

# VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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

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

## VCOG MEETING NOTICE

Wednesday, February 13, 2008

11:30 a.m.

at VCOG Offices

## AGENDA

(Pledge of Allegiance)

1. **Public Session**
2. **Acceptance of Minutes of 1/9/08 Meeting (Enc.)**
3. **Treasurer's Report (Enc.)**
4. **Correspondence**
  - (a) **Letter from Linda Tabone, Coffee Depot (Enc.)**
  - (b) **Letter from Barron Grasso Re: Coffee Depot (Enc.)**
5. **Appointment of Two Emergency Management Directors to the DEMHS Region 2 Steering Committee**  
**Staff Recommendation: Tom Eighmie**  
**John Millo**
6. **Discussion – Executive Order #15, Regional Roundtables**
  - (a) **Memo from R. Dunne (Enc.)**
  - (b) **Letter from OPM Undersecretary LeVasseur (Enc.)**
7. **Discussion on Regional and Local Plans of Conservation and Development (Enc.)**
8. **Update on Justice Assistance Grant for Local Law Enforcement (JAGLLE) Program**
9. **Old Business**

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

VCOG Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, February 13, 2008  
11:30 a.m. at VCOG Offices

**Call to Order**

Chairman Koskelowski called the meeting to order at approximately 11:35 a.m. All those present pledged allegiance to the Flag.

**Attendance:**

Ansonia Mayor James DellaVolpe  
Seymour First Selectman Robert Koskelowski  
Shelton Mayor Mark A. Lauretti

State Representative Jason Perillo  
Chris Swan, CL&P  
Matthew Hickey, CL&P

Lauren Garrison, The New Haven Register  
Jodie Mozdzer, The Waterbury Republican-American

Rick Dunne, VCOG Staff  
David Elder, VCOG Staff  
Clare Falcha, VCOG Staff  
Patricia Bruder, Stenographer

**1. Public Session:**

Chairman Koskelowski asked if anyone wished to speak. Being none, the public session was closed.

**2. Acceptance of Minutes of 1/9/08 Meeting:**

**Mayor Della Volpe MOVED to accept the minutes of the January 9, 2008 meeting; SECONDED by Mayor Lauretti and UNANIMOUSLY PASSED 3-0.**

**3. Treasurer's Report:**

Rick Dunne presented the Treasurer's Report. We are running a surplus through last month of \$30,089. This is about \$3,500 ahead of the planned \$26,000 surplus. We are right on target.

**Mayor Della Volpe MOVED to accept the Treasurer's Report; SECONDED by Mayor Lauretti and UNANIMOUSLY PASSED 3-0.**

**4. Correspondence:**

- a) Letter from Linda Tabone, Coffee Depot
- b) Letter from Barron Grasso, Re: Coffee Depot

Mr. Dunne explained that the letter from Ms. Tabone and Ms. Craft, lessees of the Coffee Depot, indicates their desire to renew their lease as is their right under paragraph 2 of their contract. Staff recommendation is to proceed with the renewal.

They are currently marketing the business, and the second letter is from a potential buyer who is asking whether we would sign a five-year lease with a five-year option. Staff recommendation is to respond that we can sign any lease within the confines of the State lease to the City of Derby which is due for renewal in 2009.

**Mayor Laretti suggested that Mr. Dunne sit with Corporation Counsel and ask him what the parameters allow us to do or not do, work out a deal with the people, and bring it back.**

**No action.**

**5. Appointment of Two Emergency Management Directors to the DEMHS Region 2 Steering Committee**

*Staff recommendation: Tom Eighmie – Town of Seymour  
John Millo – City of Shelton*

Mr. Elder explained we need two representatives on the Steering Committee, based on time commitment and the interest and ability to perform as that representative.

Mayor Laretti asked if we have resumes on the individuals, and if staff has discussed the appointments with these individuals. Mr. Elder replied that he has spoken with Mr. Eighmie, but not Mr. Millo.

**Mayor Della Volpe MOVED to accept the appointments; SECONDED by Mayor Laretti and UNANIMOUSLY PASSED 3-0.**

**6. Discussion – Executive Order #15, Regional Roundtables**

- a) Memo from R. Dunne
- b) Letter from OPM Undersecretary LeVasseur

Mr. Dunne explained that 15 Regional Roundtables be formed in Connecticut in accordance with Executive Order 15, which was signed by the Governor, creating the Office of Responsible Growth.

The order, in part, reads, “. . . *creating Regional Roundtables that will invite the ongoing participation of city and town officials and foster the development of planning agendas tailored to the specific needs of different parts of our state, starting with new transit corridors.*”

Mr. Dunne explained, they envision a body that meets no more than four times a year to come together on agendas of regional consensus. They would involve, in OPM’s vision, myself, the four CEOs, representatives from the business community, environmental groups, I would suggest the Regional Brownfields Partnership, they are asking for representatives from a housing group or a housing advocate and any other representatives that we see fit to appoint. You don’t have to follow this; you can appoint anyone you want.

