

**OCTOBER 21, 2005 MINUTES
HVCEO MEETING**

HELD AT BROOKFIELD, CT TOWN HALL

Chairman Natalie Ketcham of Redding

Vice Chairman Rudy Marconi of Ridgefield – Secretary-Treasurer Peggy Katkocin of New Fairfield

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES IN ATTENDANCE

Bethel.....First Selectman Alice Hutchinson
Bridgewater.....Alternate Robert Brown
Brookfield.....First Selectman Jerry Murphy, Alternate Judy Heise
Danbury.....Alternate Michael McLachlan
New Fairfield.....First Selectman Peggy Katkocin
New Milford.....Mayor Patricia Murphy
Newtown.....First Selectman Herbert Rosenthal
Redding.....First Selectman Natalie Ketcham, Chairman
Ridgefield.....First Selectman Rudy Marconi
Sherman.....First Selectman Andrea O'Connor

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Paul O'Sullivan of Congresswoman Johnson's office, Joel Rinebold and Amy Kelley of Broadwater Energy, Branford Town Council member Lonnie Reed representing the CT Fund for the Environment, River Trail consultant Margaret Daley, Rocky Tomlinson of the Red Cross, HVCEO appointee to HAZMAT Committee John Mangin of New Milford, Northwest HAZMAT Board Chair Torrington Fire Chief John Field, Ann Katis and Richard Schreiner of HART, Eric Hampton of CT DECD, Lynn Waller of Danbury, Christina Fishbein of the Western CT Area Agency on Aging, Mary-Kate Gill of the Elder Services Division of New Opportunities, Inc., Kathryn Faraci of Conn DOT, Candy Acquanita and Jonathan Chew of the HVCEO staff.

CALL TO ORDER/ PUBLIC COMMENT

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Natalie Ketcham at 12:35 P.M. For public comment Margaret Daley of Newtown updated members on the recent 91 rider Tour des Farms event and the continuing availability of Kings Mark environmental evaluation services.

MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 2005

On a motion made by Alice Hutchinson and seconded by Andrea O'Connor, the minutes of the meeting of September 16, 2005 were unanimously approved.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR SEPTEMBER 2005

On a motion made by Andrea O'Connor and seconded by Alice Hutchinson, the financial statement for September 2005 was unanimously approved, with inclusion of \$10,000 from the Reserve Fund for the preparation of a Sherman Center Pedestrian Plan as recommended by the Sherman Plan of Conservation and Development.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENTS

There were various amendments, dealing with replacement vehicles for SweetHART service, the Danbury to Bridgeport bus study, Grove Street relocation in New Milford, Route 37 reconstruction in Sherman and New Milford, and other items. After brief discussion and on a motion made by Herb Rosenthal and seconded by Rudy Marconi, the resolution endorsing the TIP amendments were unanimously approved

DISTRIBUTION OF HART FIXED ROUTE EFFICIENCY STUDY

The 2005 route efficiency study was prepared by Ann Katis of HART for HVCEO under the FY2005 services contract between the two agencies. This research can be used to assess HART fixed route services when citizens have questions, also as a guide to service cuts if funding falls.

Topics included are cost comparisons with other systems, documentation of strong and weak ridership by route segment, recommendations as to future service changes by route, and evaluation of on time performance. Alice Hutchinson then complimented HART staff present for their good work in recent bus routing discussions in Bethel.

REENDORSEMENT OF 2003 ENHANCEMENT GRANT PRIORITIES

A letter from Conn DOT in the agenda packet requesting a statement of top priorities was reviewed, along with a copy of the priorities adopted in 2003. Conn DOT wishes to determine if top priorities have been funded with other grants since 2003, thus changing the regional priority lists previously submitted.

Staff stated that the 2003 projects remain unfunded and that the earlier list from HVCEO was still valid and suggested its reendorsement, with the Brookfield Multi-Use Trail the top priority with a federal share of \$440,000, followed by one project each in Redding with its federal 80% share at \$622,000, Newtown at \$620,000 and Danbury at \$800,000 federal.

There was discussion of this matter, with the Council voicing its concern over possible changes to selection criteria between 2003 and 2005. The concern is that if only the top project per region is to be considered now, then back in 2003 this region might have placed a larger project as its number one priority in order to maximum funding to the area overall. It was agreed that the letter back to Conn DOT will include a recommendation that the Department take a "fiscal fair share" distribution approach in determining the funding of second and third priority projects in each planning region.

Then on a motion made by Jerry Murphy and seconded by Herb Rosenthal, the 2003 federal Enhancement Program grant priorities were unanimously reendorsed, with the recommendation as to a fair share approach to be included in the response to Conn DOT.

MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR FY2007

An agenda attachment with a proposed dues increase of 3% was reviewed. There was a discussion of heating costs and other rates of increase. Then on a motion made by Alice Hutchinson and seconded by Robert Brown, the proposed membership dues structure for FY2007 was unanimously approved.

