



**COUNCIL of GOVERNMENTS  
CENTRAL NAUGATUCK VALLEY**

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**MINUTES**

**Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley**

COGCV Conference Room

49 Leavenworth Street, Suite 303

Waterbury, CT 06702

12:00 Noon, Friday, January 10, 2014

**COG Members:** Chris Bielik, First Selectman, Beacon Falls; Leonard Assard, First Selectman, Bethlehem; Jerry Sitko, Alternate, Cheshire; Ed St. John, First Selectman, Middlebury; Bob Mezzo, Mayor, Naugatuck; Joanne Pelton (via phone), Alternate, Oxford; Tom Galvin, Alternate, Prospect; Ed Edelson, First Selectman, Southbury; Ed Mone, First Selectman, Thomaston; Kevin DelGobbo, Alternate, Waterbury; Ray Primini, Town Council Chairman, Watertown; Tom Dunn, Mayor, Wolcott; Bill Butterly, First Selectman, Woodbury.

**Speakers and Guests:** Tom Maziarz, Policy and Planning Bureau Chief, CTDOT; John DiCarlo, Waterbury Regional Chamber; Donna Perreira, Selectman, Southbury; Kurt Miller, Seymour First Selectman and Valley Council of Governments Chairman; Rick Dunne, Executive Director, Valley Council of Governments; Edgar Wynkoop, CTDOT.

**Staff:** Samuel Gold, AICP, Executive Director; Joe Perrelli, Senior Planner; Pat Gallagher, Regional Planner; Glenda Prentiss, GIS Coordinator; Aaron Budris, Regional Planner/GIS Specialist; Lauren Rizzo, Administrative Assistant.

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

Chairman Ed Edelson called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. Those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance and the roll was called. Kurt Miller spoke about the merger of COGCV and Valley COG and the advantages the strengths of both agencies will bring to member municipalities. Kevin DelGobbo and Ed Edelson offered comments describing the desire to see the merger progress in a collaborative and open way.

On a motion by Ed Edelson, seconded by Kevin DelGobbo, it was unanimously

VOTED: To add Item 9b, Legal Fee Authorization to the agenda.

**2. Consent Agenda**

- a. Minutes of the December 13, 2013 Meeting
- b. Financial Report
- c. Correspondence

On a motion by Ed St. John, seconded by Len Assard, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the Consent Agenda.

**3. COGCV Dues: FY2015**

Samuel Gold said that since fiscal year 2007, COGCV dues have been set at 42.7¢ per capita. For the present fiscal year (FY14), the dues were calculated based on the 42.7¢ per capita dues times the 2010 U.S. Census population counts. For fiscal year 2014-15,

the recommendation is to keep the dues the same. As in prior years, the institutional populations for Cheshire and Southbury are removed from the totals. Dues may be invoiced in installments in order to facilitate the transition to the new COG.

On a motion by Ed Mone, seconded by Tom Dunn, it was unanimously

VOTED: To set the FY2014-15 COGCVN municipal dues at 42.7¢ per capita times the 2010 U.S. Census population counts, as presented in Memorandum 123113F.

4. **Household Hazardous Waste Administrative Fees**

Pat Gallagher said that in Fiscal Year 2014, COGCVN approved a Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Program administrative fee of \$12,000, and program dues were allocated based on 2010 population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. COGCVN staff recommends maintaining the same administrative fees in Fiscal Year 2015.

On a motion by Ed Mone, seconded by Chris Bielik, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the FY 2015 HHW Program administrative fees at a total of \$12,000 for the region's 10 participating municipalities, with each municipality's fee based on the 2010 population estimates as presented in Memorandum 010214.

5. **Update and Actions on Regional Consolidation**

Samuel Gold reported that on 12/24/13, OPM approved the consolidation of the COGCVN and Valley COG planning regions. The new region will be known as the Naugatuck Valley Planning Region and becomes official on 1/1/15. OPM also specified that although they had received letters from Bristol and Plymouth to petition into the region, due to procedural reasons, they were unable to accommodate the requests. OPM also provided those municipalities with the steps for a petition process.

a. *COGCVN Formation Resolution* – Mr. Gold explained that despite its name, the Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley is organized under state statute as a regional council of elected officials. As part of the regionalism legislation passed by the Connecticut General Assembly last session, regional councils of elected officials and regional planning agencies are to be phased out by the end of the year. All regional planning organizations are required to become councils of governments by 1/1/15. In order to establish a new COG in the newly designated Naugatuck Valley Planning Region, the member municipalities of COGCVN are required to adopt ordinances to join a COG. There are two ways for this to proceed:

1. COGCVN board votes to reorganize COGCVN under the state COG statute and COGCVN municipalities adopt a COG ordinance.

a. A merger of COGCVN and Valley COG, and formation of a new Naugatuck Valley COG would be accomplished by a vote of both COG boards. The Naugatuck Valley COG would be a new agency comprised of projects, staff, and funds

brought over from COGCNV and Valley COG. COGCNV and Valley COG would both be wound down.

