

VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Railroad Station, 12 Main St., Derby, CT 06418
203-735-8688

VCOG MEETING NOTICE

Wednesday, October 11, 2006

11:30 a.m.**

at VCOG Offices

AGENDA

(Pledge of Allegiance)

- 1. Public Session**
- 2. Acceptance of Minutes of Sept. 20, 2006 Regular Meeting (Enc.)**
- 3. Treasurer's Report (to be emailed)**
- 4. Discussion regarding Implementation of Expanded VEMS Service,
Budget Schedule – Jerry Schwab, VEMS**
- 5. Planning Updates – David Elder**
 - (a) Emergency Management**
 - (b) Long-Range Transportation Plan**
- 6. Discussion regarding Previously Budgeted Part-Time Planner –
Rick Dunne**
- 7. Monthly Reports: (Enc.)**
 - (a) Valley Needs & Opportunities Project Report**

**** Note: A light lunch will be provided at 11:30 a.m.**

**MINUTES OF MEETING
VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
Wednesday, October 11, 2006
at VCOG Offices**

Persons Present:

Mayor James Della Volpe, Ansonia
Mayor Anthony Staffieri, Derby
1st Sel. Robert Koskelowski, Seymour
Jerry Schwab, VEMS
Roy Tidmarsh, VEMS Ansonia Rep.
Joseph Burnett, Griffin Hospital Emergency Services
Matthew Higbee, CT Post
Elizabeth Benton, New Haven Register
Rick Dunne, VCOG Staff
David Elder, “
Jan Jadach, “
Clare Falcha, “

Chairman Koskelowski called the meeting to order at 11:50 a.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was said. He then asked if anyone wished to speak during the public session. No one spoke and the public session was closed.

The **Minutes** of the 9/20/06 VCOG meeting were accepted.

Motion: By James Della Volpe; Second: Anthony Staffieri; Vote: Unanimous

Treasurer’s Report – Rick Dunne indicated that the financial report for July through September was handed out. He said we are running approximately \$55,000 ahead in income and should finish the year around \$30,000 over. We will be requesting some transfers in the next few months for things like reimbursements. He will present these after December.

Discussion regarding Implementation of Expanded VEMS Service, Budget Schedule – First Selectman Koskelowski began by saying he was advised sometime in September by Scott Andrews, VEMS Seymour representative, that a paramedic unit was stationed in Oxford. He requested information from Jerry Schwab a few times and did not receive a response. He did receive an email from Mr. Schwab on Sept. 28th stating he received the letters and wished to set up a meeting. Mr. Koskelowski indicated he then went through VEMS minutes for the past year except for February and April which he did not have. He requested that VEMS file a copy of the minutes in each town clerk’s office. He then read from the 1/06 minutes that a supervisor’s office would be located in Oxford. The March minutes indicated the new supervisor was out for five weeks. Mr. Schwab interjected that the supervisor had a heart condition. Mr. Koskelowski continued that in the March minutes, it said VEMS applied for five licenses and have only four vehicles. He then said that in the 8/06 minutes, board members suggested stationing the new paramedic vehicle in Seymour. The minutes further stated that Mr. Schwab said to wait two or three months and see how it worked out in Oxford. Mr. Koskelowski agrees with Mr. Schwab’s comments that VEMS is for the Valley, not for one individual town. His concern is the VCOG minutes of March, 2005 clearly reflect that a unit would be stationed in Seymour. He wondered

why COG was never notified. The towns are spending money for a purpose and need to explain to people if the purpose changes. He also thinks response times would be better with a unit in Seymour because of Route 8.

Mr. Schwab then spoke. He said it was in the consultant's recommendations to the COG that the vehicle be stationed in the middle of Oxford. The matter of shifting vehicles around is to have an 8-10 minute response time across the whole Valley. Mayor Della Volpe said he sat on the subcommittee, and he was under the impression that coverage was going to be in Ansonia, Shelton and Seymour. Rick Dunne then went back to the 3/05 COG meeting. At that meeting, Jason Perillo made a proposal which moved one position into Seymour at a cost of \$20,000 per town. Based upon his assertion that VEMS would add a car in Seymour, the Mayors adopted the resolution that day. Rick also reiterated that VEMS is a regional entity and has to file minutes at each town hall. He added that VEMS has a moral responsibility to inform their funders when they are deviating from what was decided.

