

APPROVED

2/18/2016 MINUTES

**WESTERN CONNECTICUT
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

Ridgefield Library, 472 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877

Public access was also available at the WestCOG Stamford Office
888 Washington Boulevard, Stamford, CT 06901

Chairman Matthew Knickerbocker / Vice Chairman Jayme Stevenson
Secretary Susan Chapman / Treasurer Patricia Llodra

IN ATTENDANCE

- Bethel First Selectman Matthew Knickerbocker
- Bridgewater First Selectman Curtis Read
- Brookfield First Selectman Stephen Dunn
- Danbury Absent
- Darien First Selectman Jayme Stevenson
- Greenwich First Selectman Peter Tesei

- New Canaan Absent
- New Fairfield Absent
- New Milford Mayor David Gronbach
- Newtown First Selectman Patricia Llodra
- Norwalk Mayor Harry Rilling
- Redding First Selectman Julia Pemberton

- Ridgefield First Selectman Rudy Marconi
- Sherman First Selectman Clay Cope
- Stamford Chief of Staff Michael Pollard (non-voting)
- Weston First Selectman Nina Daniel
- Westport First Selectman James Marpe
- Wilton First Selectman Lynne Vanderslice

Also attending were Stamford Transportation Director Joshua Benson, Weston resident Dr. Margaret Wirtenberg, Roxane Fromson and Patrick Zapatka of CT DOT, Richard Schreiner of HARtransit, Kimberlee Morton of the Norwalk Transit District, Susan Doskow of Johnson Controls Inc., New Canaan Town Planner Steven Kleppin, Greenwich Deputy Commissioner of Public Works James Michel, DEMHS 5 Coordinator Thomas Vannini and New Milford Town Engineer Daniel Stanton.

Additional attendees were, Jennifer Reid and Fran Ryan of the Ridgefield Health Department's BLAST Program, Charles Burnham and Tracy Alston of Eversource, UConn Professor Oskar Harmon and UConn students Ryan Williams and James Froehlich, WestCOG Director Francis Pickering and staff David Hannon, Michael Towle, Patty Payne, Rob Sachnin and Jon Chew.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:30 PM by Chairman Matthew Knickerbocker.

GUEST SPEAKER

UConn Professor Oskar Harmon introduced students Ryan Williams and James Froehlich. In cooperation with WestCOG each student completed a survey and analysis of a UConn Stamford Campus transportation access issue and made a PowerPoint summary thereof.

The first presentation was by Ryan Williams and entitled "Pricing and Usage Characteristics of Railroad Parking Lots." The second was by James Froehlich and entitled "UConn Stamford Parking Survey."

Both presentations focused on UConn student usage and perspectives on these transportation facilities and resulted in recommendations that would enhance access to the Stamford Campus. Both presentations were followed by questions, answers, and applause.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Margaret Wirtenberg of Weston stated that proposed legislation for state control of municipal zoning within transit oriented development areas had been reintroduced and should be aggressively challenged.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of 1/21/2016 Minutes: There was discussion. Members requested that the structure of the minutes be more detailed such that titles of documents under consideration appear next to the votes upon them.

For the draft 1/21 minutes it was requested that such specificity be added to the section entitled "Bylaw Amendment on Status of Officers." Then on a motion made by Clay Cope and seconded by Stephen Dunn the minutes of the meeting of 1/21/2016 were unanimously approved as amended.

Treasurer's Quarterly Financial Report: New Treasurer Pat Llodra commented that she has prepared for her duties by reviewing recently completed audits and that they indicate no problems. Also that she has been meeting with Senior Financial Manager Patricia Payne and Financial Manager Josephine Harvey to further develop the Council's financial reporting system.

Mrs. Llodra then presented the Quarterly Financial Report consisting of agenda attachments entitled Operating Statement, Balance Sheet of Assets, and Statement of Cash Flow, all for the six month period ending 12/31/2015. After brief discussion and on a motion made by Rudy Marconi and seconded by Clay Cope, the Quarterly Financial Report was unanimously approved.

Applications for Responsible Growth and TOD Projects: A proposed resolution of endorsement, supporting the Region's nine municipal applications to CT OPM, was reviewed. The title of the resolution was "Certified Resolution of WestCOG Supporting Applications Submitted to the Responsible Growth and Transit Oriented Development Grant Program." The municipal applications to be endorsed by the resolution were:

BETHEL - Bethel TOD Sidewalk Program
BROOKFIELD - Streetscape Project, Phase II
DANBURY - Downtown Danbury TOD Study

NEW CANAAN - Downtown Pedestrian Loop and Weed Street Sidewalk Connection
NEW MILFORD - Downtown Riverfront Project
NORWALK - South Norwalk TOD Housing Renovation Program

RIDGEFIELD - Branchville TOD Infrastructure Improvements, Phase 1
STAMFORD - Springdale Train Station Improvement Project
WESTPORT - Saugatuck Station Area TOD Master Plan

Director Pickering stated that the applications will be reviewed and ranked by CT OPM, that the task assigned by CT OPM to WestCOG is to provide an endorsement for each application without ranking. Also that the application's details were available to members via a web link distributed with the agenda packet.

There was discussion. The consensus of members was that the application title format accompanying the agenda was less than needed, that for council meetings the staff is requested to provide fuller information for each application including its cost. Francis Pickering agreed to expand this aspect of agenda attachment documentation.

