



neccog



Northeastern Connecticut
Transit District

August 2017 Meeting Minutes

August 25, 2017

NECCOG Chair Rick Ives called the meeting to order at 8:34 and noted that there was a quorum present: Ashford, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Chaplin, Eastford, Hampton, Killingly, Plainfield, Pomfret, Putnam, Scotland, Thompson, Union, Voluntown and Woodstock

The Pledge of Allegiance was conducted

Public Participation: Donna Hamzy from CCM introduced herself; John Raymond from WRTD introduced himself

On a motion from Mr. Ives and a second from Mr. Fletcher the agenda was amended to include an additional action item: Nomination of Jim Randall of Chaplin to the Region IV REPT Northeast Steering Committee. **Approved unanimously**

Directors Report:

- ❑ **Regional Paramedic Program** - The program began the new year with a new vendor - KB Ambulance, Inc. They have fully secured the PSA (Public Service Area) credentials from the Office of Emergency Medical Services. We have had no issues reported either in the transfer of the PSA to KB or regarding their services. By all accounts the program is working very well. From January 1 of this year to the end of July there were 1,342 transports. This compares to the average of the previous three years of 1,244 transports or a 7.9 percent increase. Comparing last year to this year - Killingly (as would be expected) has experienced the largest number of transport increases with 164 and Plainfield realized a 36.8 percent drop in transports - most likely the result of the Backus emergency clinic in Plainfield.
- ❑ **Crumbling Foundations** - The Legislature failed to act on any legislation to provide relief or assistance related to the crumbling foundations issue. NECCOG was active in assisting in the drafting of legislation that would have done the following:
 - ▶ Defined Pyrrhotite Contamination
 - ▶ Establish a Crumbling Foundations Assistance Fund
 - ▶ Allocated \$100 million to that fund
 - ▶ Placed a \$1 per public yard assessment on mineral extraction for the fund
 - ▶ one dollar per cubic yard of bulk concrete processed
 - ▶ one hundred dollars per residential property insurance premium for residential homes, including condominiums and planned unit developments
 - ▶ fifty cents for each package or container
 - ▶ containing a concrete pre-mix or similar product in excess of twenty-five pounds sold
 - ▶ grants of up to one hundred and fifty thousand dollars for each impacted housing unit, including planned unit developments and condominiums
 - ▶ a testing protocol for sulphide mineral aggregates for the presence of pyrrhotite used in the production of concrete for foundations and other structural products
 - ▶ Waiver of building fees
 - ▶ Statute of limitations extension
 - ▶ Disclosure notice to home buyers

- ▶ Peril of foundation collapse due to pyrrhotite contamination added to insurance policies
- ▶ Crumbling Foundation's Oversight Committee

Contained within the House Democrat's latest budget proposal is language that will address most of the above items. The assistance fund is proposed to be broadened to include other issues such as radon and sinking foundations. This has been added to broaden support for the proposal. The insurance surcharge would be \$12 - which will still yield about \$10 million annually. I will forward the full details when we receive the proposed language.

☐ **Regional Revaluation Program** - On schedule - no issues reported.

☐ **Regional Elections Monitor** - Program has been renewed and funding provided. The region is not in good shape with only 2 certified registrars (Chaplin and Voluntown) - making our region the lowest in terms of certification. Most of our towns lack deputy registrars. Questions being asked locally by our registrars include:

- ▶ What happens to the registrar and/or towns that are not able to complete the courses in the designated time frame? Are there financial consequences to the towns?
- ▶ Will the towns have to find or elect a new registrar because the original was unable to complete the class in the time frame?
- ▶ What if registrars are removed and deputies resign because they do not want to take on the registrar duties?
- ▶ Why are these classes not offered as on-line webinar trainings?
- ▶ Will there be any reconsideration regarding taking the classes in a specific order?

The Secretary of States office is intending on visiting our region latter this year to address these and other questions

☐ **DEMHS Region IV Activities** - Annual CEO Meeting is September 6 at 8:30 am n Norwich at SCCOG. A copy of the proposed budget should have already been forwarded to you. This meeting voted on the budget. If you cannot attend - please use your proxy option.

