

VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Railroad Station, 12 Main St., Derby, CT 06418

Ph. (203)735-8688 _ Fax (203)735-8680

MEETING NOTICE

Regular Meeting Valley Council of Governments

Wednesday, January 14, 2009

11:30 a.m.

at

VCOG Offices

AGENDA

(Pledge of Allegiance)

1. **Public Session**
2. **Acceptance of Minutes of 11/26/08 and 12/18/08 Special Meetings** *(Enc.)*
3. **Treasurer's Report** *(Report to follow)*
4. **Review of Energy Savings Program at Six Months** *(Enc.)*
5. **Discussion of Regional Roundtable Draft Plan** *(Previously Distributed)*
6. **Authorization to Apply for an EPA CARE Grant** *(Enc.)*
7. **Authorization to Submit Request for Funding Increase from EPA – Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund - \$450,000** *(Enc.)*

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

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
Wednesday, January 14, 2009
at VCOG Offices**

Persons Present:

Mayor James Della Volpe, Ansonia
Mayor Anthony Staffieri, Derby
1st Selectman Robert Koskelowski, Seymour
Mayor Mark Lauretti, Shelton (arrived at 11:50 a.m.)
Rick Dunne, VCOG Staff
David Elder “
Matt Fulda “
Jan Jadach “

Chairman Koskelowski called the meeting to order at 11:40 a.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. The Chairman then asked three times if anyone wished to speak during the public session. No one spoke and the public session was closed.

Minutes – The minutes of the 11/26/08 and 12/18/08 VCOG special meetings were accepted.

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

Treasurer’s Report – Rick Dunne said we would not have a Treasurer’s Report today as Clare was in Boston attending an FTA Financial Workshop.

Review of Energy Savings Program at Six Months – Rick reminded the COG members that when they approved the four-day workweek, it was on a trial basis to be reviewed after six months. The energy usage report contained in their agenda packet details mainly the energy units. There are some dollar figures included but the energy units are the important thing. Based on the original motion, the board does not need to vote to continue to extend the four-day workweek. You would need to vote if you decided to terminate it. Rick continued that this is a six-month comparison. He noted that in the electricity column, we have a reduction of 2400 KWH which works out to about a 22% reduction in usage. We did a comparison based upon the bill and the KWH charge. It can be deceiving—the savings is actually much more in dollars because we tried to compare in last year’s dollars. What you see is a 22% reduction and we had projected 15%.

Rick continued by noting that on oil, we are just into the heating season but we do have some months to compare. We have the period November 2007 - January 2008 and November 2008 – January 2009 to compare. We use oil to heat water throughout the summer but you will see that we saved approximate 259 gallons of oil just in the six-month period. Again, the dollar figures are compared in old dollars but one bill is at \$2.22/gal. and one bill is at \$1.86/gal. We do periodically go out and look for better pricing and we don’t pay tax, the same as the towns. Impressively, there was a 94% reduction in oil usage from July through November. That is mainly the heating of water, until we get to the heating season in November. There was a 45% reduction in the month of December. We don’t have a billing for January as yet but as you can see, the reduction is actually better than the 45%. We have been pretty consistent in our usage thus far. All of the gallons purchased numbers that are on the chart are to fill the tank. In last

year's dollars, it is about \$1100 in savings but it is about a 60% decrease in oil usage and a 22% decrease in electrical usage.

Mayor Staffieri then asked if we are in a consortium. Rick said we are not but would definitely be interested. Mr. Koskelowski noted that they had locked in back in August at a higher number and can't get out of it. He also noted that he is very impressed with the savings. Mayor Lauretti arrived at this time and Rick took a minute to recap for him. Mayor Lauretti then indicated that it is good news to hear but we are getting into the colder weather now. The Chairman then said a vote today is not required unless we want to go back to the five-day workweek. He asked if anyone wished to make a motion to do so. No one did.

Discussion of Regional Roundtable Draft Plan – Rick noted that the Valley Regional Roundtable proposal had been distributed to the VCOG members to see if they had any comments or changes before it went out to the rest of the Roundtable members. We did not receive any changes back from the CEOs, so last Friday, this was sent out to the rest of the Regional Roundtable members for input for discussion at tomorrow's meeting. It is broken down into three things—what the Governor wants for a regional growth agenda for us. Pulling together all of the considerations of responsible reuse of land like brownfields and sustainable reuse like drainage issues, etc.; doing the smart thing in placing state subsidies on new business attraction or retention by putting them near public infrastructure, not putting them out in the woods where eventually the state and city would have to build new infrastructure to support them sometime in the future. The third part of that document is the legislative agenda which encourages the state and federal governments to take certain actions in the upcoming session or at least consider them. The big ones have to do with them recognizing our CEDS economic development districts. This is a smart way for us to be able to get funding from the federal government directly into our local groups for things like industrial parks, sewerage for economic growth, etc. CT is the only state in the U.S. that does not recognize the economic development districts. Rick continued that we are encouraging specific projects and funding for projects that are regional in nature here, focusing in on the stimulus money that is clearly going to come to the state, not earmarked to the towns.