- b. Valley COG could vote to join COGCNV COG. Valley COG would be wound down. COGCNV would change its name to Naugatuck Valley COG.
2. COGCNV municipalities adopt a COG ordinance and join the Valley Council of Governments. COGCNV would be wound down. Valley COG would change its name to Naugatuck Valley COG.

Mr. Gold explained that approval of a COG ordinance by COGCNV municipalities is required regardless of the consolidation approach. Therefore, Valley COG's current organization as a council of governments and COGCNV's organization as a council of elected officials is not relevant. An approach that has one agency taking over another would be quicker, but individual municipalities joining the successor agency lose leverage and would have to accept the existing strictures of the successor agency. A municipality joining an existing agency may also assume the existing liabilities of that agency. Approach 1a provides all municipalities with a voice in the formation of a new agency. The new Naugatuck Valley COG would be created with the input and approval of the new board comprised of all Naugatuck Valley Planning Region municipalities. This approach could move more slowly and require more careful negotiations. However, it allows for a fresh start that could help facilitate new partnerships and cooperation in the new Naugatuck Valley Region. This type of approach was pursued in the recently completed merger of Northwest Connecticut COG and Litchfield Hills Council of Elected Officials. Mr. Gold concluded that his recommendation is that COGCNV reorganizes as a council of governments by a COGCNV board resolution and adoption of municipal ordinances. A new Naugatuck Valley COG would be formed by a vote to merge with Valley COG. Planning for the Naugatuck Valley COG would proceed cooperatively with Valley COG while the COGCNV COG is being formed.

- b. *Proposed Timeline and Process for Consolidation* – Mr. Gold said a meeting between the COG chairmen is scheduled for 1/14/14 to discuss the major consolidation decisions and to begin the process of forming sub-committees and timelines. Facilitator assistance may be needed. He presented a flowchart prepared by Chairman Edelson and a model municipal resolution for ratifying the reorganization of the Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley under the state council of governments statute was reviewed. A more concrete timeline and next steps will be determined after the initial meeting.

Kevin DelGobbo said that adopting the resolution would be deciding upon one particular path for consolidation. Samuel Gold said that another option would be for COGCNV municipalities to petition to leave and join Valley COG. Bob Mezzo had questions regarding the need to form a new intermediary COG and thought negotiations should take place before that happens. Samuel Gold explained that COGCNV is the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and a

conduit for federal funding. Without an MPO, the projects in the region would come to a halt. CTDOT is looking at MPO redesignation and will release an interim report in July, but the issue will probably take longer than this year. The issue at stake is that COGCNV as an agency is identified specifically as the MPO. The guidance he received from FHWA is that if COGCNV ceases to exist, with towns leaving and joining Valley COG, we will no longer have an MPO. The issue in Valley COG is a little less troublesome because the chief elected officials of Valley COG are identified as the MPO. Further guidance must come from FHWA and CTDOT, and they will be meeting soon to discuss this topic.

Bob Mezzo said COGCNV is still in existence, but the successor to it has not yet been determined. He said negotiations between Valley COG and COGCNV have not yet taken place to determine what the best form is between the two merging entities. Mr. Gold said he was taking a lead from Valley COG as there was a suggestion that the two COG boards could vote to merge in that way. All municipalities have to join a COG, that is a given, and the state has required that all regional planning organizations be COGS, which requires COG ordinances from the municipalities. If 60% of COGCNV's member municipalities pass ordinances to join Valley COG, COGCNV would cease to exist, resulting in a loss of the MPO designation. COGCNV formally becoming a council of governments would be an interim step in the consolidation of the two COGs. He also noted that this interim step procedure was followed by Litchfield Hills Council of Elected Officials (they voted to become a COG) as part of their merger with Northwestern Connecticut.

Ed Edelson said a decision would not be irreversible if it is ultimately decided that the merger would be better off happening under the Valley COG umbrella, but regardless of which option is chosen, each municipality has to join a COG. Mr. Mezzo noted that this must take place by 1/1/15 and questioned the urgency of the matter. He thought that taking any action at this point would be premature. Mr. Gold said it takes time for municipal ratification of the COG, and once COGCNV becomes a COG, the CEOs would then be empowered to vote to merge with Valley COG, agency to agency. In his interpretation of state statutes, regional councils of elected officials cannot directly vote to merge with a COG, the agency would have to be a true council of governments to do so. Bob Mezzo said that, in theory, municipalities could be passing two resolutions. Samuel Gold said COGCNV would pass one resolution to become a COG and one resolution to merge with Valley COG, but it would take the municipal ordinances to ratify the COG status to give COGCNV's chief elected officials the authority to merge by a vote of the board.