VOTE TO CREATE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

There was discussion of this matter, the committee to report at the January meeting. Then on a motion made by Alice Hutchinson and seconded by Andrea O'Connor, a nominating committee consisting of Jerry Murphy, Herb Rosenthal and Natalie Ketcham was unanimously approved.

PROPOSED BROADWATER ENERGY NATURAL GAS FACILITY

On this topic a presentation was made in favor by Joel Rinebold and Amy Kelley of Broadwater Energy. This was followed by remarks in opposition by Branford Town Council member Lonnie Reed representing the CT Fund for the Environment.

Members then discussed the issue and decided that the taking of a position would best be on a town by town basis and would not include a regional vote by HVCEO members. Presenters were then thanked for their attendance and remarks.

REPORT FROM NORTHWEST HAZMAT ADVISORY BOARD

There was then a PowerPoint presentation given on this topic by HVCEO's Northwest HAZMAT Committee appointee John Mangin of New Milford. HAZMAT Board Chair Torrington Fire Chief John Field and Rocky Tomlinson of the Red Cross also participated in the discussion.

Mr. Mangin noted that planning is proceeding on a 43 town basis and there will be three primary response areas of 1) Waterbury and the Naugatuck Valley, the Danbury/New Milford Area, and then the Torrington to Sharon towns. Local fire departments will call upon the new HAZMAT team as needed, and team members will themselves be specialists primarily from local fire departments, many from the more highly trained and larger paid departments, also from EMS and the industry, he said.

Applications for membership are being distributed at this time, and a copy was given to each municipal leader. There will ultimately be 70 to 100 team members who can deploy to an incident specialized equipment, instrumentation, and advanced capabilities to address small to Level III large scale HAZMAT emergencies.

The Northwest team will provide a fully equipped National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) technician level response. The concept is to build upon and broaden the already higher training level for HAZMAT found in fire departments in Danbury, Waterbury and Torrington. DEP will continue to be involved.

As for labor issues, mixing volunteers with paid responders, the arrangements in use for urban search and rescue teams may be the model. Also of note, Connecticut is trying to model regional HAZMAT team development in a manner similar to regional arrangements in Massachusetts. The State of Connecticut will set all standards for the teams. The Northwest Regional HAZMAT Team will provide the staffing for centralized administrative management of team member certification, respirator fit testing, training, medical surveillance records, etc.

There was then a discussion of funding the HAZMAT response service. Chief Field noted that DEP will assign costs in some cases where there is a dispute over "incident responsible party billing", and in many cases the trucking company, etc. is clearly at fault and pays clean up costs. Rudy Marconi noted that for the recent fuel tanker crash on Route 7, much local staff time was expended yet Ridgefield was reimbursed for all costs and Conn DOT managed all of the reimbursement administration. It was stated by the presenters that the goal will be to rely primarily upon "incident responsible party billing."

Natalie Ketcham recommended that bills to spillers include as many as possible of the related costs for training and maintenance of the HAZMAT team. Mr. Mangin and the other presenters were then thanked for their attendance.

FUNDING CUTS TO ELDERLY NUTRITION PROGRAMS

The report on this topic was given by Christina Fishbein of the Western CT Area Agency on Aging, with comment by program operator Mary-Kate Gill of the Elder Services Division of New Opportunities, Inc. Paul O'Sullivan of Congresswoman Johnson's office also participated.

Some retroactive funding cuts have led to a reduction in the number of meals served at senior centers and delivered to homes. This includes some meal sites being closed on a rotating basis. Of the two major funding sources, Title 3 of the federal Older Americans Act may now be cut further to help pay for Katrina damage. The other major source is the Medicaid Waiver Program. A 20% municipal contribution is requested for each meal served. It was suggested that where smaller towns do not use all of their per capita health grant they may wish to try to include nutrition costs as reimbursable from that source.

Chris Fishbein suggested that as the Northwest programs managed from Waterbury are more efficient per dollar than those of other regions in the state, this high efficiency should be made a funding factor, favoring our region, as declining funds are distributed statewide. Visitors on this issue were then thanked for their update.

REVIEW OF 2006 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

As the meeting was running late it was decided to review the draft legislative agenda at the November meeting, in anticipation of the legislative breakfast scheduled for 12/2/2005.

DEMISE OF LEVER VOTING MACHINES

There was discussion of the fact that the federal Election Assistance Commission recently issued an advisory opinion stating that lever voting systems have significant barriers, which make compliance with the Help America Vote Act difficult and unlikely. This puts the municipalities in the position of replacing all lever voting machines by the November 2006 elections. Secretary of State Susan Bysiewicz has a plan for the phase in of new non-lever voting equipment. It was decided to review the details of this issue at the November meeting.

SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN

There was a brief discussion of the progress of the NGS shoreline management plan for Candlewood Lake.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made and seconded the meeting was adjourned at 2:45 P.M.