

# VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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

## VCOG MEETING NOTICE

Wednesday, January 10, 2007

11:30 a.m. \*

at VCOG Offices

## AGENDA

(Pledge of Allegiance)

1. **Public Session**
2. **Acceptance of Minutes (Enc.)**
  - (a) **December 13, 2006 Regular Meeting**
  - (b) **December 22, 2006 Emergency Meeting**
3. **Treasurer's Report (Enc.)**
  - (a) **Budget Discussion and Amendments (Enc.)**
4. **Discussion of Cooperative Opportunities for Municipalities and Regions in 2007 – Gian-Carl Casa, CCM**
5. **Discussion of Long-Range Transportation Plan (Enc.) – David Elder**
6. **Endorsement of Housatonic Restoration Application**
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, January 10, 2007  
at VCOG Offices**

**Persons Present:**

Mayor James Della Volpe, Ansonia  
Mayor Anthony Staffieri, Derby  
Mayor Mark Lauretti, Shelton  
Gian-Carl Casa, CCM  
Daniel Waleski, Derby Resident  
Rick Dunne, VCOG Staff  
David Elder, “  
Jan Jadach, “  
Clare Falcha, “

(First Selectman Koskelowski was unable to be present as he was attending a funeral.)

In the absence of Chairman Koskelowski, Vice-Chairman Della Volpe called the meeting to order at 11:40 a.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

The Chairman then asked if anyone wished to speak during the public session. No one spoke and the public session was closed.

The **Minutes** of the 12/13/06 VCOG regular meeting and the 12/22/06 emergency meeting were accepted.

Motion: By Anthony Staffieri; Second: Mark Lauretti; Vote: Unanimous

**Treasurer's Report** – Rick Dunne indicated that, as he mentioned last month, he has some budget transfers that will get us through the balance of the year. He handed out an additional page to go with the sheets in the packet. Rick then began with the regular treasurer's report, noting that we are running approximately \$44,000 ahead. He asked the Mayors for action on this report after which he will discuss the budget transfers.

Motion: By Mark Lauretti – To accept the monthly financial report; Second: Anthony Staffieri; Vote: Unanimous

Rick Dunne then discussed the proposed amended budget for FY '07 as well as the page explaining the transfer requests. Clare Falcha went over the four proposed transfer requests. The first one is the addition of new grant money for the CTAA grant that was not anticipated when the budget was prepared. She noted that we are picking up \$8,000 from that grant. The second one is a reclassification of funds between fringe benefits and bonds and insurance categories. The third transfer involves the increase in travel expenses that are directly funded by state and federal grants. The last is a reclassification from legal expense to education expense. This is to reimburse David Elder for education expenses as specified in the personnel policies.

Rick Dunne then went on to say the net result of these transfers is an increase of \$4,350. He noted that most of our legal work lately has been coming out of grants and programs, so we

haven't had need for much of our own money to go into that. Mayor Lauretti had a question regarding the educational reimbursement. Rick said this procedure has been in place for many years. Following reimbursement, if the person leaves employment before a year goes by, he would have to pay the money back. Mayor Lauretti said he would like to review the personnel policies. Rick indicated that he and Atty. Welch have plans to review the policies and come up with some recommendations.

Before asking the board for a vote on adopting the amended budget, Rick then explained the additional sheet he had handed out today with the highlighted areas. He noted that when the original budget was prepared, we had agreed to try and pursue a part-time or shared employee with another region. We have not been able to do that. By not spending the \$25,000 budgeted for that shared employee, our fringe and overhead is not getting billed, costing us an additional \$35,000. So by not filling this position, it would cause a paper deficit of \$37,000. Clare added that when she bills \$25,000 in salaries, she is allowed to bill 150% of that as fringe and overhead. She counted on that in the budget to bill \$62,000 to the DOT contract. By not spending the \$25,000, she is down an additional \$37,000. The \$25,000 expense in the budget anticipates a \$62,000 revenue item. This will not put us in a deficit for the year. Rick noted that we are running \$44,000 ahead. If we don't hire someone and get this income, we will still run a surplus for the year. He just wanted to show the members what is going on at this time. He would like to have a subcommittee, or the whole group, work with him over the next few months on this. We will leave \$60,000 on the table with DOT. We can access that up to five years. He wants to have a longer discussion with the COG about this.

Mayor Lauretti indicated Rick should send the COG members a list of what the eligible items are for this type of expenditure and maybe they could provide direction to him. He went on to say that he is glad they are being kept informed of these issues. Rick then added we could probably bring in someone without sharing that person and not have an additional expense. We will get together a full range of what is available. There were no other questions or comments on this matter.

