

**MINUTES OF THE
HVCEO
MEETING OF FEBRUARY 16, 2001
AT BROOKFIELD, CT TOWN HALL**

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES

Bethel.....First Selectman Judy Novachek
Bridgewater.....Alternate Robert Brown
Brookfield.....First Selectman Martin Foncello, Secretary-Treasurer
Danbury.....Mayor Gene Eriquez
New Fairfield.....First Selectman Patricia Gay, Chairman
New Milford.....Mayor Arthur Peitler
Newtown.....First Selectman Herbert Rosenthal
Redding.....First Selectman Natalie Ketcham
Ridgefield.....Alternate Peter Yanity
Sherman.....First Selectman Donna Tuck

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Harold Mayer and Larry Marsicano of the Candlewood Lake Authority, Northwest EMS Council Director Robert Corrigan, Danbury Hospital President Frank Kelly, Greater Danbury Volunteer Center Director Karen Annoni, Attorney Ted Backer of Pinney Payne, John Morrisroe and Don Heibek of the Route 7 Expressway advocacy group CER7.

Also, Richard Schreiner and Alan Hachey of the Housatonic Area Regional Transit District, Cheryl Reedy of Congressman Maloney's Office, a citizen, Kathryn Faraci of Conn DOT, James Bellano of the Housatonic Valley Economic Development Partnership, Camille Acquanita, David Hannon and Jonathan Chew of the HVCEO staff.

CALL TO ORDER AND PUBLIC COMMENT

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Patricia Gay at 12:35 P.M. Public comment was offered from John Morrisroe of the group "Committee for Extension of the Route 7 Expressway" supporting Norwalk to Danbury Route 7 Expressway construction. The group's eight minute video presentation was then shown.

MINUTES FROM MEETING OF 12/8/2000

On a motion made by Marty Foncello and seconded by Gene Eriquez, the minutes of the HVCEO meeting of 12/8/2000 were unanimously approved.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR 11/2000 12/2000 AND 1/2001

On a motion made by Gene Eriquez and seconded by Judy Novachek, the financial statements for 11/2000, 12/2000 and 1/2001 were unanimously approved.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENTS

Dave Hannon reviewed twelve TIP amendments and administrative actions requested by Conn DOT. On a motion made by Herbert Rosenthal and a second by Natalie Ketcham, the twelve items were unanimously approved.

Dave then reviewed the request by Conn DOT to add to the TIP a \$2.5 million analysis of upgrading and electrification potential of the Danbury Branch Line from Norwalk to New Milford. A discussion followed, including reference to Chairman Gay's recent letter to Conn DOT on the structuring of the study and the response from Conn DOT received this date. Then on a motion made by Gene Eriquez and a second by Donna Tuck, this TIP amendment was unanimously approved.

LOCAL ROAD ACCIDENT REDUCTION GRANT

Deputy Director Dave Hannon reported that two applications have been received, both from the Town of Ridgefield. These are for 1) safety improvements at the intersection of Nod Road and Branchville Road (Route 102), and at the intersection of Ridgebury Road and North Salem Road (Route 116). On a motion made by Gene Eriquez and seconded by Judy Novachek, it was voted unanimously to approve the two applications and to transmit them to Conn DOT.

SECTION 5310 VAN GRANT PROGRAM

Dave Hannon reviewed an agenda attachment from HART, making a recommendation as to priorities for van applications. It was explained that for this program the application review process is delegated to HART, and on 11/6/2000 HART mailed out notices to area municipalities and non-profit service organizations informing them of the availability of funding through this program.

HART received proposals from DATAHR and from Danbury Public Schools, with the DATAHR proposal the HART recommended higher priority. DATAHR ridership estimates are 52 trips per day including both disabled and senior clients. Rick Schreiner of HART provided background on the applications. Then on a motion made by Gene Eriquez and a second by Donna Tuck, it was voted unanimously to forward the two applications to Conn DOT with the DATAHR proposal as the top regional priority.

MANAGEMENT OF BACKGROUND CHECKS ON VOLUNTEERS

Karen Annoni, Director of the Volunteer Center, Inc. serving Greater Danbury, was then introduced. She is seeking assistance with the \$25 per person cost of statewide police checks which the Center requires for all its potential volunteers in the Friendly Visitor/Tele-Care Program. The goal of that program is to support at risk seniors and help neighbors maintain neighbors in their own homes. The volunteers provided weekly companionship visits and regular telephone reassurance calls.