Tom Maziarz said that CTDOT and Federal Highway have been waiting to see the outcome of the OPM procedure before getting too actively involved with the next step, which would be the MPO consolidation. He said that it is critically important, and that CTDOT is committed to working with the COGs and the MPOs to maintain the MPO functions during the transition period. While the regional consolidation mergers

may have a one year timeframe, it may take CTDOT two years to complete some of the MPO consolidations.

On a motion by Bill Butterly, seconded by Ray Primini, it was unanimously

VOTED: To table discussion on the COGCNV formation resolution and the proposed timeline and process for consolidation until a future date.

6. **I-84 Interchange Project in Southbury (Exits 14, 15, and 16)**

Tom Maziarz spoke about a CTDOT project addressing problems in the 30-mile section of I-84 between New York and Waterbury. The project has faced delays due to expense and environmental assessments, however, short term operational improvements have been gained at key interchange locations. CTDOT is now proposing a new approach that will (1) refocus the widening and environmental study on a limited, less costly, but critical section of I-84; and (2) accelerate construction of previously provided interchange and operational improvements. The latter could be financed in part by seeking the requisite state bond funds authorized in the 2006 "Road Map" legislation (PA 06-136). I-84 widening was one of the eligible projects identified in the legislation. The widening project and its environmental study will be refocused on the section most in need of improvement, this being the five mile section in Danbury between exits 3 and 8. In order for CTDOT to pursue this, the existing EIS will need to be officially terminated and a new environmental document initiated for the shorter Danbury section. The new study can be funded with the balance of unspent funds from the larger EIS. CTDOT also proposes an aggressive program for advancing the short-term initiatives identified in the 2000-2001 needs and deficiencies studies. These smaller projects address existing problems and have independent utility, but are dependent upon getting funding approval. Exits 14, 15, and 16 on I-84 are included in the list of short term improvement projects. Mr. Maziarz asked if there were any objections to the refocusing of the long term strategy and the acceleration of short term improvements (all of which were outlined on a memo he distributed). Discussion followed.

Mr. Maziarz also spoke about a strategic planning project known as TransformCT. More information may be obtained at [www.TransformCT.org](http://www.TransformCT.org).

On a motion by Bill Butterly, seconded by Ed Mone, it was unanimously

VOTED: To postpone a vote on the I-84 Interchange project in Southbury (Exits 14, 15, and 16) pending a recommendation from the Regional Planning Commission.

7. **FY2014 Surface Transportation Program – Urban Funds**

Joe Perrelli spoke about unprogrammed Surface Transportation Program-Urban funds, as had been outlined at the December meeting and in Memorandum 120613U. Staff recommends that the region approve funding for the Waterbury Bus Operations and Needs Study with any remaining balance applied to the design for the improvements at I-

84, Interchange 17. On a motion by Bob Mezzo, seconded by Tom Dunn, it was unanimously

VOTED: To apply the region's unallocated STP-Urban funds towards the Waterbury Bus Operations and Needs Study, with the remaining balance applied to the design and improvements at I-84, Interchange 17 in Middlebury and Waterbury (Proj. #174-309).

**8. Regional Business**

Pat Gallagher said a Regional Animal Shelter Committee meeting is schedule for 1/15/14.

**9. Other**

a. *Emergency Planning* - Joe Perrelli said Local Emergency Operations Plans are due by 1/15/14. An Emergency Planning Committee meeting was held on 1/9/14 with a focus on sheltering special needs populations. Bob Mezzo opened discussion on the possibility of regional sheltering for various events.

Additionally, Mr. Perrelli said a Public Works Group meeting will be held on 1/22/14. Culvert spring technology will be the topic of discussion.

b. *Legal Fees Authorization* – Samuel Gold said that as Executive Director his financial authorization is for \$2,500 without prior COGCNV approval. With the anticipation of requiring legal advice from COGCNV's attorney as the RPO consolidation process goes forward, he would like authorization for a higher amount for these legal fees. On a motion by Tom Dunn, seconded by Jerry Sitko, it was unanimously

VOTED: To give Executive Director Samuel Gold the authority to spend up to \$6,000 for legal advice as may be required for the regional consolidation/merger of COGCNV with Valley COG.

**10. Adjournment**

At 1:22 p.m., on a motion by Tom Galvin, seconded by Chris Bielik, it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by  
Lauren Rizzo  
Administrative Assistant  
for  
Tom Dunn  
Secretary