Motion: By Mark Lauretti – To approve the FY '07 amended budget as presented; Second: Anthony Staffieri; Vote: Unanimous

**Discussion of Cooperative Opportunities for Municipalities and Regions in 2007** – Gian-Carl Casa from CCM was present for this item. He handed out CCM's 2007 State Legislative Action Program as adopted by the CCM membership. They have three priorities going into this session—providing property tax relief, stopping sprawl and investing in the future. He then went on to further discuss each of these priorities. He talked about legislation to give the COGs more powers to do things as a group. He thinks it is appropriate for groups like this to share a portion of the state sales tax, for example. Mr. Casa went on to say that even with the spending cap, there are areas where the state could be spending money, such as for sewers, transportation, infrastructure. He also mentioned increasing train service as well as oversight so that money just does not disappear into DOT. He ended by saying that CCM is here to work with the COG. They will get the Mayors as much information as possible and will try to keep them updated on what is going on in Hartford.

Rick Dunne then had a question. There is a proposal that OPM is bringing out that includes more SGIA money for the RPOs so that these towns wouldn't have to pay such a large RPO cost.

Mr. Casa indicated that CCM has been supportive of the Governor's proposal in the development area. Transportation planning, economic development and land use have been discussed. The Governor has given the State the charge to coordinate among these agencies. Rick said the towns end up having to pay for land use planning. He would hope that CCM would support their side. Mr. Casa said he would look for that. Vice-Chairman Della Volpe then thanked Mr. Casa for his presentation.

**Discussion of Long-Range Transportation Plan** – David Elder, VCOG Transportation Planner, began by saying that by February 1, the draft LRTP project list has to be submitted to ConnDOT. He handed out project lists for each program. He also handed out a project application sheet for new projects. He said he would like guidance from the Mayors as to the individual in their municipality that should receive this application for new projects. This is for any new projects that are not currently in the long-range plan. Dave discussed the types of projects the towns should consider. As an example, he wondered if Shelton has considered a greenway going south on the Housatonic. He said this is a good time to get concept plans in, that it is important to get them in the plan. Rick Dunne noted that these are not solely high priority projects. As an example, one of the projects currently at the top of the list was requested nine years ago. Dave also made the point that it is good to submit projects in all cost ranges, and a whole range of projects is good from signalization to greenway projects. As an aside, Mayor Lauretti mentioned Route 8 and indicated that the COG members need to be all on the same page regarding that project.

Dave continued, saying that he was at a meeting this morning at FHWA where they discussed a new opportunity for big grants, combining urbanized areas into one grant. They are aware that roads in CT are over capacity, and they are looking at congestion problems. They are also looking at new developments such as what is occurring in Derby and Shelton. Dave encouraged the Mayors to think about congestion management when they submit projects. Rick interjected that we have continued to ask the state to upgrade service on the MetroNorth Waterbury branch line. We see a significant increase in ridership. The rush hour trains are packed but there are not enough of them. Mayor Staffieri agreed that more train service is needed. He has received many phone calls regarding the limited train schedule.

The Mayors then each designated the person or persons David should contact regarding new projects. Mayor Della Volpe named Joe Maffeo, Public Works Director; Mayor Staffieri said to contact Police Chief Mascolo, Ron Culmo, Public Works Director and Michael Joyce, City Engineer; Mayor Lauretti named Bob Kulacz, City Engineer. David will contact First Selectman Koskelowski for his contact person.

**Endorsement of Housatonic Restoration Application** – Rick Dunne informed the members that there is a pool of \$15 million available through the Housatonic River Basin Natural Resources Restoration Project from the G.E. consent decree for natural resources damages. DEP has encouraged VCOG to apply for these funds for O'Sullivan's Island. As Rick mentioned to the COG members in a prior memo to them, there is an application process for this. We are applying for the riparian area surrounding O'Sullivan's Island peninsula in order to remove contaminants, replant native species and install porous pavers allowing people to access the perimeter of the island. If this grant goes through, funding won't be available until the end of 2008.

Motion: By Mark Lauretti – To approve and endorse the Resolution on the aforementioned effort; Second: Anthony Staffieri; Vote: Unanimous

**Endorsement of Derby Downtown Development Project** – Mayor Staffieri said he would like to ask his fellow Mayors for their support. The City of Derby is applying to state and federal agencies for funding that would benefit the downtown development area. Rick said the motion would be to get regional support for Derby’s efforts in obtaining state and federal funding. Mayor Lauretti indicated that he does not have a problem with supporting Derby, but he would like more information on what he is supporting. Rick said possibly this can wait for the next meeting and Derby can draft a letter for the COG to endorse. Then the Mayors would know specifically what they are supporting.

There was no discussion regarding the VNOP monthly report.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark A. Lauretti,  
Secretary