Ms. Annoni noted that in December's training there were 27 persons, which at \$25 per person is a very difficult cost for a Volunteer Center. She stated that if the checks were submitted to state police by municipal staff, there would be no charges, as costs are waived for municipalities. Her program would then annually report how many police checks had been requested from individual communities, which would represent their "in-kind" donation to Center.

In answer to a question from Arthur Peitler concerning municipal staff time available, Ms. Annoni stated that the Volunteer Center will still complete all paperwork required for the background checks, the difference being they will be submitted by the municipality, without a check for \$25 attached. After further discussion, on a motion made by Herbert Rosenthal and a second by Gene Eriquez it was voted unanimously to urge all HVCEO members municipalities to assist the Volunteer Center by agreeing providing the service of submitting this background checks. Art Peitler abstained from this vote.

DISCUSSION OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Robert Corrigan, Director of the Northwest CT EMS Council, was the first to speak to this issue. He distributed a package of information relevant to current legislation affecting EMS and also EMS planning materials. He advised continuing to focus on the regionalization of service.

Frank Kelly, President of Danbury Hospital, was then introduced. He cited progress made at a meeting the previous evening between Danbury Hospital and EMS groups that cleared many issues, including the restocking of ambulances. A general discussion followed.

Gene Eriquez commented that a major issued for Danbury was provision of backup EMS service to surrounding towns. The issue is not Danbury assistance when the other towns are busy with an emergency, he said, but the unfairness of a Danbury response when ths other town has no staff busy already or even on duty when the emergency comes up, leading to a

call to Danbury.

UPDATE ON PROPOSED STRATEGY BOARD

Dave Hannon recommended that a letter outlining major transportation issues be forwarded from Patty Gay to Oz Griebel as Chair of the Strategy Board. The letter will also thank him for agreeing to attend the upcoming March HVCEO meeting and ask him to respond to the statement of need in this letter. A discussion followed. Then on a motion made by Judy Novachek and a second by Marty Foncello, it was voted unanimously to authorize the letter to be sent.

DANBURY BRANCH LINE ELECTRIFICATION STUDY

Dave Hannon commented on the Conn DOT hearing recently held on this topic. The Council has received an answer from Conn DOT in response to its list of questions on the electrification study, he said. Also, that a legislative hearing on rail passenger service extension to New Milford would be held on 2/20/2001 at which he would testify.

STATEWIDE DIGITAL AERIAL PHOTO

It was agreed that HVCEO would contact all area legislators to express strong support for the State's proposed \$1.9 million acquisition of data rights for aerial photography mapping products covering the entire state, as the acquisition will be of great practical benefit to the mapping activities of the municipalities.

LAND USE TRAINING

HVEDP Director James Bellano commented that the land use training session held on January 31 had been well attended. Future sessions are planned.

REGIONAL BIKE RACE

James Bellano stated that the planning and fund raising for the Housatonic Valley Classic bike race had been successful, and that the event with nationally known racers will be held on Saturday, May 20, with travel through all ten municipalities in the Region. A discussion followed concerning designation of contact persons in each municipality for detailed bike race planning

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE

Jon Chew distributed the 2001-2021 Draft Regional Transportation plan update. He reviewed a draft list of each municipality's priority traffic flow and safety improvement needs. Traffic improvement projects on the list represent the near term traffic improvement goals of each community. Federal law requires that municipal traffic needs must appear in the HVCEO Regional Transportation Plan before any federal financial assistance can be granted, he said, and that the Plan is now being distributed to municipalities and by legal notice to the general public.

Members will consider approval of the update at their 4/20/2001 meeting. Herb Rosenthal asked that Newtown Community Development Director Liz Stocker be contacted concerning some concerns in the Plan over roadway classifications.

EXECUTIVE SESSION CONCERNING LEASE OR SALE OF LAND NEAR FERC REGULATED HYDROPROJECTS

On as motion made by Art Peitler and seconded by Donna Tuck, it was voted unanimously to enter executive session on this topic. The Council then went into executive session in which Attorney Ted Backer gave an updated on negotiations and strategy for land preservation. The Council then voted to come out of executive session. No votes were taken in the executive session.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 P.M.