

Capitol Region Council of Governments

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES CRCOG Boardroom, 241 Main Street, 4th Floor, Hartford, CT January 10, 2018 Noon

Attendance

Brandon Robertson
Jon Colman
Leslee Hill
John Elsesser
Dave Kilbon
Marcia Leclerc
Nancy Nickerson
Dr. Chip Beckett
Luke Bronin
Scott Shanley
Paul Shapiro
Robert Lee
Matthew Hart

Town/Organization

Avon
Bloomfield
Canton
Coventry
East Granby
East Hartford
Farmington
Glastonbury
Hartford
Manchester
Mansfield
Plainville
West Hartford

Staff

Cheryl Assis
Winsome Barnaby
Kimberly Bona
Jennifer Carrier
Mary Ellen Kowalewski
Lyle Wray
Pauline Yoder

CRCOG
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Guests

Kathie Lutz
James Redeker
Pam Sucato

Rome Smith Lutz
CT DOT Commissioner
CT DOT Legislative Liaison

Call to Order

Chairperson Marcia Leclerc called the meeting to order at 12:03 pm.

1. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

2. Remarks from James Redeker, CT DOT Commissioner

Chairperson Marcia Leclerc welcomed Commissioner James Redeker and DOT Legislative Program Manager Pam Sucato. She thanked the Commissioner for attending the meeting on short notice. Chairperson Leclerc then opened the floor to Commissioner Redeker.

The Commissioner spoke to the Executive Committee stating that due to the state budget, the transportation fund is running out of funds. Currently the treasurer is borrowing from cash accounts, and hoping for bond sales to maintain transportation funding. He stated that the Governor's proposal, if adopted, will include cuts to rail service, increased fees in for transit and rail service and an approximate 15% cut in DOT staffing. He explained that with no new revenues coming in, they are balancing the budget with transit service cuts and fare increases among other steps. Commissioner Redeker explained that the only place they are able to cut is state funded projects. The most severe cut will be municipal funding, i.e. TAR and LOTCIP funding. The Commissioner stated that the total impact over the next 5 years looks to be approximately 4.3 billion dollars, and an estimated 400 million dollars of uncompleted projects in FY 2018 alone. In order to balance the major crisis in the Special Transportation Fund (STF), transit is facing a major crisis. Commissioner Redeker explained that the Governor will be proposing strategies later in the day for the revenue side and that revenue restoration will improve bond ratings. These proposals include implementation of tolls across the state, gas tax and new car tax transfer to STF. Discussion followed. John Elsesser expressed his concern with town funds, such as LOTCIP, being used by the state. He is concerned that this money could end up being used towards state projects. Mayor Luke Bronin asked what it would take to fix the long term deficit. The Commissioner stated it would take a \$0.14 increase in gas tax over the next 5 years. Discussion followed. Chairperson Marcia Leclerc thanked the Commissioner for his time today, as well as the outstanding service he has provided since his arrival as DOT Commissioner.

3. Approval of Minutes from August 9, 2017

Chairman Marcia Leclerc requested a motion to approve the minutes from August 9, 2017. Jon Colman made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Dave Kilbon seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

4. Chair and Executive Director Remarks and Report

Chairperson Marcia Leclerc stated she has talked to Lyle in regards to making some amendments to the draft Legislative Agenda. She explained that the

approximate \$255,000 annual tax abatement that East Hartford receives annually has been wiped out, and echoed the concerns of the Commissioner in regards to unfunded mandates. Marcia Leclerc thanked Scott Shanley for his time serving as Chair of the Personnel/Finance Committee, and thanked Robert Lee for volunteering to serve as Chair going forward.

Dr. Lyle Wray provided a Director's Report to the Committee and highlighted the following items:

- CRCOG's audit has been completed with no findings and thanked Winsome Barnaby for her efforts resulting in a clean audit.
- CRCOG's new lease for office space will be signed soon, and will allow use of a Conference Room in this building for Policy Board Meetings and other CRCOG meetings. Hopefully this summer we will be able to begin holding meetings here at CRCOG.
- Dr. Lyle Wray stated that work is underway for the Anchor Institution and Neighborhood Engagement in TOD grant.
- He stated that Dial-A-Ride will be on the next meeting agenda for the Human Services Coordinating Council.
- Concrete Foundations: 238 applications have been submitted, and almost all reimbursements have been made. He thanked Pauline Yoder for her work on this project, including getting the website operating in a timely fashion.
- CEDS: Dr. Lyle Wray stated that New Economy Working Group (NEWG) was the firm selected to prepare the CEDS and that he is looking forward to CRCOG and NEWG working together in creating new strategies for the region.

5. ACTION: Resolution: Appointment of CRCOG Representative and Alternate to the Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D)

Mary Ellen Kowalewski explained that the CRCOG has been asked to renew its appointment of a representative and an alternate to serve on the RC&D Council, and that on April 27, 2017, the CRCOG Policy Board authorized appointment of Lynne Pike DiSanto, Principal Planner and Policy Analyst as representative, a Mary Ellen Kowalewski, Director of Policy and Planning, as alternate, to fill this position. She stated Lynne and herself are willing to continue to serve on the RC&D Council.