Mayor Lauretti then noted that the state's position is that we should be telling businesses where they should be developing. Rick said if the state is going to offer financial incentives, they shouldn't be doing it in ways that will eventually cost the state taxpayers more money later to maintain infrastructure. Rick then gave a brief overview of the Regional Roundtable saying that the Governor directed each of the RPOs to form these Roundtables. Our first meeting was in September, which Mayor Lauretti reminded the others he could not attend due to the death of his mother-in-law. At the time, we developed ideas of what we would put into our plan as goals and objectives. It was written up as a fairly dense mission statement with ideals and goals that we would like to achieve by category in terms of coordination of things like transportation, economic development, housing, etc. Rick continued that his idea was to take what the Governor is making us do under the Regional Roundtable and try to coordinate a strategy that works for the Valley and allows us to consider certain options at certain points that would make sense for us. We need to reuse our brownfields sites in the areas where there is built-up infrastructure. If the state adopted a policy like that, it would put our region at an advantage.

Mayor Lauretti asked if this plan was the result of the last Roundtable meeting. Rick said it was, and the staff's work, as well. Basically, Rick is working on it with David Elder, Jim Ryan,

Arthur Bogen and Matt Fulda. David interjected that we are all doing similar things. We have Route 8, we have a branch line, we all have brownfields in our downtown centers. Everything that the Governor is pushing in their responsible growth interest we all have. Rick said our priorities on this list would have to do mainly with improvements to the transportation system and hopefully having the state give us money to do some sustainable development practices in the development of industrial parks, and new transit-oriented development areas. He thinks that each one of our four towns has one proposal or another that could use money like that. There was no other discussion on this.

Authorization to Apply for an EPA CARE Grant – Rick handed out an explanation of this item from Arthur Bogen. He indicated that this is a funding program from EPA—Community Action for a Renewed Environment. The idea here is that there are ways to improve the health and environment of various communities. It has been done in some other communities previously—Massachusetts, Portland, Oregon, Baltimore. Bridgeport and New Haven both got initial grants so they are in that first initial grant period. What we are looking for here is authorization to apply for the grant and to, in fact, act as fiduciary if the grant is received. We have some partners that we are looking at—mostly public entities and one private company called United Recycling. Mayor Lauretti asked what they are partners for. Rick said to do the actual plan. He noted if you look at the proposal as Arthur has written up, we will look at proposed patterns of development to assess how to achieve the greatest balance among economic growth objectives, available public transportation while achieving reductions in environmental impact. We will look at the sources of environmental risk from municipal waste streams while identifying reduction strategies which could significantly reduce municipal costs; and to build long-term partnerships among economic development groups with community and regulatory groups. Rick continued that United Recycling is a private company based in Shelton that is rather unique in what they do. We thought that partnering with a private company made the most sense in terms of trying to develop some new strategies. Mayor Lauretti then asked if this is a requirement for future funding. Rick said no. Mayor Lauretti doesn't think we should be spending the money on studies. He would rather have the money come for analyses and the actual cleanup. He thinks private entrepreneurs should determine what community they want to go in and what location they want to be in to suit their business needs. Our resources are better utilized for actual bricks and mortar type things that actually help get businesses here and get to a location. There could be any number of locations. First Sel. Koskelowski agreed saying he does not like paper studies. They sit on a shelf and nothing ever happens. Mayor Staffieri concurred.

Rick said he had neglected to mention that Arthur Bogen could not be here today, as he was at a meeting at DEP regarding the American Precision project in Ansonia. At this point, the Chairman asked if anyone would like to make a motion to apply for this grant. No one wanted to make a motion. Rick said that one of the things we could do is to develop a strategy on how to decrease the waste stream and how to increase the recycling stream. Right now, we only pick up certain plastics and papers at curbside. He would like to have looked at how we reduce the costs of recycling and increase the market for taking a wider part of that stream. Mayor Lauretti said that DEP has a pilot program grant that they have for municipalities to do just that. It is a pay-as-you-go type of recycling and the City of Shelton is probably going to implement it. Secondly, we should sit down with CRRRA which has an extensive program about the recycling markets. Recycling affects all of us. Just because we are not in some type of political established boundary, that doesn't mean that we can't be talking to these groups and getting their ideas. DEP has a very extensive study program on recycling and so does the CRRRA. We should be

tapping into that. The Chairman then indicated that since there was no motion on this item, we would move on.

Authorization to Submit Request for Funding Increase from EPA—Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund - \$450,000 – Rick Dunne indicated that this is a request for authorization to apply to EPA for additional capital for the Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund. There is also a handout from Arthur on this. Our fund balance for the Valley right now is \$250,000. We had \$350,000 but we made our first loan. That is the one that Arthur is up at DEP working on today. We are expecting an application for \$650,000 from Waterbury. The Mayor has already endorsed it. That \$650,000 would only be used for one year and then it flows back to us with interest. At that point, it becomes this body's prerogative to control and loan that money. Once we make one loan and revolve it back, then we control it. Until we make that one loan, EPA controls it. This is unusual that they are making more money available. They confiscated money from some funds that haven't made loans. We are still sitting on some of Danbury's money that they haven't used and potentially we can still tap into that. Mayor Lauretti said that if we have locations in one of our communities that can serve the purpose of the grant, we should be tapping into that. Rick said that what we are asking for is authorization to apply for the additional capital under this program. We will also continue to approach Danbury. EPA may ask us to take over Danbury's money.

Motion: By Anthony Staffieri; To authorize staff to apply for the additional capital for the BRLF from EPA; Second: Mark Lauretti; Vote: Unanimous.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark A. Lauretti,
Secretary