potential confusion in the bylaws on the status of an officer when such officer does not win re-election. At the last meeting the remedy of two bylaw text revisions had been approved.

However as proposed bylaw amendments, a second vote at the following meeting, this date, is also required. The text revisions under discussion are contained within a staff memo entitled "Bylaw Amendment Re Council Officers" dated 1/21/2016.

There was discussion. Then on a motion made by Rudy Marconi and a second by Susan Chapman the vote was all in favor except for Pat Llodra and Peter Tesei opposed and Clay Cope abstaining.

Banking Resolution for Signatures: Francis Pickering explained that such a resolution is required in accordance with the bylaws. Then on a motion made by Matt Knickerbocker and a second by Susan Chapman, the vote to approve the bank signatures update was all in favor with Clay Cope abstaining.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Municipal Crisis Management: Pat Llodra spoke to this issue, stating that there were many lessons in emergency management provided by the 2012 Sandy Hook School shooting tragedy. As the leader of Newtown throughout that crisis she has been asked on many occasions to summarize crisis management lessons learned, applicable to events of a lesser scale.

She has prepared a 45 minute presentation of value to municipal leaders and offered to present it at a future WestCOG meeting. There was discussion, with all members strongly in favor of Mrs. Llodra's remarks being scheduled for an upcoming meeting.

Municipal Roadway Safety Profiles: Francis Pickering distributed to each member information on high frequency accident locations in their jurisdiction, displayed on an

11 X 17 municipal map. The large scale display format makes available to local officials one of the key data variables tracked by the Council's transportation program, he said.

Utilization is two fold, with relative frequency of accidents a key input to setting corridor improvement priorities and shaping the project designs that follow. Local law enforcement and municipal planning approvals can also make use of accident location data.

Current Funding Opportunities: There was a summary of the current grant opportunities under discussion at the two MPO meetings; the CTDOT Community Connectivity Program and the OPM Responsible Growth and TOD Grant Program.

Dept. of Emergency Management and Homeland Security Update: Rudy Marconi, Chairman of the DEMHS Region 5 Emergency Planning Team, updated members on the current Region 5 grant process to prioritize \$187k for support of municipal emergency management activities.

WestCOG Drug Task Force: Francis Pickering reported that as requested by members, a WestCOG Drug Task Force to improve response to the opioid crisis will soon be in operation. The first meeting is at 9:30 AM on Thursday, February 4 at Redding Town Hall. There will be two presentations. Break out groups will then identify service gaps, goals and expectations for the new group.

CT Transportation Finance Panel Recommendations: Francis Pickering updated members on this topic, noting that many of Connecticut's expressways such as I-84 and I-95 were found to be at the end of their fifty year life cycle, with some rail facility designs one hundred years old.

As for the introduction of tolling on interstates, the Panel's priorities are the entirety of coastal I-95 from New York to Rhode Island and then I-84 from the New York Line easterly to Hartford. Traffic diversion and other impacts would be high in the WestCOG area. It is also recommended that the state seek to capture the increase in value of land near transportation improvements.

There was considerable discussion of the above issues and other aspects of the Panel's report. Mr. Pickering advised that some aspects of the Panel's recommendations may appear in upcoming legislative bills.

Legislative Breakfast and Agenda: Matt Knickerbocker reported on the second annual legislative breakfast held on January 14 in Weston. WestCOG's "Priorities for 2016" were presented and were well received. As Representative Steinberg and Senator Boucher recommended adding Danbury Branch Line improvements to the list, that will be accomplished, he said.

Saugatuck River Watershed Symposium: An update on the Nature Conservancy's upcoming symposium, relevant to nine municipalities within the WestCOG region, was provided.

OTHER BUSINESS / ADJOURNMENT

Peter Tesei introduced Cyndy Anderson and Nancy Cooper who are observing WestCOG operations on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Greenwich.

Matt Knickerbocker noted that the next WestCOG meeting will be at the Ridgefield Library on Thursday, February 18, 2016. There being no further business, on a motion made by Susan Chapman and seconded by Jayme Stevenson the meeting was adjourned at 1: 50 PM.