Jon Colman made a motion to authorize the Resolution presented for the two year reappointment of Lynne Pike DiSanto and Mary Ellen Kowalewski to the RC&D Council. Dave Kilbon seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

6. Letter to Governor on Fiscal Disparities

Dr. Lyle Wray stated that this draft letter to the Governor regarding CRCOG's response to fiscal disparities is for consideration and recommendations by the

Committee, and a final draft will be presented at the Policy Board Meeting on January 24, 2018 for approval. Pauline Yoder reviewed CRCOG's considerations and recommendations in response to the recent mandate. They include the following:

- Fully Fund the PILOT Program.
- Special Education Costs- have the State assume all cost of special education with appropriate adjustments in ECS funding.
- Regional Asset Districts: Allow creation of Regional Asset Districts to promote recreational and cultural facilities funded through food and beverage and local property taxes.
- Reduce restrictive prevailing wage provisions.
- Support restoration of the Regional Performance Incentive Program (RPIP).
- Consider and pursue CCM Recommendations for the state.
- Support for CEDS.
- Advance existing regional programs.
- Support Regional Emergency Teams.
- Recognize that Hartford is not the only city in distress.

Discussion ensued among the Committee regarding suggested revisions to the letter.

John Elsesser mentioned road use fee. He stated that thought citizens would be opposed to this, it could generate a lot of money to replace TAR funding. He feels we must look at alternative revenue sources and deal with the negative feedback received.

Dr. Chip Beckett stated he feels priorities are an aspect that need to be considered and that major problems must be addressed.

Matthew Hart suggested a change of focus. Perhaps provide us with more tools to allow us to work ourselves on regional issues because we cannot rely on the State.

The consensus of the Committee is they feel the State must start doing what they say they are going to do, and stop making promises that they do not keep. The Executive Committee would like to see a bolder introduction in the letter. They would also like the issue of fiscal disparities linked to the Legislative Agenda.

Dr. Lyle Wray stated he feels that all of these suggestions should be discussed as part of the Legislative Agenda. Chairperson Marcia Leclerc requested a new draft of this letter be circulated once it is completed so it may be reviewed prior to the Policy Board meeting on January 24th.

7. CRCOG Strategic Planning Session

Dr. Lyle Wray spoke briefly about the proposed CRCOG Board Strategic Planning Session scheduled for Wednesday, February 21, 2018 from 10:30 – Noon, prior to Policy Board Meeting. A memo on the session was in the packet.

Dr. Lyle Wray discussed a survey that went out in December of 2017, to review member interest in possible major regional projects. The major projects areas with major concerns were:

- Enterprise Resource Planning/Finance Software (ERP)
- School/Town Back Office Consolidation
- Regional Property Assessment
- Regional Dispatch 911 Center
- Regional Prisoner Holding for Nights and Weekends

Mayor Luke Bronin stated that Hartford has hired a new dispatch and suggested having her attend a future Policy Board meeting to discuss her new set up. Marcia Leclerc agreed and suggested she attend a Chief's meeting as well.

Dr. Lyle Wray thanked Pauline Yoder for sending this survey to members. He asked the Committee to review it in more detail so it may be discussed again in February.

Dr. Lyle Wray briefly reviewed the CRCOG Strategic Plan 2018-2023 Current Services Overview, discussing CRCOG's mission and vision for the Board to consider in looking at strategic direction for CRCOG over the coming years.

Dr. Lyle Wray reviewed strategic recommendations based on current services and anticipated needs. Recommendations include:

- Metropolitan regional economic growth that is broadly shared.
- Continuation and expansion of current shared and other service offerings.

8. DRAFT 2018 CRCOG Legislative Agenda

Discussion took place regarding the Draft 2018 Legislative Agenda. The Committee would like to see fiscal disparities linked to the agenda, as discussed earlier. Jon Colman suggested perhaps breaking it up into two parts: the first part being an introduction stating concerns, issues, etc. and the second part; recommendations on what to do to make necessary changes, etc. Jon Colman suggested municipal officials get more involved by voicing concerns and options to state legislatures. Matt Hart suggested holding a roundtable consisting of speakers and leadership. Discussion followed.

John Elsesser pointed out that we have powerful tools that we have not used thus far and perhaps it is time to reconsider.

Dr. Lyle Wray will work on a revised agenda to include a preamble paragraph, as well as moving regional empowerment to the top of the agenda and get this out for review in advance of the January 24th meeting.

9. Update on Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Dr. Lyle Wray explained that CRCOG is finalizing the contract with New Economy and things are moving along.

10. Regional Future Initiatives

Dr. Lyle Wray stated that Regional Future Initiatives will be implemented to follow up on the CEDS report.

11. Other Business

Chairperson Marcia Leclerc asked Kathy Lutz of Rome Smith Lutz if she had any comments. Kathy Lutz feels that perhaps it is time for CRCOG to let it be known it is ready to step up because what needs to be done, is not getting done. She suggested CRCOG consider a press conference to be heard.

12. Adjournment

Chairperson Marcia Leclerc entertained a motion to adjourn.

Jon Colman made a motion to adjourn at 2:10 pm. Dave Kilbon seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

**The next CRCOG Executive Committee meeting
will be held on March 7, 2018 at 241 Main Street Hartford 4th Floor**