

**MINUTES OF THE 9/21/2007
HVCEO MEETING**

HELD AT BROOKFIELD, CT TOWN HALL

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES IN ATTENDANCE

Bethel.....First Selectman Robert Burke
Bridgewater.....Alternate Robert Brown
Brookfield.....Alternate Selectman Arthur Kerley
Danbury.....Alternate Dennis Elpern
New Fairfield.....Alternate Selectman Ronald Oliveri
New Milford.....Absent
Newtown.....First Selectman Herbert Rosenthal
Redding.....First Selectman Natalie Ketcham
Ridgefield.....Absent
Sherman.....First Selectman Andrea O'Connor, Acting Chair

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Western CT Red Cross Chapter Director Stephen Woods and Emergency Manager Rocky Tomlinson, DEMHS Region 5 Coordinator Roy Piper, Partnership for Strong Communities Director David Fink, Dirk Perrefort of the News Times, Ann Fanizzi, Chair of the Putnam County Coalition for the Preservation of Open Space Ann Fanizzi, President Emeritus of the Croton Watershed Clean Water Coalition Marian Rose, Eric Hampton of DECD, Richard Schreiner of HART, Lynn Waller of Danbury, and from the HVCEO staff Camille Acquanita, David Hannon, George Blake and Jonathan Chew.

CALL TO ORDER / PUBLIC COMMENT

The meeting was called to order by Andrea O'Connor as Acting Chair at 12:35 P. M., after which attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance. There was no public comment offered.

MINUTES AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

On a motion made by Robert Brown and seconded by Robert Burke, the minutes of the meeting of 6/15/2007 were unanimously approved except for abstentions by Ron Oliveri, Natalie Ketcham and Robert Burke who were not present at that meeting. Concerning the financial statements for June, July and August of 2007, on a motion made by Natalie Ketcham and seconded by Robert Burke the statements were unanimously approved.

APPOINTMENT TO NORTHWEST CT EMS COUNCIL

Jon Chew reviewed a letter from the Northwest CT EMS Council, which has requested a renewed appointment. He noted that the current HVCEO appointment from 2001 to 2007, Jerry Myers of Ridgefield, wishes to step down at this time.

He contacted the alternate, Ronald Romano of Redding, who has served as alternate 2001-2007, and he is willing to move up to the member position. After brief discussion and on a motion made by Natalie Ketcham and seconded by Ron Oliveri, the appointment of Ronald Romano was unanimously approved, with thanks to both parties for their service.

SUPPORT FOR RETAINING HAWLEYVILLE POST OFFICE

Staff reviewed this issue, noting the potential for the post office in Newtown's Hawleyville section to be relocated or closed. A recommended letter from HVCEO to postal authorities was presented, stating that the policies in regional and state plans support retaining this post office to meet community development goals. After discussion and comments by Art Kerley and Dennis Elpern, on a motion made by Natalie Ketcham and seconded by Ron Oliveri the draft letter was approved.

REGIONAL PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE GRANTS

The new regional performance incentive grant, with explanatory excerpts attached to the agenda, was then discussed. There is \$8.6 million available statewide for regionalization of existing municipal services. This is a one year program funded with 2006-07 surplus funds.

Municipal mill rates may be reduced as one or more existing town services are regionalized. A cost benefit analysis must be submitted as part of the grant application, also a certification that binding arbitration will not be a constraint. It was noted that the grant is for regionalizing existing services and costs, not funding a new program.

Jon Chew commented that there was no planning phase of the 12-18 or so months that would be needed, prior to submission of grant applications, to formulate a proposal with ramifications for existing municipal staff. He pointed out that this grant jumped over planning right to the implementation phase, with town meeting approval due 11/20/2007, completely unrealistic.

There was discussion of the application process and agreement that it was unlikely there was a proposal that could be researched and approved locally in time. It was agreed to place this topic on the next agenda to review possibilities for future grants of this nature.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW WESTERN CT RED CROSS CHAPTER MANAGER

Comments were then made by Stephen Woods, the new Executive Director for the Western CT Red Cross Chapter. In reviewing his background, he noted experience as the New England representative to the national Red Cross, significant Red Cross experience in Fairfield County, and that he is a Danbury resident.

Dave Hannon noted to Mr. Woods that Rocky Tomlinson on the Red Cross staff for emergency planning matters had been serving with distinction. After brief discussion, members thanked Mr. Woods for the courtesy of his visit.

