

**MINUTES OF THE 05/21/2009
HVCEO MEETING
AT BROOKFIELD, CT TOWN HALL**

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES ATTENDING

Bethel.....First Selectman Robert Burke
Bridgewater..... Alternate Robert Brown
Brookfield..... First Selectman Robert Silvaggi
Danbury..... Alternate Chief of Staff Wayne Shepard
New Fairfield..... First Selectman John Hodge
New Milford..... Mayor Patricia Murphy, Chairman
Newtown..... First Selectman Joseph Borst
Redding..... First Selectman Natalie Ketcham
Ridgefield..... First Selectman Rudy Marconi, Secretary-Treasurer
Sherman..... First Selectman Andrea O'Connor, Vice Chairman

OTHERS ATTENDING

CT DOT Deputy Commissioner Jeffrey Parker, CT DOT Chief Engineer Thomas Harley, Carla lezzi of CT DOT, HART Transportation Planner Ann Katis, Newtown Director of Public Works Fred Hurley P.E., Danbury Director of Public Works Antonio Iadarola P.E., Danbury City Engineer Farid Khouri P.E., New Milford Director of Public Works Mike Zarba P.E., Brookfield Director of Public Works Ralph Tedesco P.E., CT DEMHS Region 5 Coordinator Robert Kenny.

In addition, Lisa Scails, Executive Director of the Housatonic Valley Cultural Alliance, HVCEO's King's Mark Appointee Peg Daley of Newtown, and from the HVCEO staff Camille Acquanita, George Blake and David Hannon.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Patricia Murphy at 12:35, after which attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Comments were made by Peg Daley of Kings Mark updating members on the recent successful Still River cleanup project and showing pictures of the debris taken from the waterway. Ms. Daley asked for assistance in educating the public about the harm caused by dumping debris into the Still River waterway and asked if police enforcement might help the situation.

After considerable discussion on the need for both education and enforcement, it was agreed that Dave Hannon would ask the area Police Chiefs for a recommendation regarding enforcement and that this topic would then be reported back on an upcoming agenda.

APPROVALS AND BRIEF REPORTS

--- **Minutes from 04/16/2009:** On a motion made by Andrea O'Connor and seconded by Joseph Borst the minutes of the meeting of 04/16/2009 were unanimously approved.

--- **Financial Statement for 04/2009:** On a motion made by Andrea O'Connor and seconded by Joseph Borst the financial statement for 04/2009 was unanimously approved.

--- **Transportation Improvement Amendments:** Dave Hannon reviewed the two proposed amendments to HVCEO's 2007-2011 TIP. One amendment concerned a TIGGER grant to help upgrade 106 buses to hybrid operating technology and the second was for the Statewide Recreational Trails grant program. A resolution to this effect was presented. Then on a motion

made by Vice Chairman Andrea O'Connor and seconded by First Selectman Robert Burke, the TIP amendments were unanimously approved.

**CT DOT UPDATE ON PROGRESS OF
TRANSPORTATION STIMULUS PROJECTS**

CT DOT Deputy Commissioner Jeffrey Parker and CT DOT Chief Engineer Thomas Harley described CT DOT's processing of the transportation stimulus projects submitted from the Housatonic Region. Mr. Harley stated that most of these projects appear to be in "good shape" and that every participating municipality in the Region had submitted their projects. At this time, the "ball is in CT DOT's court" to review the projects and get back to the municipalities with any questions, he said.

Commissioner Parker then discussed the importance of processing the "municipal agreement" for each transportation stimulus project exactly as approved by the CT Attorney General's Office. A draft municipal agreement was included in the agenda package at the meeting.

Commissioner Parker also described the reporting requirements connected with the use of the transportation enhancement grant funds. CT DOT and FHWA will conduct training sessions for municipalities on these reporting requirements.

First Selectman Marconi asked if municipalities could request more stimulus project funds than had been allocated to them, anticipating that some towns might not be able to spend all of their allocated funding. Mr. Harley indicated that if additional stimulus funding became available, it might be possible for a municipality to access those funds through a "change order" process, assuming that an approved project had the capability to be expanded beyond its original construction limits. He emphasized that to facilitate this process it would be necessary to initially select stimulus projects that could easily be expanded in terms of construction limits.