☐ **Economic Development**

- ▶ **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs)** - The CEDs is in its final edit stage and will be ready for public comment in late September or early October. The goal is the submission to the state for review in November or early December.
- ▶ **ECEC** - No inquiries made during the past three months and just two this year.. There was of note a forum held/hosted by Thompson with DECD and the person that coordinates the ECEC and other enterprise zones in early August.
- ▶ **Tourism** - To date, four the towns have signed up to allow NECCOG to populate the state website with their towns activities. Approximately half of the towns are to some degree doing their own populating of data.
- ▶ **Thompson Branding Strategy** - The strategy is now complete. This strategy is the first of its kind for the region and one of the first for Connecticut.
- ▶ **Airline Trail Marketing** - DEEP has approached NECCOG about working together to market the Airline Trail as an economic driver for the state and region. A meeting is pending on this subject.

☐ **Transportation**

- ▶ **Airline Trail Crossings Project** (\$5.6 million) is moving forward within the DOT project process. The town has asked NECCOG to be the project manager and we expect the project to be active throughout 2018 and a large portion of 2019.
- ▶ **Trail Connections** - NECCOG facilitated a meeting with CONNDOT, DEEP, East Coast Greenway Council, Putnam, Thompson and Killingly to discuss and review options for filling in the gaps on the Airline Trail between Putnam and Thompson, the gap from the Airline Trail in Putnam to the East Coast Greenway in Killingly and the gap on the East Coast Greenway from Killingly south to Plainfield.
- ▶ **Regional Trail Plan** - Work continues on the development of this plan. In the fall our staff will be reaching out to member towns to discuss gaps and the potential for new trails.
- ▶ **Pomfret Sidewalk Project** - Work is expected to begin shortly on this project. The NECCOG Engineer is coordinating this project for the town.
- ▶ **LOTICIP (Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program)** has one active (Town of Killingly's Main Street Sidewalk Project) and one developing project (Putnam). The purpose of the LOTICIP is to provide State monies to urbanized area municipal governments in lieu of Federal funds otherwise available through the Federal transportation legislation. NECCOG has a large portion of the I-395 corridor categorized as urban. The region also receives \$1.2 million annually for Rural Collector roads.
- ▶ **Traffic Counts** - NECCOG continues to provide this service for roadways and trails. If this is something you would like, please let us know.
- ▶ **Veteran's Transportation** - NECCOG is waiting on CONNDOT regarding NECCOG's grant application to assist in the transport of veterans to medical facilities in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

☐ **Engineering Program**

- ▶ Subdivision reviews
- ▶ Pomfret Sidewalk Project
- ▶ Parking design work in Putnam
- ▶ Brooklyn - Design and contract document preparation of Route 6 Sidewalk Project
- ▶ Eastford - Conceptual plan of reconfiguration of Eastford Rd-County Rd-Old Colony Rd-Westford Rd intersection
- ▶ Plainfield - Assist town staff with preparation of their MS4 Stormwater Management Plan
- ▶ Putnam - Inspection services for 30 Sidewalk ramps installed in the Special Service Area of town
- ▶ Putnam - Evaluate traffic movements at Route 44 and Hawkins Rd and at East Putnam Rd
- ▶ Scotland - 68 Brook Rd Athletic Field Conceptual Design
- ▶ Woodstock - Camp Nahaco pond overflow pipe relocation evaluation for Woodstock Public Works Department
- ▶ Woodstock - Adequacy of drainage system report on Bungay Hill Rd installed by town DPW
- ▶ Woodstock - Drainage system design for English Neighborhood Rd
- ▶ NECCOG - MS4 Stormwater Management Plan preparation research
- ▶ NECCOG - Prepare conceptual site plan for relocation of offices, animal shelter and new household hazardous waste facility
- ▶ UConn Connecticut Transportation Institute - Attend 1-day workshop on design and construction of Modern Roundabouts

- ☐ **Property Tax Working Group** - This group has been meeting for several years (NECCOG through the Director has been active since its inception) in an effort to explore ways to reduce the dependence on the property tax. The property tax makes up the largest share (41.9%) of all taxes paid by Connecticut

taxpayers (Income Tax (33.4%), Sales Tax (14.7%, Corporate Tax (1.1% and the Gift and Estate Tax (0.9%)). The group has invited each of the declared candidates for governor to meet and discuss their ideas for reforming or easing the property tax burden. These discussions start in September and we have three candidates confirmed so far.

