

Legislative Committee Meeting Minutes
1:00 PM, December 21, 2023
This meeting was virtual

DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED

Members and Alternates

Chris Edge
Lisa Thomas
Jason Bowsza
Keri Rowley
Ryan Aylesworth
Steve Stephanou
David Porter
Brock Weber
Fred Presley

Town/Organization

Berlin
Coventry
East Windsor
Glastonbury
Mansfield
Manchester
Marlborough
New Britain
Wethersfield

Staff

Matt Hart
Pauline Yoder
Elizabeth Sanderson

CRCOG
CRCOG
CRCOG

Guests

Kathie Lutz, Chris Smith, John Harkins
Kowalski

Rome Smith Lutz &

1. Welcome and Introductions

Jason Bowsza (Chair) called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM.

2. Approval of December 06, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Chris Edge made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Brock Weber.
Motion passed unanimously.

3. Development of FY2024 CRCOG Legislative Agenda

Jason Bowsza, Matt Hart, and others commended Kathie Lutz for her long-time service to CRCOG and wished her well in retirement.

Matt Hart and Steve Stephanou reported on their recent meeting with State Senator MD Rahman to discuss the work of the task force on the motor vehicle property tax. Senator Rahman emphasized that he wishes to hold towns harmless and help develop a more progressive revenue option to reduce the disparity in the motor vehicle tax rates across the state. Matt Hart has volunteered to serve on the task force and is waiting to see if he will be appointed.

Matt Hart and Keri Rowley reviewed another item related to the property tax on motor vehicles. In the 2022 session the General Assembly made the most recent revisions to the state's motor vehicle mill rate cap, setting it at 32.46 mills. The cap applies to municipalities as well as special taxing districts. The state has established a municipal revenue sharing program to reimburse towns with mill rates above the cap for lost revenue and to mitigate a shift in tax burden to homeowners. Unfortunately, there appear to be some unintended consequences in the grant formula, as municipalities lose funding when they lower their mill rate to a level that is closer to or below the state cap. One example of where this can occur is after a town has completed its statutorily required revaluation. There are six municipalities within the CRCOG region that stand to lose significant revenue in FY25 because of this component of the grant formula. By consensus, the committee supported the suggestion that CRCOG coordinate efforts with CCM and COST to find a solution that holds towns harmless.

Jason Bowsza and Matt Hart reviewed the draft agenda. By consensus, the committee made the following revisions and assignments:

- The RSLK team will review all committee assignments for accuracy and will coordinate meetings with Planning & Development and the Housing Committee.
- Move the Permitting of Large Solar Installations to the Legislative Proposals to be Submitted by CRCOG section. Mr. Bowsza will prepare draft language in collaboration with the RSLK team.
- The RSLK team will review recent adjustments to the Medicare/Medicaid ambulance reimbursement rate, and state funds to remediate PFAS contaminated wells.
- Elizabeth Sanderson will research the Rhode Island infrastructure bank and other examples where states assist municipalities with the non-federal match for federal infrastructure grants. Ms. Sanderson will develop a related narrative for the agenda.
- Elizabeth Sanderson will review the report from the *Office of Early Childhood Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Care*, particularly in the context of workforce development and licensing, and develop a related narrative for the agenda.
- Matt Hart will confirm the amount of state assistance for CFSIC, develop language regarding the Primary Service Area Responder (PSAR) designation, and make other final edits to the draft.

4. Next Steps

By consensus, the committee agreed to meet again in early to mid-January to finalize the agenda for presentation to the Policy Board on January 24, 2024.

5. Adjournment

Jason Bowsza adjourned the meeting at 2:17 PM.