

APPROVED Council Minutes

For the 2/23/2017 Regular Meeting

Held at the Ridgefield Visiting Nurse Association
27 Governor Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut 06877

Chairman Jayme Stevenson – Vice Chairman Susan Chapman
Secretary David Gronbach – Treasurer Patricia Llodra

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Bethel..... First Selectman Matthew Knickerbocker
Bridgewater..... Absent
Brookfield First Selectman Stephen Dunn
Danbury..... Mayor Mark Boughton
Darien First Selectman Jayme Stevenson
Greenwich..... Alternate Selectman John Toner

New Canaan..... Absent
New Fairfield First Selectman Susan Chapman
New Milford..... Mayor David Gronbach
Newtown..... First Selectman Patricia Llodra
Norwalk..... Absent
Redding..... First Selectman Julia Pemberton

Ridgefield..... First Selectman Rudy Marconi
Sherman..... Absent
Stamford Chief of Staff Michael Pollard
Weston First Selectman Nina Daniel
Westport..... First Selectman James Marpe
Wilton..... First Selectman Lynne Vanderslice

OTHERS ATTENDING

Former Weston First Selectman Woody Bliss, Kimberlee Morton and Stephanie Scavelli of Norwalk Transit, Richard Schreiner and Harrison Wenchell from HARTransit, Weston citizen Dr. Margaret Wirtenberg, Eversource representatives Tracy Alston and Garrett Sheehan, WestCOG staff members Nicole Sullivan, William Kenny, James Bastian, Robert Sachnin, Carl Zimmerman and Jonathan Chew.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:10 am by Chairman Jayme Stevenson.

STAFF PRESENTATION

Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal (CAMA) Regional Study:

GIS Manager Carl Zimmerman made a PowerPoint presentation on the upcoming Regional CAMA Study. WestCOG is initiating a voluntary baseline assessment of municipal CAMA, tax billing and collections systems, as well as evaluating related business practices and IT resources. A review of municipal GIS and parcel data will also be completed, he said.

The cost for study consulting services with Axiomatic, LLC of Portsmouth, NH is \$88,400, to be provided through an existing CTOPM grant to WestCOG. The recent regional conference call with assessors on this topic was discussed.

Francis Pickering contributed to the discussion, stating that the new CCM report on municipal efficiency cites tax assessment management as an area to review for savings. And that the WestCOG approach does not focus on reduction in personnel, rather coordination of purchasing, joint cloud hosting, uniform ties to WestCOG GIS and enhanced billing and collection systems.

Mr. Zimmerman concluded that the consultant's baseline assessment will be due in April of 2017, enabling a determination as to the viability of regional coordination. Should the Council then decide to continue with the study, a final report will be available in August of 2017.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Resolutions of Appreciation: The chairman then presented a resolution of appreciation to immediate past Chairman Matthew Knickerbocker, thanked by her for guiding WestCOG through the merger process into its stable position today. A second resolution of appreciation was then presented to Senior Project Manager Jonathan Chew for forty years of service. Both recipients thanked the Council for their recognition.

Discussion of State Budget Reductions Proposal: There was a lengthy discussion of this topic, focusing upon which proposed state cuts to municipalities are most likely and which less so. Members reviewed their assumptions and shared information on other state related budget matters. Francis Pickering reviewed his activities speaking at the Capitol in support of the 2017 WestCOG Legislative Agenda.

OPM Governance Study: Jayme Stevenson reviewed this topic and referred to an agenda attachment entitled "Councils of Governments and Mandatory Proportional Voting January 2017 by CTOPM." The attached research responds to the requirement of Special Act 73-79 that such a study be prepared, she said.

The focus of the study was to determine if "each member of a regional council of governments having a population of 50,000 or more should be entitled to one additional representative on the council for each additional ten thousand inhabitants, each additional representative to have one vote."

Michael Pollard commented that the actual legislative intent was to evaluate the impact of weighted voting by current COG representatives. To review the merits of this idea from the perspective of an impractical increase in total voting representatives, Stamford to have eight persons voting rather than one with a weighted vote, could only result in CTOPM's conclusion of impracticality contained herein.

There was then considerable discussion as to the options for structuring regional COG voting. These ranged from remaining with the current "one town one unweighted vote," a revision to "weighted vote based upon municipal population," and options in between.

Federal Rail Administration (FRA) Northeast Corridor Plan: Jayme Stevenson report on a fact finding meeting in Darien with FRA representatives to which coastal rail corridor communities were invited.

The main concern is potential impacts in thickly settled areas, such as from the additional right of way needed for additional tracks to enable passing, new overhead power structures, also relocated or higher embankments. It appears FRA will undertake additional detailed study in Connecticut, she said.

There was discussion. Jayme Stevenson concluded that while implementation of FRA proposals is decades away, the foundational documents now in preparation will have an impact on our communities and we need to be vigilant in shaping them.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Comments were made by Tracy Alston and Dr. Margaret Wirtenberg.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of 1/23/2017 Minutes: After review and on a motion made by Jim Marpe and seconded by Matt Knickerbocker, the minutes of the meeting of 1/23/2017 were unanimously approved.

Resolution for Banking Authority: Jayme Stevenson raised this topic, stating that two standard authorizations need to be revised to reflect the recent change in Council officers. To address the first, she referred to a document in the agenda packet entitled “Certified Resolution for Banking Authority.” On a motion made by Rudy Marconi and seconded by Jim Marpe, that resolution was unanimously approved.

Resolution for Pension Plan Trustees: Jayme Stevenson then referred to a document in the agenda packet entitled “Resolution for Pension Plan Trustees.” On a motion made by Rudy Marconi and seconded by Matt Knickerbocker, the pension plan trustee resolution was unanimously approved.

Resolution for Snow Plow Routing Optimization Study: Francis Pickering stated that funds for this effort had been delayed but were now available from CTOPM, enabling this delayed administrative approval. The “Resolution for CTOPM RPIP Snow Plow Routing Study” in the agenda packet was cited. On a motion made by Michael Pollard and seconded by Jim Marpe, the resolution was unanimously approved as amended.

Immediate Past Chairman’s Membership on Executive Committee: It was noted that to promote continuity and take advantage of Matt Knickerbocker’s experience, at its last meeting the Council voted to review options on this matter. Members then reviewed a background memo on this topic by Francis Pickering entitled “Continued Service on the Executive Committee.”

Mr. Pickering then noted that the bylaws do not bar the Council from electing a fifth member to the Executive Committee. Thus a bylaw amendment is not necessary, only a vote to place the additional person on the Committee. An individual voted onto the Committee in this manner would not be considered a Council officer, he said.

There was discussion. Then on a motion made by Rudy Marconi and seconded by David Gronbach, it was voted unanimously to place the First Selectman of Bethel on the Executive Committee to serve through 2017.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Stevenson stated that the next WestCOG meeting will be held on March 16, 2016 at the office of the Ridgefield Visiting Nurse Association. There being no further business, on a motion made by Rudy Marconi and seconded by David Gronbach, the meeting was adjourned at 1:20 pm.

