

Western Connecticut COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



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INTERIM Council Minutes for the 11/19/2020 Regular Meeting Videoconference

*Chairman Rudolph Marconi - Vice Chairman Jayme Stevenson
Treasurer Julia Pemberton - Secretary Lynne Vanderslice*

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Bethel First Selectman Matt Knickerbocker
Bridgewater First Selectman Curtis Read
Brookfield First Selectman Steve Dunn
Danbury Absent
Darien First Selectman Jayme Stevenson
Greenwich Absent

New Canaan First Selectman Kevin Moynihan
New Fairfield First Selectman Pat Del Monaco
New Milford Mayor Pete Bass
Newtown First Selectman Dan Rosenthal
Norwalk Absent
Redding First Selectman Julia Pemberton

Ridgefield First Selectman Rudy Marconi
Sherman Absent
Stamford Absent
Weston First Selectman Chris Spaulding
Westport First Selectman James Marpe
Wilton First Selectman Lynne Vanderslice

OTHERS ATTENDING

WestCOG staff members in attendance were Mike Towle, Kristin Hadjstylianos, Todd Fontanella, Nicole Sullivan, Kristin Floberg, Kevin Mahoney, Nick Trabka, Tucker Beckett, Victoria Ricks, Patty Payne, Charles Vidich, and Executive Director Francis Pickering. Rick Schreiner and Alex Dashev from HARTransit, Kimberlee Morton from Norwalk Transit, Kathryn Faraci from CTDOT, Representative Anne Hughes, Representative Lucy Dathan, Representative David Michel, Representative Jon Steinberg, Representative

Harry Arora, Representative-Elect Cindy Harrison, Meg Haffner from the Kennedy Center, Elizabeth Gara from COST, Ellen Graham from Senator Blumenthal's office, Victoria Brudz from Milone and MacBroom, Westport Operations Director Sara Harris, Jenine Lupo from Representative Hayes office, Greenwich Planning and Zoning Chairman Margarita Alban, Samantha LaBonne from Eversource, Burt Cohen, State of Connecticut Broadband Policy Coordinator, Jessica Fowler from Lit Communities and Sanford Jewett from Widelity were also in attendance.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:10pm by Chairman Rudy Marconi.

FEATURED SPEAKERS

Burt Cohen, State of Connecticut Broadband Policy Coordinator, gave a presentation on how the Covid-19 pandemic has exposed broadband issues throughout the state and has forced policymakers to address these issues. Consistent and reliable broadband service has become an essential lifeline to function today. The state is trying to develop a state broadband map, with availability and speeds noted. Rudy asked for advice to municipalities regarding should they wait for the distribution of 5G to the private sector or move forward to look at installation options. Burt commented that this technology will be available to those areas that the carriers believe are the most lucrative.

Kristin Floberg and Charles Vidich from WestCOG presented the Wireless Telecommunications Task Force Final Recommendations.

Jessica Fowler from Lit Communities and Sanford Jewett from Widelity presented on options to address wireless and fiber network short term needs and develop connectivity solutions for communities.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Representative David Michel spoke about his interest and health concerns regarding the deployment of 5G technology.

Representative Harry Arora spoke about his concerns with the lack of competition for broadband in the district he represents.

Representative-Elect Cindy Harrison introduced herself to COG members.

Victoria Brudz from Milone and MacBroom gave an update on a project they are working on with multiple COGs to identify resiliency project needs and will be attending a Resilient Connecticut summit with CIRCA on Friday, November 20th.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of October 15, 2020 Minutes: After review and on a motion made by Bridgewater First Selectman Curtis Read and seconded by Wilton First Selectman Lynne Vanderslice, the minutes of the 10/15/2020 meeting were unanimously approved.

2020 DEMHS Region 5, COG MOU Homeland Security Grant (HSG) Program: After review by WestCOG Deputy Director Mike Towle, and on a motion made by Wilton First Selectman Lynne Vanderslice and seconded by Brookfield First Selectman Steve Dunn, the Homeland Security Grant MOU was unanimously approved.

LOTCHIP Adjustment: WestCOG Senior Project Manager Kevin Mahoney presented a requested adjustment to the COG's LOTCHIP project endorsements. On a motion made by Wilton First Selectman Lynne Vanderslice and seconded by New Milford Mayor Pete Bass, the TAG unanimously recommended approving the increase of the Weston Pedestrian Safety Improvement Project from \$1,820,000 to \$1,850,000.

2021 Meeting Schedule: After review and on a motion made by Weston First Selectman Chris Spaulding and seconded by Bridgewater First Selectman Curtis Read, the 2021 Meeting Schedule was unanimously approved.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Covid-19 Discussion: WestCOG Executive Director Francis Pickering and WestCOG attorney Steve Mednick reviewed the updated Governor's Executive Orders related to Covid-19. All active Executive Orders are now extended through Feb 9th. The budget process and restrictions around meetings and voting have not yet been addressed in these new extended orders.

County Equivalency Update: WestCOG Executive Director Francis Pickering gave an update on upcoming Census activities.

Regional Service Update: WestCOG Deputy Director Mike Towle gave an update on regional services data that WestCOG staff are currently on collecting regarding Parcel Data, CAMA Date, Animal Control, Public Safety and Waste Management.

Legislative Committee: WestCOG Executive Director Francis Pickering reminded COG members that the Legislative session will be reconvening in early 2021 and the Legislative Committee is trying to schedule a meeting next week to discuss priorities.

Planning and Zoning Regional Discussion: WestCOG Executive Director Francis Pickering gave an update on developments in local planning and zoning regulations. WestCOG is hosting a conversation with the municipal Planning and Zoning Committee Chairs on November 30th.

Housing and Demographic Analysis: WestCOG Senior GIS Analyst Nick Trabka and GIS Analyst Tucker Beckett gave an update on the residential location analysis from the October COG meeting. WestCOG

Planner Kristin Floberg added on to this presentation and gave an overview of housing trends in Connecticut.

OTHER BUSINESS:

There was no other business discussed.

ADJOURNMENT

The next COG meeting will be held on Thursday, December 17th. On a motion made Darien First Selectman Jayne Stevenson and seconded by Bridgewater First Selectman Curtis Read, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 2:35pm.

INTERIM MINUTES SUBJECT TO FINAL APPROVAL BY THE COG MEMBERS