

MINUTES

Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley

Thursday January 18, 2007, **8:00 AM**

Legislative Office Building Cafeteria – Dining Room

300 Capitol Avenue

Hartford, CT

COGCNV Members: Susan Cable, First Selectwoman, Beacon Falls; Ellen Samoska, Alternate, Bethlehem; Ron SanAngelo, Mayor, Naugatuck; Robert Chatfield, Mayor, Prospect; Mark Cooper, First Selectman, Southbury; Robert Flanagan, Alternate and Chairman Regional Planning Commission, Thomaston; Theresa Caldarone, Alternate, Waterbury; Thomas Dunn, Mayor, Wolcott; Richard Crane, First Selectman, Woodbury; August Palmer III, First Selectman, Oxford **Other Attendees:** Vickie Nardello, State Representative, Cheshire & Prospect; Arthur O’Neill, State Representative, Southbury; John Piscopo, State Representative, Thomaston; Lou Mangini, Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro’s Office; Mike Guarco and George McLaughlin, Jr., Connecticut Municipal Consortium for Fiscal Responsibility; Christopher Wood, Woodbury Town Planner; Ken Hanks, Naugatuck Assistant Fire Chief; Christy Rubenstein, Partnership for Strong Communities **Staff:** Peter Dorpalen, Executive Director; Virginia Mason, Assistant Director; Samuel Gold, Senior Planner; Jeffrey Cormier, Assistant Planner; Patricia Bauer, Financial Manager; Selma Alves, Secretary.

1. Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call, Introductions, Public Comment

Chairman Susan Cable called the meeting to order at 8:08 am, and those present recited the pledge of allegiance. Peter Dorpalen called the roll and introduced speakers and guests. There was no public comment.

2. COGCNV Legislative Priorities/ Legislators’ Perspectives

Susan Cable presented the four main concerns of the Executive Committee: State aid to municipalities (including ECS, TAR, and LoCIP funding), transportation (notably the I-84 upgrade), open space funding, and brownfields remediation.

State Representative Vickie Nardello said that the Educational Cost Sharing (ECS) is one of the top priorities of the Democratic caucus, along with energy and healthcare. On energy, she stated that municipalities are being vastly overcharged. With very few bidders and vendors, energy prices are artificially inflated. Vendors are purchasing energy for approximately \$60 per megawatt hour and selling it to the public for \$130 per megawatt hour. She urged the municipalities to demand better pricing.

State Representative Arthur O’Neill spoke about the Governor possibly revamping the ECS program and that municipalities should expect similar amounts of funding to previous years. The program was initially instituted to make up for towns with less tax base. Municipalities should not expect significant increases in the future.

State Representative John Piscopo discussed unfunded mandates and the prevailing wage issue. He proposed raising the thresholds for local projects to help with rising costs. On brownfields, he favored codifying the process and authorizing one agency to assist with all aspects of

brownfields remediation. Much of the brownfields legislation is area-specific and should be more broadly focused.

3. **Administrative Items**

- a. *Minutes of December 8, 2006, meeting* — On a motion by Richard Crane, seconded by Mark Cooper, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the December 8, 2006 meeting.

- b. *Minutes of January 10, 2007, Executive Committee meeting* — On a motion by Richard Crane, seconded by Theresa Caldron, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the January 10, 2007 Executive Committee meeting.

- c. *Financial Report* — Peter Dorpalen reported, as of December 31, 2006, the Council was 50% through the fiscal year and had expended 41% of the \$682,342 operating budget. Of the total budgeted amount which includes pass-through funds, 16.2% of the \$2,029,435 budget has been expended. The STIF account totaled \$57,617. The Webster Checking account balance was \$26,267 and the STIF Reserve Fund had a balance of \$189,378. Peter Dorpalen explained that the fiscal year 2006 audit was clean, revealing no findings. On a motion by August Palmer, seconded by Mark Cooper, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the January 2007 financial report.

On a motion by August Palmer, seconded by Richard Crane, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the fiscal year 2006 audit report.

- d. *Correspondence* — Peter Dorpalen summarized recent correspondence.

December 20, 2006 Letter from CERC encouraging town participation in the EDDI (Economic Development Data and Information) program. Future fees for the service will be dropped as an incentive.

