



March 2015 Meeting Minutes

March 27, 2015

Mr. Gray opened the meeting at 9:01 am - noting that a quorum was present (Ashford, Brooklyn, Chaplin, Eastford, Hampton, Killingly, Plainfield, Pomfret, Putnam, Scotland, Sterling, Voluntown and Woodstock)

The previous meeting minutes from January and February were accepted as presented on a motion from Mr. Sirpenski and a second by Ms. Nicholson

Mr. Strandson of USDA Rural Development addressed the Council regarding funding availability for roads and bridges (contact him with details) and legislation pending that would allow municipalities the option to extend financing to 40 years.

Mr. Otto, President of QVEC, Inc. addressed the Council during public participation to thank NECCOG and its individual letters of support in the proposed change to the funding formula for 911 centers.

The Executive Director presented his monthly update:

- Natural Disaster Mitigation Plan** - We received comments from the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) which require us to make a number of adjustments to the draft plan. While many of the suggested changes are minor, several are substantive and will require additional research, drafting and taking the plan back to the member towns for review. The largest changes relate to mitigation strategies. DEMHS wants these better explained and detailed as to how they will be addressed. The interesting aspect of their comments is that many are new (both to the NECCOG and WINCOG previous drafts that made it to FEMA). We have begun the process of addressing each issue raised by DEMHS and anticipate being ready for town reviews in April. Prior to such meetings we will have an informal sit down with DEMHS to ensure we are on the correct path. Additionally, staff is attending FEMA Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan training on March 24/25.
- Emergency Management** - There is not a lot to report as most towns are focused on snow. We discussed with our GIS Viewer vendor an application that can provide real-time data related to emergency management - allowing for internal and external assistance. The program can allow the public to send in reports of situations (trees in the road, flooding, power lines down, etc.) with locational information. The program can allow responders to know where emergency response assets are and receive reports from them as a particular emergency develops. A demonstration of this application is being set-up for the Region's EMDs later this spring.
- Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Study** - The Oversight committee met on the 26th of March and selected Fitch and Associates to undertake the study.
- Regional Paramedic Program** - The Town of Killingly has taken formal action to associate its paramedic needs with KB Ambulance and petition the state for the Town to be its own Public Service Area - effective on July 1, 2015. Killingly represents approximately 30 percent of the

transport volume (although not necessarily 30 percent of the value) of the program. In order to determine what the financial impact will be to the other towns in the program my recommendation is that NECCOG issue a RFP as soon as possible for the 2015-16 fiscal year. In doing this I would further recommend that the RFP request that responders provide a cost based (1) on all current towns saying in the program, (2) all towns with the exception of Killingly, (3) the cost should Killingly not have its regulatory results by July 1 - but will leave when such status is granted and (4) the cost to the program should Killingly exit the proposed new arrangement and seek to re-join the NECCOG program. I have consulted with our contracts attorney on this and believe we can have this RFP ready by next week.

- Transit District** - Despite the weather, ridership has been strong. Of particular note is that our Sunday service has been steady. We are still waiting on CONNDOT to determine if our bus involved in the November accident can be fixed (estimates range from \$6,300 to \$9,000) or if it will be declared "totaled." We have discussed with our GIS software vendor the possibility of adding a "real-time" route map on our site (also be available on mobile devices). Such a system can essentially play off of the NECCOG GIS Viewer.
- Transportation Planning** - NECCOG was notified that its transportation planning funds (federal) will be increased significantly for the first time in more than twenty years. The increase in funding will allow the Region to conduct comprehensive transportation planning that previously was not possible.
- Economic Development** - NECCOG sponsored a meeting (Monday, March 23) with DECD's Deputy Commissioner to discuss the State's Brownfield's Program. House Bill 6259, now pending before the Planning and Development Committee, will mandate that there be not more than nine Economic development Districts (EDDs) and that they be coterminous with one or more COGs. The bill uses the COGs as the building block for regional economic development. Work continues on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and it should be ready for public review in April.
- Regional Reval II** - The RFP was issued on March 19 - with a due date of April 9. The RFP was posted in multiple locations and sent to OPM's list of certified reval companies. Any town that is unclear as to how the program works, please let me know and I will meet with you and others from your town to explain. The oversight committee (three assessors and three selectmen) will initially review the RFP responses and interview potential vendors. This will be followed by public presentations/interviews and then a recommendation to the NECCOG council for vendor selection.
- GIS System Status** - Currently, all town CAMA data is being loaded into the system - which will make all data up to date. Parcel corrections are still pending for Ashford, Pomfret, Canterbury, Woodstock and Union. Parcel data updates will follow based on a schedule (most likely two per month) to be determined by and between our GIS person and your assessor. The old viewer has been removed from operation - however, it seems that some folks are still running into it on the web. Hopefully, we can fully remedy this confusing situation shortly.