- ❑ **Animal Services** - Attached to this report are several detailed charts regarding the program. From January 1 of this year through August 15 NECCOG has conducted 777 investigations, impounded 428 animals at our shelter of which 195 were redeemed by their owner and another 174 were adopted. The town with the most usage of the shelter has been Killingly and the largest number of investigations is also related to Killingly. The program averages 25-30 calls per day (Monday-Friday business hours). Currently, NECCOG has in place five officers, a kennel maintainer and multiple volunteers. In terms of missed or dropped calls for service, those that have occurred have been the result of internal mistakes and not a lack of personnel.
- ❑ **Transit District**
 - ▶ Ridership numbers are attached. For the first half of the year overall ridership is down. This in part is due to gas prices remaining reasonable, multiple weather events, availability of drivers and the age of our fleet.
 - ▶ Currently, we are in the middle of a comprehensive survey of our riders and others as we review each route and related stops. To date, we have received more than 150 survey responses. The purpose of the survey is to gain insight into rider satisfaction and service needs.
 - ▶ Consideration is being given to a monthly pass to allow persons with limited incomes to buy once - especially at the beginning of the month - and retain the ability to ride throughout the month.
 - ▶ We are also in negotiations with the driver's union and hope to have that concluded by early September.
 - ▶ On August 1 NECTD maintenance service has gone quite smoothly and we have not experienced any significant issues by having our maintenance work done in Norwich.
 - ▶ The camera system for the buses is now under review by CONNDOT and we expect a response at any time.
 - ▶ Veterans Stand Down will take place on September 22 and NECTD will participate.
 - ▶ A bus tour is being planned for elected officials to experience the bus service and discuss related issues. NECTD is waiting for dates from elected officials.
- ❑ **State Plan of Conservation and Development** - NECCOG hosted a public hearing in July for OPM. Towns have until October to comment. If towns want to make map changes, NECCOG can provide this service in the format required by OPM.
- ❑ **Water Utility Coordinating Committee** - This group continues to meet and may be reaching out to member towns for water system data.
- ❑ **Planning Assistance** - The Scotland POCD is now complete. NECCOG is working with Ashford to update its zoning map and may assist in further modifications of their zoning regulations. NECCOG is providing staff assistance to the Voluntown Planning and Zoning commission - this work includes application review and text amendments. NECCOG will also be providing commission training for Voluntown in September. NECCOG is also providing planning assistance to the Wetlands Commission and the Planning Commission in Eastford.
- ❑ **GIS Program** - Work continues with assessors to update parcels as scheduled. The program is adding annotations to town maps (this has been done for Union, Ashford and Putnam previously).

- **Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR)** - Committee is gearing up to research a range of issues as candidates for regionalism and/or efficiencies. These include town back-office functions, assessment, public works, public safety, animal services and the relationship of state agencies to towns.

Discussion and Action Items

1. Regional Referrals - ***motion by Mr. Sweet and second by Mr. Piper - both approved unanimously***
 - a. Town of Scotland, Plan of Conservation and Development Update
 - b. Town of Chaplin, Proposed Zone Text Amendment to Section 5.2 to allow multi-family agricultural preservation on 40 acres or more with at least 80% cleared as active farmland and 20% of the units set aside as affordable units
2. Nomination of Jim Randall of Chaplin to the Region IV REPT Northeast Steering Committee - ***motion by Mr. Eaton and second by Mr. Beausoleil - motion to approved, passed unanimously***
3. 2020 Census Local Update of Census Addresses Operation (LUCA) - ***General discussion expressing confusion as to exactly what the Census was looking for - NECCOG will investigate and report***
4. State Budget - ***significant discussion by members and three of the region's legislative delegation present (Representative Boyd, Representative Rovero and Representative Dauphinais). There was discussion of the Governor's Executive Order and the possible compromise to be offered by the Democrats that may include a sales tax increase and having the towns cover part of teacher salaries. Mr. Cunningham stated that towns should have the right to negotiate their teacher's pensions if the burden to pay for it is to be placed in whole or in part on the towns.***
5. New Housing Plan Requirement - Regional Option - ***The Director explained the new requirement and suggested that it be addressed regionally. On a motion from Mr. Griffiths and a second from Mr. Falzarano the motion to have NECCOG address the housing plan requirement regionally passed unanimously.***
6. NECCOG/NECTD Budgets and Work Plan - ***tabled pending the State Budget***

Motion by Mr. Griffiths and second by Mr. Walker to **Adjourn** - passed unanimously, 9:56