

**FEBRUARY 17, 2006 MINUTES**  
**HVCEO MEETING**  
**HELD AT BROOKFIELD, CT TOWN HALL**

Chairman Rudy Marconi of Ridgefield  
Vice Chairman Jerry Murphy of Brookfield - Secretary-Treasurer Andrea O'Connor of Sherman

**MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES IN ATTENDANCE**

Bethel.....First Selectman Robert Burke  
Bridgewater.....Alternate Robert Brown  
Brookfield.....First Selectman Jerry Murphy  
Danbury.....Alternate Michael McLachlan, Alternate Dennis Elpern  
New Fairfield.....First Selectman John Hodge, Alternate Ronald Oliveri  
New Milford.....Mayor Patricia Murphy  
Newtown.....First Selectman Herbert Rosenthal  
Redding.....Absent  
Ridgefield.....First Selectman Rudy Marconi, Chairman  
Sherman.....First Selectman Andrea O'Connor

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**

James Andrini, Keith Hall and Kathryn Faraci of Conn DOT, Jeffrey Smith and David Kalafa of CT OPM, Danbury Fire Chief Peter Sicienski, Rick Schreiner of HART, Robert Gates and Bruce DiGennaro representing NU, Harold Mayer and Larry Marsicano of the Candlewood Lake Authority, River Trail consultant Peg Daley of Newtown, David Hannon and George Blake of the HVCEO staff.

**CALL TO ORDER/ PUBLIC COMMENT**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Rudy Marconi at 12:35 P.M. Under public comment, River Trail consultant Peg Daley distributed flyers as to the Still River clean up scheduled for May 20 and asked that they be further distributed into town halls.

**MINUTES AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

On a motion made by Robert Burke and seconded by Andrea O'Connor, the minutes of the meeting of January 20, 2006 were unanimously approved. Then on a motion made by Mike McLachlan and seconded by Andrea O'Connor, the financial statement for January 2006 was also unanimously approved.

**TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENT**

It was explained by Dave Hannon that \$1.4 million in federal and HART funds is proposed for the replacement of 20 small buses used for SweetHART elderly and disabled, NYS rail shuttles and job access programs. Rick Schreiner of HART commented that there will be an average of between 100,000 to 150,000 miles on each bus by the time this grant is approved and the bid process is complete, estimated to be in the spring of 2007.

Then on a motion made by Robert Burke and seconded by Jerry Murphy, the resolution of approval for the TIP amendment was read by the Chairman and unanimously approved.

### **UPDATE ON I-84 AND STARTING THE EIS**

Guests from Conn DOT, James Andrini accompanied by Keith Hall, then made a presentation on this issue. A hard copy summary of the presentation was distributed.

The status of each CT DOT transit and traffic study, along with minor I-84 traffic capacity expansions, in western Connecticut was provided by James Andrini. As for near term improvements, the progress with upgrades for Exits 5 and 6 in Danbury and the conversion of the Exit 11 "J Ramp" to a diamond configuration in Newtown were reviewed.

Keith Hall then outlined problems with initiation of the upcoming I-84 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), a document needed before major investments in greater roadway capacity can be made. He noted that projection of indirect impacts of roadway construction is a "hot button" issue at US EPA, which must approve the work program for the EIS.

He also stated that EPA regulatory interpretations have been getting stricter and stricter. Continuing, that the Federal Highway Administration does not wish to approve the EIS format until EPA is satisfied. The current impasse has involved one year of unsuccessful negotiations and iterations. Mr. Hall then stated that Conn DOT has developed a new approach to the issue of projecting impacts from considered highway improvements that he believes EPA will accept.

The current outlook, he said, is that the issue could be resolved during May. Asked by Chairman Marconi if he wished HVCEO assistance in the form a request for intervention from a congressional office, Mr. Hall suggested additional negotiations be completed first. Mr. Hall agreed to keep the HVCEO informed. The CT DOT representatives were then thanked for their visit.

### **THE CT CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND ITS ROLE IN LOCAL SEWER SERVICE DEVELOPMENT**

A presentation on this topic was then made by Jeffrey Smith and David Kalafa of CT OPM. Chairman Marconi explained that this issue arose from his meetings with state staff as to the possible extension of a sewer thru watershed area to facilitate a planned development proposal in Ridgefield, and that he thought all members should be aware of the influence of this state plan on their development.

CT OPM staff then explained that the state plan is a guide for state agencies. They displayed a map of our region excerpted from the statewide plan, which is updated periodically in accordance with state statutes, the last update approved by the legislature in June of 2005. This map was circulated among HVCEO members during the presentation.

Central Danbury was pointed out on the state map as the regional center, the "bulls eye" of developing area. Descending categories of urban growth then radiate out from there, showing where water and sewer services are most common. The rural lands shown are suggested for on site water and sewer carrying capacity only.

As for the key question regarding control of sewer extensions, they stated that since 1991, actions of all state agencies including CT DEP are required to be consistent with this plan regarding their awarding of state grants and purchases of real property costing over \$100,000. While they cannot speak for other state agencies, it is known that CT DEP takes the state plan very seriously.

There was then a discussion of the plan and its impact. It was clarified that failing septic systems

may be served with limited sewer pipe sizes even if within a water supply watershed area. OPM staff were then thanked for their visit today.