Mr. Schwab said on the positive side, the reason for the five licenses is if one vehicle is out of service, they need to have a fifth vehicle. Also, three years ago, they had \$120,000 worth of debt which they do not have now. They have also increased service. He apologized for any miscommunication. Mr. Koskelowski then said the four member towns passed the resolution, not Oxford. He said Seymour paid \$20,000 for the expanded service back in December 2005. He just received another bill for expanded service for \$20,000 for the upcoming year. Service did not start until Sept. 2006. He wondered why we should pay for services we did not receive. Mr. Schwab said that in November, 2005, VEMS sent two invoices—one for \$20,000 for bundle billing and one for \$20,000 for expanded service. He viewed that \$20,000 payment from Seymour as going towards bundle billing. Mr. Koskelowski disputed this and asserted that Seymour's check to VEMS clearly stated that the payment was for expanded service. This year, no budget requests were made so Seymour put \$20,000 aside in the budget for VEMS.

Mr. Koskelowski stated again that the whole issue is this board passed a resolution that this vehicle would be stationed in Seymour and it is not. Until the COG changes that resolution, this is what he is recommending. We funded this because it is what was represented by VEMS to us. Mr. Schwab once again said to go back to the study that the COG paid for. Rick Dunne said we can only go by what was represented to us by a VEMS representative at that March meeting. This board endorsed funding based upon those assertions. If VEMS made the decision to station it elsewhere, you should have let us know. We do not implement everything that comes out of a study. Consultants tell us to do things all the time, but we don't always do it. The CEOs have a fiduciary responsibility. This carries through when they fund another organization.

Rick Dunne then said he had a question for Mr. Schwab about expanded service. Derby, through a change in administration, did not appropriate funds for this. You did receive money from Seymour, Ansonia, Shelton and Oxford. When did you get that money? Mr. Schwab said most of it would have been in December, 2005. Rick then asked him when the expanded service was implemented, and he said the supervisor was hired in October, 2005, and they sent out invoices. Service commenced fully in August, 2006. Rick said his main concern is that the towns paid for service around Dec. 2005-Jan. 2006. What period did that cover? It seems like they paid for a year and got about six months of fully implemented service. Mr. Schwab said in that first period, the money would have gone for capital expenses. As he noted before, the supervisor had a heart condition and was out a few months. He has Derby and Seymour as outstanding issues. Rick

said once again the towns need to know what periods they are paying for. What period is covered by the new invoices that are going out now? The towns need to have a better understanding of this. Mr. Schwab said he would have Jason Perillo send that information out.

Mayor Staffieri then spoke. He has researched that Derby's past administration chose not to participate. He has been looking into this to determine if they would participate. Now he has been finding out that statements were made that an ambulance was to be stationed in Seymour and was not. There is a big miscommunication for whatever reason. VEMS should have come back to this board and said that through this study, they recommend putting it in Oxford. We are making decisions for our citizens. He then asked which town had the most amount of calls—Seymour or Oxford. Mr. Schwab said Seymour. Mayor Staffieri said from that, it would seem that the unit should be in Seymour in an appropriate spot so it can easily get to Oxford.

Joseph Burnett, Griffin Hospital Emergency Services, then asked to speak. He said this is a complex issue. The vote in essence was for expanded service to all towns. The goal was to equally distribute the services so that everyone got an adequate response time which is 8-10 minutes. Seymour may not have a vehicle stationed there, but they get coverage from adjacent towns. By stationing a vehicle fully in Seymour, Oxford response times will go up. He understands Seymour's issue. However, the goal always has been to think of it in geographical regions and to decide how to best serve those regions. You are still getting the expanded service, even if the vehicle is on the Oxford side. Mr. Koskelowski said Seymour is not getting the expanded service that was represented to him, and he would like it stationed in Seymour. If we need another expanded service in Oxford, come and ask us for it. Mr. Burnett continued that he does not see a problem with coverage for Oxford/Seymour with the car in Oxford. There would be a problem if it was stationed in Seymour.

Mr. Schwab once again apologized. He did not understand that the COG was under this impression. Cars shift around all the time. This helps expand the area of response. Mayor Della Volpe said if someone had just come to the COG and explained this to us, they would understand. Mr. Burnett would like 1st Sel. Koskelowski to understand that Seymour is benefiting today with that car. Rick Dunne asked Mr. Schwab to please submit updated response times and more importantly, the funding issue needs to be resolved.

