



# WCEDD Meeting Minutes

July 14 at 1:00 pm | Web Conference

## Members in Attendance

- |                                |                            |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| - Rudy Marconi, Chair          | Town of Ridgefield         |
| - Lynn Vanderslice, Vice Chair | Town of Wilton             |
| - Hal Kurfehs                  | Coldwell Banker Commercial |
| - Jennie Ripps                 | The Owl's Brew             |
| - Jason Patlis                 | Norwalk Aquarium           |
| - Lisa Scails                  | Cultural Alliance          |
| - Janice Chrzescijaneki        | Town of Bethel             |
| - Jennifer Orlikoff            | Stamford UConn             |
| - Lisa Mercurio                | Advance CT                 |

Francis Pickering, Mike Towle, and Betsy Paynter were in attendance with WestCOG. Devin Cox and Jeff Christensen were in attendance with EntryPoint

## Meeting Call to Order

Meeting Called to order at 1:02 PM

## Public Participation

No Public participation.

## Approval of April 2022 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes as presented by Lynne Vanderslice and seconded by Rudy Marconi.

## Broadband Update

Mike Towle provides an update on WestCOG's Broadband Study.

- WestCOG hired EntryPoint to explore options for broadband installation in WestCOG communities.
- This study is in preparation for the IJJA broadband funds anticipated in the next year or so.
- WestCOG has a survey out as well as the state. WestCOG is in coordination with the state to provide its results to the state.
  - The WestCOG survey has additional questions.

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Rudy asked if the project explores open access broadband solutions. The survey does not engage the public on the question of open access. The WestCOG Workshop at the July COG meeting will explore that option. The study itself will also present an open access solution along with other builds.

EntryPoint notes there are currently 12 open access broadband projects in MA which include Quincy and Springfield.

The survey is currently at 160 responses and aims to for 500 replies.

**ACTION.** WestCOG will send out the survey link for the Council to complete and share with their networks

## Grants Update

Betsy Paynter provides and update.

**IIJA – Federal Infrastructure Bill.** Light activity currently. WestCOG is waiting for the NOFO to be released. WestCOG is working closely with Commissioner Boughton's office and will provide updates on this grant as they are released.

## Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Betsy Paynter provided a summary on CEDS Update activity thus far and seeks input from the WCEDD Council members.

The CEDS' SWOT analysis, Strategic Plan, Goals, Objectives, and Actions have been drafted. A solicitation of municipal economic development projects has been collected and reviewed.

Francis Pickering recommends that the objectives for the infrastructure goal include language to maintain existing infrastructure as well as adding capacity and/or objectives that increase capacity without having to build new infrastructure.

Francis Pickering recommends including language or an objective under the workforce goal that acknowledges both deficiencies in workforce and surplus of skills. There might be opportunity to align workers and businesses.

Rudy Marconi mentions there is opportunity in employment in municipal government or regional projects.

Hal Kurfehs raises the risk that the CEDS could be developed with a suite of important concepts but not be shelved. The information in the CEDS should be acted upon and delivered to the public so they are aware of them, create a marketing plan around the actions needed in the CEDS

Francis Pickering recommends that WestCOG explore projects with a few municipalities and see if other towns also share these projects. Also notices Greenwich has no entries in the CEDS.

Francis Pickering requests we include a goal on agriculture. While it is a small industry in the region, this also means it has opportunity for growth.

**ACTION.** WestCOG will take its list of CEDS projects and seek further input from communities.

## Upcoming Meetings

- CEDS Working Group meetings:
  - o August 4<sup>th</sup> at 1pm via Zoom
  
- September WCEDD Special Meeting – Wednesday September 14, 2022 1:00 PM
  
- Quarterly WCEDD meeting – October 13, 2022 @ 1:00 PM via Zoom

## Adjournment

Meeting adjourned 1:55