

**MINUTES OF THE 3/19/2009  
HVCEO MEETING  
AT BROOKFIELD, CT TOWN HALL**

**MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES ATTENDING**

Bethel.....First Selectman Robert Burke  
Bridgewater.....Alternate Robert Brown  
Brookfield.....Absent  
Danbury.....Mayor Mark Boughton  
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.....Absent

**OTHERS ATTENDING**

Carla Iezzi of Conn DOT, Conn DOT Bureau of Public Transportation Chief James Redeker, Director of Newtown Emergency Communications Maureen Will, Steve Soler of the Georgetown Land Development Company, Robert Miller of the News Times, New Fairfield Director of Public Works Robert Rzasa, New Milford Emergency Management Director Marla Scribner, Lynn Waller of Danbury, Robert Rush of the New Milford Planning Commission, and from the HVCEO staff Camille Acquanita, David Hannon and Jonathan Chew.

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Robert Rush of the New Milford Planning Commission spoke to the Danbury Branch Line study planning process. He pointed out that the Conn DOT study's development of parking plans at area rail stations was greatly delayed, and that this fact put the Region at a disadvantage when decisions are made by the new Conn DOT Rail Parking Task Force.

Lynn Waller of Danbury then stated that she understood the need to pursue cost savings thru regional efforts. However, that public access to attend meetings of regional agencies was more difficult than access to municipal forums, and to keep this negative factor in mind when designing new regional programs.

**ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS AND REPORTS**

**--- Minutes from 2/19/2009:** On a motion made by John Hodge and seconded by Joe Borst, the minutes of the meeting of 2/19/2009 were unanimously approved.

**--- Financial Statement for 2/2009:** On a motion made by Joe Borst and a second by Rudy Marconi, the financial statement for 2/2009 was unanimously approved.

**--- Conn DOT Requested Transportation Improvement Program Amendments:** Dave Hannon reviewed the two amendments requested by Conn DOT. These were for a) \$500,000 for additional Brookfield Route 7 Bypass environmental mitigation; b) \$800,000 for the design of traffic signals statewide. Then on a motion made by John Hodge and seconded by Natalie Ketcham, the requested Conn DOT TIP amendments were unanimously approved.

**--- Redding Requested Transportation Improvement Program Amendment:** Redding First Selectman Natalie Ketcham then introduced a TIP amendment for a total of \$35,590,000 in federal stimulus funds for the construction phase of the Georgetown Intermodal Transportation Center in Redding.

That project is in the public interest, in conformance with local and HVCEO plans, fully designed and shovel ready and clearly eligible for Connecticut's allotment of FTA transit funding, she said.

Mrs. Ketcham referenced the Housatonic Council's January submission to Conn DOT of recommended interregional transit projects to be funded with federal transportation stimulus funds. She noted that HVCEO had approved for submission both the Georgetown Center rail-bus-parking project and the centralized traffic control (CTC) signal system for the Danbury Branch Line. However, that only the Branch Line CTC has to date been endorsed by Conn DOT for FTA funding.

She described how Redding's Georgetown Intermodal Transportation Center is part of a U.S. EPA award winning "Smart Growth" and "transit oriented development" project, and clearly a public investment of interregional transit benefit in conformance with the Danbury Branch Line improvement plan.

Mrs. Ketcham emphasized that an HVCEO TIP approval for Intermodal Center construction would serve as a re-endorsement of the earlier January 2009 more general HVCEO approval, and that the result would be for the minutes of this HVCEO meeting to serve as documentation of regional MPO support for use during the next phase of advocacy activities for federal FTA construction funding.

Discussion by members followed. Then on a motion made by Joseph Borst and seconded by John Hodge, the requested TIP amendment for the Georgetown Intermodal Transportation Center was unanimously approved.

**--- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Discussion:** Dave Hannon provided members with an update on the \$6,349,968 in Federal Highway Administration stimulus funding available to HVCEO member municipalities thru Conn DOT. He distributed the draft regional list of municipal projects tailored to the town by town funding allotments previously set by HVCEO. Conn DOT will only accept applications from municipalities after their projects appear on the HVCEO regional list, he said.

He noted that the Bridgewater allotment of \$50,800 will need to be reprogrammed as there are no qualifying projects in that small town. Also, that Sherman had a similar rural road situation, but was designating its allocation of \$95,250 to New Fairfield so that the two municipalities can cooperatively fund a rail commuter parking lot to serve both communities.

Mark Boughton commented that the public had been confused as to which roadways are eligible for federal stimulus funds for roadway repair. And that the limitations, to only the major roadways in each community, should continue to be explained by HVCEO members and staff.

Dave Hannon outlined the remaining questions to Conn DOT as to the eligibility of several potential municipal projects. He requested that a date of 4/15 be set for the closing of the regional priority list so that it can be forwarded to Conn DOT. He noted timing as the key concern as Conn DOT will not start processing a municipal application until after that municipality's regional project list has been received. After discussion members agreed to authorize staff to set the date of 4/15 in discussions with local public works officials preparing applications.

