



**COUNCIL of GOVERNMENTS
CENTRAL NAUGATUCK VALLEY**

49 Leavenworth Street, Suite 303, Waterbury, CT 06702 • 203-757-0535 • cogcnv.org

MINUTES

Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley

COGCV Conference Room

49 Leavenworth St., Suite 303

Waterbury, CT 06702

12:00 Noon, Friday, November 22, 2013

COG Members: Chris Bielik, First Selectman, Dominick Sorrentino, Alternate, Beacon Falls; Leonard Assard, First Selectman, Dave Deakin, Alternate, Bethlehem; Jerry Stiko, Alternate, Cheshire; Ed St. John, First Selectman, Middlebury; Bob Mezzo, Mayor, Naugatuck; Joanne Pelton, Alternate, Oxford; Bob Chatfield, Mayor, Tom Galvin, Alternate, Prospect; Ed Edelson (by phone), First Selectman, Southbury; Ed Mone, First Selectman, Thomaston; Garrett Casey, Alternate, Waterbury; Tom Dunn, Mayor, Wolcott.

Speakers and Guests: Kevin DelGobbo, Waterbury Development Corporation; Edgar Wynkoop, CTDOT; Peter Betkoski.

Staff: Samuel Gold, Acting Executive Director; Pat Gallagher, Regional Planner; Glenda Prentiss, GIS Coordinator; Lauren Rizzo, Administrative Assistant.

1. Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call, Public Comment

As Chairman Ed Edelson was unable to attend in person, the meeting was called to order by Secretary Bob Chatfield at 12:05 p.m. Those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance and the roll was called. There was a moment of silence for the late President John F. Kennedy on the anniversary of his assassination. There was no public comment.

2. Minutes of the November 8, 2013 Meeting

On a motion by Ed Mone, seconded by Jerry Sitko, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the November 8, 2013 meeting.

3. Election of Vice Chairman

On a motion by Jerry Sitko, seconded by Tom Dunn, it was unanimously

VOTED: To appoint Bob Chatfield as COGCV Vice Chairman, effective at the next COGCV meeting.

4. Update and Actions on Regional Planning Organization Consolidation

Samuel Gold provided an update on RPO consolidation. On November 20, Valley COG met and did not vote to approve a stand-alone merger with COGCV. They reiterated their support for a Valley, Bridgeport, and COGCV region. The meeting included two mayors who did not win re-election. On November 21, word was received that OPM approved a merger of Housatonic Valley and Southwestern Connecticut. OPM has also asked that they reconsider allowing Greater Bridgeport to join them. OPM has also said they cannot guarantee approval of a voluntary consolidation if it is not received before December 16. Mr. Gold also reported that on November 7, Central Connecticut voted to merge with

COGCNV. Their chairman sent a letter explaining the organization's governing structure. The options for COGCNV are 1) a voluntary merger with CCRPA, 2) wait for the next scheduled Valley COG meeting that will include the new members, or 3) take no action and wait for OPM.

Ed Edelson said that in order for COGCNV to be the master of its own destiny, he believes the best option is to enter into a merger with CCRPA and see where individual towns wish to go in January. Bob Chatfield said he generally agrees with this, with the door left open to Valley should they change their mind. Chris Bielik asked for Dominick Sorrentino's input, as Mr. Sorrentino has been a COGCNV alternate for two administrations now in Beacon Falls. Mr. Sorrentino said his thoughts are similar to Bob Chatfield's, with keeping COGCNV's options open before the state makes a decision. Mr. Bielik said he believes there is a benefit to be gained by the Valley sticking together as an entity. Leonard Assard said from Bethlehem's perspective either the Valley option or the CCRPA option is fine, but if forced into a merger with Bridgeport, Bethlehem may opt to become part of Litchfield Hills, as they share little in common with Bridgeport. Jerry Sitko said Cheshire could support a merger with CCRPA while also leaving the door open to Valley. Ed St. John would like to include Valley while going with CCRPA. Bob Mezzo said he felt that acting today on a merger with CCRPA would cut off the opportunity with Valley, and that Valley would then opt to merge with Bridgeport. Depending on what Oxford and Beacon Falls would then choose to do, Naugatuck would then petition to leave COGCNV and join the new Valley region. Joanne Pelton said Oxford feels the best course of action is waiting to see what the two newly elected mayors in the Valley region opt to do. Ed Mone feels a decision needs to be made now. He advocates merging with CCRPA while leaving the door open for Valley to also join. Garrett Casey said Waterbury is not in favor of making any decision at this point, because there is not a consensus among the CCRPA towns to join with COGCNV. He said Waterbury would like to welcome in the Valley towns, but is against a merger that would include Greater Bridgeport. He said that Waterbury is more comfortable with letting the state make the decision and Waterbury's preference at this juncture is to do nothing. Tom Dunn said he believes it is important to keep Waterbury as the main hub, and if the state would keep Waterbury as such, he would be comfortable with having the state make the decision. He would like Valley to merge with COGCNV. He was not in favor of a decision being made at this meeting.

At this point, COGCNV staff contacted Valley COG to confirm the date of their next meeting. It was discovered that Valley had decided not to hold a December meeting, but could hold a special meeting if their board decided to have one. At this time they are not scheduled to hold another meeting until January.

Bob Mezzo wanted it noted for the record that his main concern is being with Naugatuck's historical and cultural neighbors (the area from Naugatuck to Shelton) regardless of which town may be the central community in the region.

On a motion by Ed Edelson, seconded by Tom Dunn, with Ed St. John abstaining, it was

VOTED: To table Agenda Item 4 until the next COGCNV meeting and to invite OPM Under Secretary David LeVasseur to that meeting.

5. Other

- a. *Regional Nutmeg Network Info Session* – Samuel Gold explained that the state is allowing municipalities to join its fiber optic network. The network has increased speed over conventional internet connections and may also provide cost savings. OPM has made grants available to cover capital costs and, potentially, operating costs to join the network. An informational session will be held on Monday, November 25th at Waterbury City Hall.

6. Adjournment

At 1:20 p.m., on a motion by Tom Dunn, seconded by Leonard Assard, it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by
Lauren Rizzo
Administrative Assistant
for
Bob Chatfield
Secretary