In a related issue, Rick mentioned that the COG is engaged in a long-term design of the Route 8 corridor. Exit and entrance #17 northbound on Route 8 will be closed permanently. Griffin Hospital met with the consultant years ago and indicated that was not a problem. Neither Mr. Schwab nor Mr. Burnett thought there would be a problem with this as exit 18 would be used instead.

To close, Mr. Koskelowski would like a copy of minutes on file in each town clerk's office and would like the problem rectified about the car being stationed in Seymour. He would like call volumes for Seymour. Also, he wants to know why bundle billing increased from \$20,000 to \$25,000. Mr. Schwab said the board voted on and approved the schedule. Mr. Koskelowski thanked all for attending and explaining this matter. He is still not completely satisfied. He believes we are getting expanded service, but it could be better if the vehicle was in Seymour.

Planning Updates – David Elder addressed the COG members about two issues—Emergency Management and the Long-Range Transportation Plan.

Emergency Management: David indicated that this year, DEMHS gave each municipality the option of having their RPO apply for and administer the local emergency management funding. Seymour and Shelton elected to apply for and administer the grant themselves and the COG will submit on behalf of Ansonia and Derby. He informed the mayors that DEMHS is holding a grant application workshop on Monday, October 16th if anyone is interested in attending. He would recommend that Shelton and Seymour send the personnel who will be responsible for applying for the grant. He will be meeting with the relevant persons in Ansonia and Derby soon to gather more information. David reminded the Mayors that there are five regions statewide for emergency planning, and we are in Area Two. DEMHS has created a committee to review the plan, and they're asking for two representatives from each RPO region. He and Jason Bashura, NVHD, have been representing the COG to this point, but DEMHS has asked for one or two more emergency personnel to review the plan as well. This could be fire, police, ambulance, etc.

Long-Range Transportation Plan: David informed those present that 167 surveys were sent out with questions pertaining to transportation in the region. So far we have a 28% response rate. A completed draft of the plan needs to be endorsed by the MPO in July, 2007. The first draft has to be submitted to ConnDOT by February 7, 2007. Dave told the Mayors that this plan is like a wish list of projects that could be completed in the future, so if anyone has a problem intersection or local road improvement, this is a good time to let him know. He said we will be carrying over all of the projects that were included in the previous plan but have not yet been completed. He will formalize something and send it to the Mayors regarding this.

Regarding the LRTP, Rick added that the COG members should look forward, even 25 years, when thinking of projects for their wish list. Also, they should take a look at the old projects and see if they still want them and if they still make sense. As an example, Route 334 has been in the plan for ten years and is finally being done. There were no questions, and the Chairman then thanked David Elder for the updates.

Discussion Regarding Previously Budgeted Part-Time Planner – Rick Dunne reminded the Mayors that we had budgeted for a part-time planner to work in the office because we had increased funding from the feds. We were going to try to hire someone experienced in transportation to work here part time; however, that is not working out. The next step is to pursue relationships with some of the other MPOs/COGs around the State regarding sharing an employee. We will be sending a formal request to the Bridgeport region about this. Failing that, we would think about contracting with Bridgeport to do some of the required work for transportation planning. The second option would be to try and do it in such a way where we could fund additional money in future years to hire an additional person. Even though Dave Elder is doing a good job, we are getting to the point between homeland security, Brownfields, transportation planning and land use that it is a lot more than one person should be handling. Rick will get back to the Mayors with further details.

Regarding transportation, Mayor Staffieri brought up the traffic in downtown Derby, saying it seems like lately the signals are messed up. He wondered if staff could contact ConnDOT about this. Rick said some of the signals are not part of the State; they are local. David said he will check into this with the State and will ask if the timing has changed on the system. He will also check into the possibility of incorporating the municipal lights into the system.

There were no questions on the VNOP monthly report. Regarding Brownfields, Rick indicated there was no monthly report made since the last meeting. He informed them, however, that there are two projects coming up for revolving funds. We have an \$850,000 fund from EPA for site cleanup and a \$500,000 DECD fund. Any loans on either of these would have to be approved by the VCOG as fiduciary. We may be asking for a special meeting before the next regular meeting to vote on loan applications. One site is in Ansonia and one is in Derby.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark A. Lauretti,
Secretary