January 12, 2007 Email from ConnDOT with possible options for the 80/10/10 Urban STP highway funding.

January 12, 2007 Letters to mayors and first selectmen requesting a review of the top local transportation priorities for the update of the regional transportation plan.

4. **CT Municipal Consortium for Fiscal Responsibility**

George McLaughlin stated that the purpose of the consortium is to return control of expense and budgets to municipalities. The prevailing wage thresholds have not been raised since 1991. George McLaughlin proposed raising them to \$1 million for everything, indexed to increased construction costs. Mandatory binding arbitration is an issue dealing with all municipal employees without a contract. When dealing with this issue the State have more options and the consortium is asking that municipalities are given those same rights. Unfunded mandates are a burden to municipalities and should be funded or eliminated. Mike Guarco added that in many cases beneficial programs are cut in favor of mandates,

making municipal government services ineffective. On a motion by Ron San Angelo, seconded by August Palmer, it was unanimously

VOTED: To support the general efforts of the consortium and the specific efforts as outlined in the consortium's resolution.

5. **Project Updates**

a. *NVCC Municipal Training* — Ron SanAngelo reported that the budget for the program will range from \$81,000 - \$105,000 depending on the number of courses provided. Higher priority courses will be more general in nature to meet the needs for all towns. Payment by each town is on a per-capita basis ensuring equal representation. This program is unique, cost-saving, and will improve the skills of municipal employees. Susan Cable added that some union contracts have provisions for training, and this program would give towns direction over the curriculum. Christopher Wood emphasized that lawsuits are detrimental to municipalities, and can be avoided by providing staff with proper training on procedural steps and decision-making. SanAngelo specified that general courses are a beginning point, and more specialized courses can be added in the future. Ellen Samoska spoke about the difficulty in convincing the finance board of the program's importance. At this point the municipalities stating an interest to participate are Beacon Falls, Naugatuck, Oxford, Prospect, Southbury, Thomaston, Watertown, and Woodbury. Dorpalen will check with the remaining towns.

b. *Emergency Operations Planning* — Virginia Mason explained that CT DEMHS approved having the Emergency Planning Committee decide the use of the \$14,000 "incentive" account received for pooling the grant allocations regionally. The plan is to allocate\$1,000 to each town. The Emergency Planning Committee has requested that they become a standing committee of COGCNV. Ken Hanks announced an exercise occurring in May or June being coordinated by DEMHS and will facilitate town cooperation during emergencies. It will be a notification exercise with each municipality opening its EOC and a regional EOC operating also. On a motion by Ron San Angelo, seconded by Richard Crane, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the Central Naugatuck Valley Emergency Planning Committee as a standing committee of COGCNV.

c. *Pre-Disaster Mitigation* — Virginia Mason reported that the Pre-Disaster '04 plans are virtually completed and are awaiting FEMA final approval. The four 05 grant municipalities have completed their public meetings and are waiting for Milone & MacBroom to finish drafts. According to DEP, the Pre-Disaster '06 funds have been approved, but no paperwork has been seen yet. That contract would start in the Fall.

7. **Regional Business** — Lou Mangini announced that Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro's office will be taking requests for the FY08 earmarks in the next two months. Earmarks may be requested for anything from transportation, brownfields, or local improvements. Ron San Angelo asked to begin discussion and formal meetings with Rosa DeLauro's office to develop a package for local projects. Her annual mayors meeting will be in the last two weeks of February, making it a key time to submit earmark requests. The deadline to submit requests for earmarks is the end of February.

8. **Other**

- Peter Dorpalen announced that COGCNV has unexpended carry-over transportation funds from previous years. Some potential projects include GIS parcel mapping, design study for the Naugatuck River Greenway, and congestion monitoring.
- Christy Rubenstein introduced a proposed voluntary program to promote affordable housing in municipalities. It was noted that, for Connecticut's economy to grow, workers need reasonably priced housing to be able to live in the state.

9. **Adjournment** — At 9:41 AM, on a motion by Richard Crane, seconded by Theresa Caldarone, it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by
Jeffrey Cormier, Assistant Planner

For

Maura Martin
Secretary