A second resolution of endorsement supporting WestCOG's own application to CT OPM was then reviewed. The title of the resolution was "Certified Resolution of WestCOG Authorizing the Application for and Administration of a Responsible Growth and Transit Oriented Development Grant," those funds for a WestCOG "Responsible Growth Environmental Review Collaboration Project."

After further discussion and on a motion made by Curtis Read and seconded by Julia Pemberton, the two resolutions cited above were unanimously approved except for a nay vote by Jayme Stevenson.

State Agreement to Engage Regional Election Monitor: Francis Pickering summarized an agenda attachment providing details on the proposed state grant to WestCOG to provide regional training for municipal election staffs.

Objectives of the grant are to enable a more efficient arrangement for training of election staffs, improve staff capability with technology enhancements and promote communications with registrars, he said.

To proceed, WestCOG is required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Secretary of the State for \$11,111 to fund the service. The title of the document under review was "Memorandum of Understanding between the Office of the Secretary of the State and WestCOG - Regional Election Monitor," and accompanying "Schedule A Scope of Services."

There were questions posed to Director Pickering. There was a motion made to approve the MOU and its Attachment by Lynne Vanderslice and seconded by David Gronbach. There was then an extensive discussion, with members' opinions divided.

To summarize the views of those opposed, the election monitor grant was unsolicited, is unneeded and wasteful, that the Council is requested to hire but then given no authority over employee performance.

To summarize the views of those in favor, limitations of this grant are recognized, but as this role for WestCOG was incorporated into state statutes, participation by WestCOG is legally required.

There was additional considerable discussion, followed by a vote on the motion to approve the MOU with seven members in favor: Matt Knickerbocker, Curtis Read, Stephen Dunn, David Gronbach, Harry Rilling, Julia Pemberton and Lynne Vanderslice.

There were also seven members opposed: Jayme Stevenson, Peter Tesei, Patricia Llodra, Rudy Marconi, Clay Cope, Nina Daniel and Jim Marpe. The motion to approve did not receive a majority of the fourteen members voting and thus did not pass.

Rudy Marconi then suggested a compromise whereby the Council approves the MOU "under protest" with the condition that a list of objections accompany the document when it is returned to state officials. There was discussion of this approach.

There was then a revote on the approval motion with agreement that objections would be attached if the MOU were approved. There were nine members in favor: Matt Knickerbocker, Curtis Read, Stephen Dunn, Jayme Stevenson, David Gronbach, Harry Rilling, Julia Pemberton, Rudy Marconi and Jim Marpe.

There were five members opposed: Peter Tesei, Patricia Llodra, Clay Cope, Nina Daniel and Lynne Vanderslice. On this second vote the motion to approve with the conditions cited carried by a majority.

Hiring of Election Monitor: Francis Pickering reviewed the agenda attachment entitled "Job Description for Regional Election Monitor," those duties reflecting the "Schedule A Scope of Services" that accompanies the MOU.

The process of reviewing monitor candidates can be conducted by a panel of two Council members, two registrars and himself, he said. A motion to proceed with the hiring was then made by David Gronbach, seconded by Stephen Dunn, all aye.

Authorization of LOTCIP Agreements with CTDOT: Francis Pickering made a request that the LOTCIP authorizing resolution included as an agenda attachment be approved. The title of the resolution is "Resolution of WestCOG Authorizing the Execution of Agreements with the State of Connecticut to Perform the Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program Administration Grants."

The purpose is to enable agreements with CTDOT to continue funding for administration of the state funded Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program, he said. After discussion and

on a motion made by Clay Cope and seconded by Pat Llodra, the requested resolution was unanimously approved.

Proposal to Hire Professional Engineer: Francis Pickering overviewed the OPM State-Grant-in-Aid process that partially funds WestCOG, and the large increase to WestCOG recently. He noted that several of the other Councils of Governments have utilized the CT OPM increase to employ licensed professional engineers.

Their assignments have been to provide design review, project inspection and increased management of the Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program and the Local Road Accident Reduction Program.

Mr. Pickering proposed that the Council follow this model and engage a licensed professional engineer with experience in municipal transportation and public works projects, to be sustained by CT OPM funding, that support expected to remain level for at least two more years. He then sought approval to begin preparing a job description and scope of work for such a new position.

There was a discussion of the proposal. Members requested that two options to traditional full time employment be included in the solicitation. These were use of a contracted employee with 1099 independent contractor tax status and use of a consultant engineering firm for contracted services.

After further discussion and on a motion made by Stephen Dunn and seconded by Matt Knickerbocker, it was voted unanimously to authorize the Director to proceed with the process and present to the COG comparative results of a search for services that reflects the three formats above.

Office Relocation: Francis Pickering stated that he is awaiting a revised contract for the WestCOG attorney to review.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Due to the length of the meeting members asked that the agenda information items section be postponed to the next meeting. A motion to this effect was then made by Clay Cope, seconded by Stephen Dunn, all aye.

OTHER BUSINESS / ADJOURNMENT

Matt Knickerbocker noted that the next WestCOG meeting will be at the Ridgefield Library on Thursday, March 16, 2016. There being no further business, on a motion made by Clay Cope and seconded by Pat Llodra the meeting was adjourned at 1:50 PM.