UPDATE ON STATEWIDE AFFORDABLE HOUSING INITIATIVE

David Fink, Director of the Partnership for Strong Communities, then addressed the Council. He reported that the HOME Connecticut group's proposed legislation, to provide planning costs and school cost reimbursements for affordable housing, was only partly successful, with no major reimbursement approved this session. The trend now will be to redirect incentives from per pupil school cost reimbursements to broader cash reimbursements for all project related costs, and to ask for funding next session.

The legislation that passed embraced the framework of housing incentive zones, provided zoning and building permit incentives and appropriated \$4 million for technical assistances to towns, regional planning organizations, housing organizations and non-profit developers.

Mr. Fink noted that the legislation provided for a study group, and that Mayor Mark Boughton of Danbury had been chosen by Governor Rell to chair the new Blue Ribbon Commission on Housing and Economic Growth that was created by the HOME Connecticut statute.

A discussion followed. It was agreed that Jon Chew will inquire as to possible reimbursement from the new funding for the \$25,000 regional housing market study recently initiated by HVCEO via a contract with consultant HMA, Inc. After further discussion Mr. Fink was thanked for his presentation.

PROPOSED LETTER TO GOVERNOR RELL CONCERNING CONTROL OF LYME'S DISEASE

Natalie Ketcham reviewed a proposed letter to the Governor circulated with the agenda. It explains the problems with coordination between CT DOH and CT DEP regarding the control of Lyme's Disease through deer management, also the relatively high profile for West Nile Disease but low impact on public health, versus the low priority given to Lyme's by the state yet high health impact.

Additional text by Andrea O'Connor was approved for inclusion. There was further discussion of the letter and members then agreed to add their individual signatures.

PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE REPORT ON REGIONAL PLANNING

Jon Chew noted that the summary report was released on 9/18, but without recommendations, which will follow in December. The tone of the report reviewing regional planning organizations thus far is quite positive, he said.

He noted that RPO directors met 9/20 to review the factual report and that the chair of the CT Association of Regional Planning Organizations, Executive Director Judy Gott of SCRCOG, will make a statement to the Committee on 9/25 stressing the willingness of RPO's to cooperate, followed by comments by the RPO directors.

PLANNING FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE

DEMHS 5 staff comments by Roy Piper: Mr. Piper noted that a federal grant is available to assist with funding emergency management directors, and that the duties of this municipal position are growing beyond that of part time.

He also reviewed the bylaws for the DEMHS Region 5 Regional Emergency Management Team. This group will coordinate the preparation of the regional emergency response plan soon to be created for the 43 town DEMHS Region 5 area. After discussion, and on a motion made by Herb Rosenthal and seconded by Bob Brown, the bylaws as attached to the agenda were unanimously endorsed.

DEMHS 5 plan preparation options: Jon Chew reviewed a memo attached to the agenda on this subject. As the DEMHS 5 regional office has not been staffed up for the coming regional planning effort, DEMHS is inquiring if a lead RPO can step forward and take this role.

He noted that while HVCEO wished to play a meaningful role in the creation of the new plan, it would not be possible for this office to take on state agency responsibilities of such magnitude, including planning on a 43 town basis and grants management and grant check distribution to Sharon, Waterbury, Torrington, etc. and other towns beyond our boundary.

The other four RPO's in DEMHS 5 have already taken this position. With no lead RPO, the fallback plan put forward by DEMHS is for the Hartford office to prepare the plan.

Jon Chew recommended that HVCEO formally decline the offer of lead RPO status for DEMHS 5, cooperate with DEMHS as its main office prepared the plan, continue to negotiate with DEMHS for a more traditional consulting or supportive role in plan preparation, and recommend that the DEMHS 5 office be fully staffed to undertake DEMHS 5 plan management in the future. Then after discussion, and on a motion made by Natalie Ketcham and seconded by Herb Rosenthal, the Council unanimously approved this strategy.

Status of emergency video network: Dave Hannon reported on this topic, noting that the video communication equipment was now fully functional in all but Sherman, New Milford and Redding, where the new service will go active shortly.

Regional Justice Assistance Grant: Dave Hannon reported that a grant from CT OPM to HVCEO for \$20,400 is potential available, the purpose of which is law enforcement enhancement on the regional level.

He stated that the Council's regional police chiefs coordinating group had met on the topic and was unanimous in its view to recommend that these funds be used for consultant expertise to coordinate police and related emergency radio communications.

After discussion and on a motion made by Bob Burke and seconded by Natalie Ketcham, the Council unanimously endorsed the recommendation of the regional police chiefs group

ADJOURNMENT

Then on a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 1:45 P.M.