--- **Alliance for Sensible Airspace Planning:** Alliance Chairman Rudy Marconi reported that final reply briefs documenting flaws in the FAA planning process will be orally argued in a Washington, D.C. court shortly. Attorney General Dick Blumenthal will lead the process and supporters will be in the galleries by bus and train from potentially affected areas of western Connecticut and eastern New York.

He also noted that House Resolution 915, Section 219, the proposed FAA Reauthorization Act of 2009, could preempt the efforts of the Alliance for Sensible Airspace Planning. The Alliance recommends that action be delayed until the outcome of its present case and members agreed.

--- **Communications on draft Shoreline Management Plan:** John Hodge reported on the latest developments, supplemented by comments by Pat Murphy. New Candlewood Lake owner GDF Suez now states that it cannot guarantee the permanent removal of proposed shoreline property owner annual administrative fees from the draft FERC Shoreline Management Plan, as the Plan needs to be reevaluated every six years as required by federal law. The total annual fee collection to be waived has been estimated at \$400,000.

In response, municipalities are to have included in the Plan specific language guaranteeing their right to reargue the fee issue if it is reopened during a future Shoreline Management Plan update. The municipalities continue to stress that early deeded rights held by shoreline owners cannot be superseded.

--- **Update on CT DEMHS 5 Emergency Preparedness:** Dave Hannon reported that the DEMHS 5 office move from Litchfield to Southbury was scheduled for the next day. Also that the next federal grant cycle to fund municipal and regional emergency management equipment is soon to be initiated. The "draft DEMHS 5 Regional Emergency Operations Plan" will be out for review soon and will likely be approved in May.

As for the Internet bridge equipment supporting the HVCEO's emergency videoconferencing system, Dave reported that it will likely be relocated from the Brookfield Police Department to the new DEMHS office in Southbury, this action a vital cost saving measure as state funds to HVCEO for interconnection fees, about \$11,000 annually, have been dropped from the state budget.

#### **NEW CONN DOT RAIL PARKING TASK FORCE**

Conn DOT Bureau of Public Transportation Chief James Redeker then made a presentation on the mission of the new Task Force. The Department is to prepare one uniform plan for all rail station parking and access in Connecticut, he said.

A broad approach will be taken, such that potential commuter shuttles and other services will be included in data base development, not just the single issue of parking spaces. Information services allowing drivers to access real time rail parking lot space availability data, and if full divert elsewhere, are also to be included.

Discussion followed. Members expressed their frustration with the slow pace of the current Conn DOT Danbury Branch line study, in that it was to develop much of the data needed for this new Conn DOT effort. As a result when funding decisions are made based on the recommendations of the new Task Force, Danbury Area towns may be placed at a disadvantage.

It was noted by Natalie Ketcham that parking need projections for Redding's proposed Georgetown Train Station were available for Mr. Redeker's effort. It was also agreed that Jon Chew of the staff would be one of the HVCEO's appointees to the Task Force. Mr. Redeker was then thanked by Chairman Murphy for his visit.

**REGIONALIZING NEWTOWN'S EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER**

Next to address the Council was Maureen Will, the Director of Newtown's Emergency Communications Center. Ms. Will briefed the Council on Newtown's intent to study the possible consolidation of Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) in the Newtown area.

She referred to a statewide map attached to the agenda identifying all municipal and regional PSAPs in Connecticut. The proposed Newtown based regional PSAP could include adjacent Bethel, Brookfield, Southbury and Monroe, she said.

She then outlined the study process, citing similar plans completed for groups of municipalities in the center of the state. State funds are available for study costs, she said. Towns interested would be asked to sign a memorandum of understanding agreeing to participate in the study, but that they are not then required to abide by the results.

Ms. Will reported that indications are from the CT Department of Public Safety that no single municipality may be included within two state funded study areas. For example, if a town is included in the Newtown regional study, and then as a result has a clearly view that its PSAP consolidation should be in the opposite geographic direction, then state funding will not be available to include it within a second study group to explore that option.

A discussion with questions and answers followed. One concern raised by members was the ability of a municipality to keep its police station "lit and live 24/7" if the PSAP function was relocated out of town. Ms. Will then concluded that with this regional briefing completed she will proceed to individual contact with potentially participating municipal partners in the state funded PSAP consolidation study.

**DISCUSSION OF MULTI-TOWN PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED WITH 50M IN STATE BOND FUNDS**

An agenda attachment outlining potential projects was reviewed and discussed. John Hodge added possible cooperation on homelessness services as a potential project.

Some ideas, such as the potential to regionalize registrars of voters, did not seem practical. And regional purchasing confronts different specifications and vendor fees for extra delivery distances. There was discussion as to possible further consolidation of animal shelters and also property revaluation contractual services.

Members agreed that proposals appearing most viable at this point include purchase of a regional driving simulator as presented at the 11/2008 meeting and an expanded regional fire training facility in Danbury as endorsed on the 2009 Legislative Agenda.

**OTHER BUSINESS / ADJOURNMENT**

The invitation from Congressman Chris Murphy to attend his March 27 listening session in Brookfield Town Hall on federal transportation bill reauthorization was distributed.

There being no further business, on a motion duly made and seconded the meeting was adjourned at 1:50 P.M.