Moving forward, the Director discussed the possibility of putting together a regional GIS Advisory Committee made of of persons representing the various disciplines that will/could use GIS. This would include: Assessors, Public Works, Land Use, Emergency Response/Preparedness, Solid Waste management, School Bus scheduling, Animal Control and others - members liked the idea and it will be pursued.

- MORE Commission** - The MORE Commission has begun again and added a new sub-committee dealing with regional efficiencies (the other deals with regional entities). The work of these groups has just begun and there is no expectation that any legislation will result from either during the 2015 legislative session. I was asked to participate on both committees and accepted the invitation.

- Animal Services** - Thanks to the generosity of the Town of Killingly, the program has a vehicle (at least temporarily) to conduct business. The vehicle formally used was a 1996 Transit bus that probably lasted longer than anyone expected. We are now exploring options to have a vehicle in place prior to the one on loan from Killingly is returned. In terms of activity, the number of investigations is steady. The number of animals is very low (2-3 dogs on average and 4-6 cats). We did provide testimony on Senate Bill 1094, An Act Concerning Assault with Enhanced Penalties to include animal control officers in the list of persons covered as victims in the case of an assault as a class C felony.
- The Director introduced Rita Aguiar the **Trap, Neuter and Release Program** Director and noted that she will be visiting each town to explain the program
- Town Administrative Assistance** - We are currently concluding our work with the Town of Sterling regarding administrative assistance. This work involved creating a narrative describing what each office does - including its statutory obligations, creation of job descriptions and a salary comparison. During the course of the study several towns called to discuss this work and the idea evolved to create a comprehensive guide for local officials as a resource. The guide would include comprehensive descriptions of various offices/departments/boards, FOIA, job description catalog and salary inventory.
- Legislation** - Attached are several bills and some related testimony for your review and discussion at the meeting Friday.
 - Senate Bill 1, An Act Concerning Tax Fairness and Economic Development - this proposal has three parts: (1) alters PILOT, (2) Creates a state car tax with a uniform mill rate and (3) puts in place a COG based revenue sharing system based on a 1971 Minnesota model. This bill generated a great deal of discussion/concern from the members. A primary concern was that any monies taken by the state in the form of a new state-wide car tax would not be returned to the towns.
 - Senate Bill 1070, An Act Concerning Payment in Lieu of Taxes - this proposal would create a three-tier PILOT program in an effort to reform this element of the property tax system.
 - House Bill 5709, An Act Concerning the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Authority to Designate Additional Stormwater Sewer Systems Outside of urban Areas - this proposal would require DEEP to gain regulatory authority before it could extend the so-called MS4 regulations to towns outside of urban designated areas.
 - House Bill 7019, An Act Concerning the Minimum Budget Requirement - this proposal aims to modify the way the MBR is used - allowing towns the flexibility to reduce budgets in line with a decline in enrollment.

Discussion and Action Items

1. Consideration and Acceptance of the 2013-14 NECCOG Audit

Motion by Mr. Sweet and a second by Mr. Syme - the audit was accepted as presented

2. Consideration and Acceptance of the 2013-14 NECTD Audit

Motion by Mr. Ives and a second by Mr. Falzarano - the audit was accepted as presented

3. Resolution 01-03-15, Authorizing the Executive Director to enter into all contracts and agreements, including those with the Connecticut Department of Transportation

Motion by Mr. Sweet and a second by Ms. Nicholson - the Resolution was accepted as presented

4. Authorization to issue a new RFP regarding Paramedic Intercept Services for 2015-16

Motion by Mr. Sweet and a second by Ms. Nicholson - the authorization to issue to RFP was approved as presented

5. Regional Referrals

Town of Brooklyn, Proposed Text Amendment to the Town's Zoning Regulations: to the Limited Business Enterprise to provide a definition for a currently undefined term and to create a Special Permit create specific to Limited Business Enterprises.

Motion by Mr. Sweet and a second by Ms. Nicholson - the referral was accepted without comment to regional impact

Selectmen's Roundtable

Mr. Falzarano brought up the idea of a **shared Human Resources person** - after brief discussion concerning the variations between the towns it was decided to have the Executive Director consult with the NECCOG labor attorney and report back at the April meeting.

Motion to **Adjourn** - Ms. Nicholson, seconded by Mr. Syme