#### **TAX CREDITS AND TAX DEFERMENTS FOR ELDERLY HOMEOWNERS**

Jerry Murphy reviewed a recent report on this topic prepared in Brookfield. Benefits available from area municipalities were compared on a handout he distributed. A considerable discussion followed, with agreement that each HVCEO member would forward information on this topic for their municipality to HVCEO staff, who would organize the material for distribution back to the members.

#### **UPDATE ON HYDRO LAKE SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLANS**

Robert Gates of Northeast Utilities and his consultant Bruce DiGennaro of the Essex Partnership discussed the draft FERC required shoreline management plan (SMP) for the area's hydropower lakes. They distributed the handouts that will be given out at upcoming citizen participation meetings scheduled for next week in Brookfield and New Fairfield.

The public draft SMP is on the Essex Partnership web site now, and then the final draft will be released for formal written comments, with NU required to respond to each comment.

They noted that an implementation plan with funding sources and continuing responsibilities was not yet written. A considerable discussion followed. It was agreed Mike McLachlan will assemble municipal attorneys to review the SMP and if needed to provide recommendations for initiatives such as a possible uniform regulatory approach. Mr. Gates and Mr. DiGennaro were thanked by Chairman Marconi for the update.

#### **CT DOT ELDERLY AND DISABLED**

##### **TRANSIT GRANTS TO MUNICIPALITIES**

Dave Hannon reported that as a follow up to the direction given by members at the January meeting, there will be one grant application to CT DOT for Bethel, Brookfield, Danbury, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown and Ridgefield. There will then be one grant application each from the outlying towns of Sherman, Bridgewater and Redding. Rick Schreiner stated that the expanded services will fill in existing gaps, in some case extending the service day for intertown trips, and also provide more coordination with Red Cross services.

A resolution was then presented by Dave Hannon to authorize the HVCEO Chairman to submit applications for funding to Conn DOT under state statute section 13b-38bb, and on a motion made by Herb Rosenthal and seconded by Andrea O'Connor, the resolution was unanimously approved.

#### **MUNICIPAL ACTION FOLLOWING DEMHS**

##### **APPROVAL OF VIDEO CONFERENCING GRANT**

Dave Hannon gave the news that the CT Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) had agreed to allow each municipality to utilize a portion of its assigned FY2004 or FY2005 Homeland Security Grant Program funds to purchase a regional video conferencing system, as originally recommended at HVCEO's July 16, 2004 meeting. He stated that the next step will be for each chief elected official to send a letter to DEMHS requesting use of their money in this way. HVCEO staff will provide each member with a draft of the letter to be submitted to DEMHS, including the specific amount of funding to be allocated for this purchase.

It was agreed that HVCEO staff and City of Danbury staff, under the direction of Fire Chief Peter Siecienski, who is also Danbury's Emergency Management Director, will work with local staff to get the equipment set up and operational in each community.

Peter Siecienski noted that in addition to providing vital communications during an emergency, the regional video conferencing equipment could be used by chief elected officials and emergency management staff to make coordinated preparations for an imminent emergency, such as an approaching hurricane. This communications system also has the potential to be used by municipal staff to avail themselves of "distance learning" opportunities without having to leave town.

He also noted that he had spoken to Danbury Mayor Mark Boughton and that the City is willing to pay for the necessary bridge equipment out of its federal grant. The cost of that component of the regional video conferencing system has increased significantly since the original estimate was prepared. He also stated that Danbury Hospital has expressed an interest in linking with the municipalities via this video conferencing system. The current estimated total cost is now approximately \$86,000.

There was discussion of the proposed cooperative project. When asked to state their continuing commitment, the consensus was that all members remain interested.

It was agreed that Chief Siecienski will continue with development of the multitown project and generate information required for the state bid process. Dave Hannon will continue with preparing the draft letter from each official to DEMHS. The target time for becoming operational should be six months.

#### **IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS DURING WEATHER EMERGENCIES**

Rudy Marconi raised this issue, noting the difficulties Ridgefield officials had in communicating about power issues with NU during the snow storm of Saturday and Sunday, January 14 and 25, 2006. There was then a discussion of various experiences with NU emergency coordination.

#### **OVERVIEW OF DISPUTE SETTLEMENT CENTER, INC.**

Members reviewed the brochure of this organization that accompanied the agenda. Based in Norwalk, and with a web address of dscct.org, this non-profit organization fosters constructive conflict resolution among individuals, groups and communities.

#### **UPCOMING LABOR NEGOTIATIONS SEMINAR**

The Chairman reminded members that the twenty ninth annual labor seminar to coordinate collective bargaining strategies will be held on Tuesday, March 28, 2006 from 8:30 to noon at the Ethan Allen Inn in Danbury.

#### **MINUTES CORRECTION**

Pat Murphy noted that at the January meeting she stated that she is opposed to the use of Candlewood Lake for water supply purposes by Danbury, had asked that this be reflected in the minutes, but that her position did not appear there. Members authorized this correction to be made to the January 2006 minutes.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Then on a motion made by Andrea O'Connor and seconded by Herb Rosenthal, the meeting was adjourned at 2:25 P.M.