

MINUTES
Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley
Room 310, State Capitol
Hartford, CT
Wednesday, February 2, 2005, 12:00 Noon

COGCNV Members: Susan Cable, First Selectman, Karen Wilson, Alternate, Beacon Falls; Joseph Salvini, Alternate, Middlebury; Ron San Angelo, Mayor, Naugatuck; August Palmer III, First Selectman, Oxford; Robert Chatfield, Mayor, Prospect; Mark A.R. Cooper, First Selectman, Southbury; Clifford Brammer, First Selectman, Thomaston; Thomas Dunn, Mayor, Wolcott; Richard Crane, First Selectman, Woodbury.

State Legislators: Sen. Joan Hartley, District 15; Rep. Alfred Adinolfi, District 103; Rep. Leonard Greene, District 105; Rep. David Labriola, District 131; Rep. Sean Williams, District 68; Rep. Arthur O'Neill, District 69; Rep. John Piscopo, District 76; Rep. John Mazurek, District 80; Rep. Vickie Nardello, District 89.

Other Attendees: Jennifer DeWitt, Executive Director Central Naugatuck Valley Regional Action Council; Darlene Tynan, Joblinks; Grayson Wright, ConnDOT; Will Siss, Republican-American; Lou Mancini and Danielle DeJesus, U.S. Rep. Rosa DeLauro's Office.

Staff: Peter Dorpalen, Executive Director; Virginia Mason, Assistant Director; Michael Flood, Regional Planner; Samuel Gold, Regional Planner, Patricia Bauer, Financial Manager, Selma Russo, Secretary.

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

Chairman Mark Cooper called the meeting to order at 12 Noon. Peter Dorpalen called the roll and introduced guests, and, the pledge of allegiance was recited. Lou Mangini, Congressional Aide to U.S. Rep. Rosa DeLauro made a public comment. He announced that his office is soliciting appropriation earmark requests for municipal and regional projects. Earmark requests will be due around the end of February.

2. COGCNV Legislative Priorities / Legislators' Perspectives

Mark Cooper introduced the discussion of COGCNV's Legislative Priorities. He stated that the general consensus among chief elected officials in the Central Naugatuck Valley Region (CNVR) is that, although the difficulty of this year's state budget is recognized, the CNVR's towns are looking to not be hurt by reductions in state aid and additional unfunded mandates. He mentioned the importance for the State Legislators to understand that Connecticut's towns are also hurting fiscally. Copper suggested that even holding everything even with the past year's budget would be helpful. Ron SanAngelo, Mayor of Naugatuck, added that with Education Cost Sharing, holding the line would not be sufficient. Staying flat on Education Cost Sharing would require towns to raise taxes because of annual increases in education expenses caused by union contracts.

On transportation, members emphasized the importance of upgrading I-84 from Waterbury to the New

York State line in the forefront. The next step in the upgrade process is the federally-required environmental assessment of the I-84 corridor. Senator Hartley mentioned that she has pursued a line item appropriation to restore midday service to the Waterbury Branch of the New Haven Rail Line. She wants to work to increase ridership on the branch. Peter Dorpalen noted that marketing and publicity is needed to advertise the service. Reggie Beamon commented that clean and working trains and safe stops are important in improving ridership.

The discussion turned to unfunded mandates placed on municipalities, especially the reform of binding arbitration. Ron San Angelo said that towns are reluctant to go into binding arbitration since arbiters compare salaries in his town to the state average. The state average says nothing about a town's ability to pay, and therefore towns such as Naugatuck do not have a fair chance in the arbitration process. State legislators gave the impression that any changes in binding arbitration would be unlikely. Auggie Palmer, First Selectman of Oxford, suggested that many of the problems that towns face with education funding could be solved by giving the legislative body of any tax-levying town the ability to hire and fire the superintendent of the school district.

Peter Dorpalen explained the need to maintain annual funding for Regional Planning Organizations, and returning it as a line item in the OPM portion of the state budget. Several legislators noted the value of regional planning organizations.

Thomas Dunn, Mayor of Wolcott, requested that the responsibility for providing transportation and storage for evicted tenants possessions be moved from the municipality to the property owner.

3. Administrative Items

a. Miscellaneous Approvals

On a motion by Bob Chatfield, seconded by Richard Crane, it was unanimously VOTED: To approve the minutes of January 14, 2005 COGCNV meeting, the February 2005 Amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program, and the Recreational Trails Program – Support for Swendsen Farm trail project, Bethel.

b. Correspondence

January 2005 Letter from Naugatuck Valley Brownfields Pilot Program, administered by the Valley Council of Governments, asking for a new appointment to represent COG with the pilot.

4. Pre-Disaster Mitigation Planning

Virginia Mason reported that Waterbury, Cheshire, Prospect, and Wolcott are participating with COGCNV in an application for a pre-disaster planning grant.

5. Regional Business

a. Municipal Labor Negotiations Process — Peter Dorpalen reported that the committee met again and created a list of specific areas for the committee to look into. One issue brought up was employee health benefits and having a consultant give his perspective to COGCNV on possible strategies to curtail medical insurance costs.

b. Municipal Tax Exemptions and Credits Survey — Peter Dorpalen reported that a survey has been sent out to the towns. He requests that the completed surveys be returned quickly so he can have the results ready in time for the next COG meeting.

- c. *Other Regional Business* — Peter Dorpalen asked for a motion to appoint Regional Planner Samuel Gold as COG's representative to the Naugatuck Valley Brownfields Pilot Program. On a motion by Bob Chatfield, seconded by Thomas Dunn, it was unanimously

VOTED: To appoint regional planner Samuel Gold to be COGCNV's representative to the Naugatuck Valley Brownfields Pilot Program.

6. Other

- a. *Senior Officials NIMS Seminar* — Virginia Mason reported that senior officials training for emergency management will be taking place 9 A.M. to Noon at the Prospect Firehouse on Friday, February 4. This training session qualifies for NIMS credit.
- b. *Stormwater Workshop* — Virginia Mason reported that this workshop will take place in two parts on March 31, one during the day for town staff and one in the evening for commissions.
- c. *Naugatuck River Greenway Project* — Samuel Gold reported that on February 1 a meeting of the Naugatuck River Greenway Committee reconvened. At the meeting educational signs and brochures were discussed including holding a contest in the schools for a logo for the Greenway.
- d. *Future COG Meeting Topics* — Peter Dorpalen solicited suggestions for future COG meetings. Some of the issues he suggested were employee health benefits, town liability and certification issues, insurance for volunteer firefighters, and United Way's Infoline 211 presentation.

7. Adjournment

At 1:09 P.M. on a motion by Thomas Dunn, seconded by Dick Crane, it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by
For

Michael Jarjura, Secretary