

Capitol Region Council of Governments
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Municipal Services Committee Meeting
CRCOG Offices, 241 Main Street, Hartford, CT 06106
3rd Floor Board Room
Tuesday, December 5, 2023
12 Noon
DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED

Members and Alternates

Peter Souza, Chair
Grace Tiezzi
Jon Colman
Lori Spielman
Tom Modzelewski
Jonathan Luiz
Kasia Purciello
Maria Capriola
David Porter
Lauren Rines
Andy Cirioli
Tom Fitzgerald
Brian Foley
Megan Massa
Peter Tanaka

Town/Organization

Windsor
Avon
Bloomfield
Ellington
Ellington
Glastonbury
Manchester
Mansfield
Marlborough
Newington
Plainville
Simsbury
Tolland
Tolland
Willington

CRCOG Staff

Kimberly Bona
Matt Hart
Aaliyah Miller
Robyn Nichols
Erik Snowden
Pauline Yoder

CRCOG
CRCOG
CRCOG
CRCOG
CRCOG
CRCOG

Guests

Mark Massaro

Eversource

1. Call to Order/Introductions

Chairperson Mr. Peter Souza called the meeting to order at 12:04 pm and welcomed new members. Introductions were made, and new members were welcomed.

2. Approval of Minutes:

- **October 17, 2023, Meeting Minutes**

Ms. Lori Spielman made a motion to adopt the minutes of the October 17, 2023, meeting. Mr. Jon Colman seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

3. Reports from the Chair and Staff

- **Chair**

Chairman Souza thanked everyone for attending today's meeting and encouraged members to attend the MSC meetings regularly.

- **Executive Director**

Mr. Matt Hart stated there has been some turnover on the CRCOG Policy Board resulting from the recent Municipal Elections. He explained that CRCOG is in the process of planning an orientation for both new and existing Policy Board members on either December 13th at Noon, or December 20th prior to the December 20th Policy Board meeting.

He thanked Jon Colman for heading up the Nominations Committee as the Policy Board will be electing new officers for the new two-year term. This action will take place at the Board meeting on December 20th.

- **Chief Operating Officer**

No update from Ms. Pauline Yoder.

- **Other**

Ms. Kim Bona stated that the gasoline bid will close on December 13th. Bid results will be posted later that afternoon.

4. Business Items

- **Approval of 2024 Municipal Services Committee (MSC) Meeting Schedule**

Mr. Hart stated that MSC meetings will be held mainly virtually via zoom, however, there will be hybrid and/or in-person meetings when announced at the call of the Chair (roughly, on a quarterly basis.)

Mr. Colman made a motion to approve the 2024 MSC Meeting Schedule as presented. Ms. Spielman seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

- **CRCOG's 2024 Legislative Update**

Mr. Hart stated each year, the Policy Board adopts a Legislative Agenda focused on the state's General Assembly. Mr. Hart explained that CRCOG's Ad hoc Legislative Committee prepares a draft for the full Board's review, and included in the 2024 Draft Legislative Agenda are the following items:

- Additional funding for Stormwater Management
- Infrastructure Bank created by the State (pool of money to be used as a local match for federal funding opportunities such as those opportunities under bipartisan infrastructure law)
- Establishing Regional Fair Rent Commissions
- Increasing State's Medicare Ambulance reimbursement rate (to match federal rate at a minimum)
- Increased funding for payment in lieu of taxes on state owned property
- Continued funding annually to fund Crumbling Foundation Insurance Program
- State support for establishment for apprenticeships for local government positions i.e., Building Officials and make reciprocity easier
- Continued funding to remediate PFAS contaminated wells
- What more can the State do to eliminate barriers to service sharing?

Chairman Souza opened the meeting up to member suggestions and thoughts regarding Legislative Agenda.

Ms. Maria Capriola- Continued pressure on the State to not lose momentum with the Municipal Employees Relations Act's (MERA) working group.

Mr. Jonathan Luiz - Statutes state that municipalities with purchasing policies must go out to sealed bid for anything that costs \$25k or more. Last updated approximately 11 years ago – it would be great to get number adjusted for inflation purposes... perhaps increase to \$34k or \$35k.

Ms. Capriola- Police Accountability Law/MERA inconsistency re: certifications.

Chairman Souza –Threshold the state has for renovation projects and prevailing wage (suggested by Eric Anderson, Andover).

Discussion followed.

- **RPIP Updates**

Ms. Yoder stated CRCOG is making progress with the Shared Animal Control Officer (ACO) Program - Hebron, Andover, and Columbia are scheduled to enter into a contract to share ACO services in July 2024.

Ms. Yoder informed new members that RPIP is the Regional Performance Incentive Program and explained that CRCOG was awarded three grants for Shared Animal Control Officers, Shared Building Officials, and Shared Assessment Services.

Ms. Yoder stated many towns have expressed the need for assistance with Building Official services, but CRCOG continues to face the challenge of finding people to serve in this capacity. Currently, CRCOG is recruiting for a full-time Building Official but is struggling to get applications. CRCOG is now preparing an RFP to obtain these services via a firm.

Chairman Souza pointed out that he has explored private consulting firms and stated it is important to make sure they are certified in Connecticut.

Mr. Andy Cirioli stated appreciation for CRCOG efforts with the Building Official and stated Plainville is very interested in the Building Official program, however, expressed concern regarding both the certification hurdle as well as the cost once it shifts towards the town and away from the grant.

Mr. Hart explained there are other options that may be more cost efficient for towns:

- 1) Building Official does not have to be a CRCOG employee – if there is a town that has a skilled and talented individual is willing to take the lead and contract with members via an interlocal agreement, CRCOG could use the grant to add additional staff.
- 2) Explore hiring a specialist that perhaps specializes in HVAC, electrical, etc. to fulfill the needs our towns are experiencing.

Ms. Yoder explained the grant is structured to fund 75% of costs for the first year, 50% second year, 25% third year, and by the fourth year, the town would fund self-sufficiently fund the program.

Discussion followed.

Ms. Yoder stated CRCOG is still seeking willing participants for the Shared Assessment program. CRCOG is considering exploring a lower-level position such as a Shared Assessment Tech / Deputy Assessor for assessment services versus shared Assessors. If interested, please let her know as participants are needed to move forward with this program.

5. Municipal Information Sharing

Ms. Kasia Purciello is looking for ideas for successful volunteer firefighter incentives, please let her know.

Ms. Grace Tiezzi stated Avon has recently done a study for their Fire Department that she is happy to share.

Discussion followed.

Ms. Cheryl Assis stated that for the FY 2020 Homeland Security Grant, CRCOG received a set aside in the amount of \$10,000 for election security and is looking for ideas from towns: perhaps a large training session? Please email cassis@crcog.org with any questions or thoughts.

6. Future Agenda Items:

- **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)**
- **Federal Funding / IIJA / BIL Important / Time Sensitive Updates**
- **Stormwater Management and/or Waste Management**
- **Legislative Issues**
- **Other?**

7. Adjournment

With no further business, Mr. Souza entertained a motion to adjourn at 1:03 pm and the motion carried unanimously.

The next meeting will be held on January 16, 2024.