First Selectman Marconi asked if municipalities could use their own paving equipment and public works staff to do paving projects, the object being to extend the benefits of the stimulus program by using funding primarily to purchase paving materials. Mr. Harley said he would check into this concept and get back to the HVCEO and that his initial reaction to the concept was positive. The Public Works Directors group in the Housatonic Region will meet to discuss the feasibility of this concept.

First Selectman Hodge commented on the reimbursement process for stimulus project funding and how the timing of such reimbursement would impact local municipal finances.

The Council thanked Commissioner Parker and Chief Engineer Harley for their report on the status of the transportation stimulus program and for their willingness to consider local approaches designed to improve the benefits of this program to area municipalities.

**STUDY OF HOW I-84 TOLLS WOULD
IMPACT TRAFFIC IN THE REGION**

Vice Chairman O'Connor initiated a discussion of recent proposals at the State level to consider converting I-84 to a toll highway. Ms. O'Connor believes that if such an action were to take place, it would result in a diversion of I-84 traffic into and thru the Town of Sherman and adversely affect the quality of life in her community.

First Selectman Hodge also expressed his concerns about the diversion of I-84 traffic thru New Fairfield if tolls were installed. He indicated that when the State's Weigh Station on I-84 in Danbury is open, there is a significant increase in truck traffic in New Fairfield caused by trucks trying to avoid the weigh station.

First Selectman Silvaggi indicated that a recent hearing in Danbury on the placement of tolls on I-84 drew universal condemnation of the idea from those attending the hearing. He suggested that the Council should go on record now as being opposed to I-84 tolls.

Chairman Murphy inquired as to where tolls would be placed on I-84; would it be a system similar to the Massachusetts Turnpike with tolls at every exit or only at state borders. First Selectman Joseph Borst described some of the new technologies available to collect tolls without the use of traditional toll plazas.

First Selectman O'Connor suggested that HVCEO staff be directed to undertake a study of the potential traffic impacts to HVCEO municipalities if I-84 were to become a toll road. First Selectman Marconi inquired as to the cost of such a study. Dave Hannon responded that the study would be undertaken by in-house, rather than consultant, staff.

Wayne Shepard urged HVCEO staff to contact the Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce to learn of their position on this issue and to coordinate efforts. First Selectman Marconi inquired as to when the State General Assembly would likely vote on this topic, as a study completed after such date would have little or no value.

First Selectman Robert Burke then made a motion directing HVCEO staff to undertake a study of the traffic impacts to HVCEO municipalities resulting from the possible placement of tolls on I-84, with the proviso that staff bring the project back to the Council if additional outside assistance is required.

The motion was seconded by First Selectman Marconi. There was a brief discussion during which First Selectman Silvaggi indicated that he was opposed to such a study because the Council should go on record now as being opposed to tolls on I-84. The vote on the motion was then nine in favor and Mr. Silvaggi opposed.

UPDATE ON THE HOUSATONIC VALLEY CULTURAL ALLIANCE

Executive Director Lisa Scails of the Housatonic Valley Cultural Alliance provided a PowerPoint presentation of recent activities of the Alliance and thanked the Council for their continuing support. There was a discussion of providing municipal links to the Alliance's web site to further the dissemination of information about the Alliance and its activities.

Ms. Scails described the upcoming events of the Cultural Alliance and invited the participation of HVCEO municipalities in these activities. After further discussion the Council thanked Ms. Scails for her update and expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Alliance.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Dave Hannon provided the Council with an update on the development of the FY-2008 Spending Plan for CT DEMHS Region 5, utilizing Homeland Security Grant Program funding. The draft Spending Plan was included in the Agenda package and will be voted on by the 43 chief elected officials of CT DEMHS Region 5 on June 8 at 1:00 P.M. at DEMHS Southbury Office. Additional information on the Region 5 Spending Plan will be emailed to CEO's by DEMHS, prior to the meeting.

Robert Kenney, CT DEMHS Region 5 Coordinator, then provided the Council with an update on recent DEMHS activities, including H1-N1 Flu alerts/updates, the annual review of Local Emergency Operations Plans by DEMHS, as well as upcoming events including the replacement of batteries for the emergency ITAC/ICall radios used by municipalities and the participation of CT DEMHS Region 5 resources for an upcoming Triathlon event within DEMHS Region 5.

OTHER BUSINESS / ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on a motion duly made and seconded the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 P.M.