OPM is asking us to make the appointments by March 1<sup>st</sup>. Staff suggestion is to outline positions, revisit it in March, and send the names up at that point. VCOG will facilitate regular meetings.

Mr. Dunne understands from the Governor’s staff that these sorts of consensus decisions on regional activities will weight heavily on the allocation of State and federal funding for transportation, economic development, housing and environmental issues.

Chairman Koskelowski asked, concerning transportation, what will this detail? Mr. Dunne replied that we have a transportation planning process. This will bring people into the process that are not traditionally stakeholders in that, such as Chamber of Commerce, the hospital, housing developers. It will try and get them around a common agenda that we all endorse regionally, and that will be one of the items in support of setting up a transit corridor. We keep trying to raise our profile with the State to set up a transit corridor involving not just highway but rail and bus as well, to move commuters and businesspeople between the Naugatuck Valley and Fairfield County, and toward New Haven. This is the type of thing the State is going to be looking for in the future to identify regional support as opposed to a single project request coming in from a single town that hasn’t been vetted by the region for regional benefit.

Mayor Laretti noted, we went through this already with the Transportation Safety Board. After two years of attending meetings that were lengthy, attended by many different people, and yielded nothing, he stopped attending. Without a change in legislation and the way we allow zoning to occur, I don’t know why we do it. I would rather be productive. I suggest that we comply with the Executive Order. Why don’t you just pull in some of the stakeholders and make a recommendation to us. We’ll vote on it and let them do their thing and submit their report to us.

Chairman Koskelowski stated, they want people to use public transportation, but until they fix the Waterbury line and the Bridgeport line – I have almost 30 people that get on a train in Seymour daily going in both directions. Once they get to Waterbury and Bridgeport they’re lost. They have to get cabs. The transportation system in Connecticut is a joke. They run it from point ‘a’ to point ‘b’ and there is no point ‘c’. I agree with

Mark in that all this concerning transportation – all it is, is committee meetings, and everything goes on a shelf.

Mayor Lauretti stated, groups in the past have spent a lot of time and energy on these topics and have generated a lot of information that should be useful. I am a little frustrated with this approach – committee after committee, meeting after meeting, and we're still in the same spot. In Connecticut there is always going to be a tug of war over who thinks they have the higher priority. It becomes a turf war. That doesn't benefit the greater good.

Mr. Dunne stated, we will make a recommendation to you and come up with a list. We will probably use it more to develop and gain approval on the legislative agenda for the region. That's probably going to be the most useful way for us to use this – to develop project priorities that everybody can agree upon and send to the State.

Mayor Lauretti stated, we do that now through the MPO. Mayors and First Selectmen, regardless of what their political affiliation is, they get it. For the most part they work together on things. That's why things happen here locally. Maybe we make the MPO this committee and put it on our MPO agenda. You've got all the people there – all the representatives from transit there, the CEOs from how many towns? 13? 14? This agency is represented, Bridgeport's agency is represented.

**Mr. Dunne will send a letter to the Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency to see if they're interested.**

**Mayor Lauretti stated, tell them it's the recommendation coming out of the Valley.**

**Mr. Dunne stated, we'll take that action and we'll inform OPM and we'll reach out to Bridgeport RPA.**

**7. Discussion on Regional and Local Plans of Conservation and Development**

Mr. Elder explained, in 2006 the Connecticut General Statutes were amended to include a mandate that the Local Plans of Conservation and Development as well as the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development had to include three sections in their next update. The Regions have to update this Plan by July 1, 2008. We have been working on the regional update. At two Regional Planning Commission meetings for the region, they talked about Derby, Seymour, and Ansonia plans were updated in 2002, and they are not compliant with this new mandate. Shelton was updated in 2007 and is in compliance.

We discussed at the Regional Planning Commission that because the plans, the Derby, Seymour and Ansonia, were all created by the same planning agency, it would be an easy way to get all the plans compliant by updating not only the regional plan this July, but also the Seymour, Derby and Ansonia plans.

Mr. Elder continued, I've talked to all the Chairmen of the Planning and Zoning Commissions and all of the Town Planners or on-call Town Planners. Everyone knows about this. So far it seems doable. It is an aggressive schedule but it will be in front of this board in June as well as your local Planning boards' endorsement.

Those three sections are,

- We need to identify areas in our towns that can accommodate TOD (Transit-Oriented Developments)
- We need to identify areas in our town that we are going to preserve agriculture land whether for historic purposes or future agricultural purposes
- And most importantly, we have to stay consistent with the State's Six Growth Management Principles.

We are prepared to update those by June for all the towns that are not compliant.

Chairman Koskelowski asked, will the towns be completed it by the deadline?

Mr. Elder replied, they should be. The sections that need to be added are somewhat of a template and I've already looked at all of the towns' zoning maps and the locational guide map that the State plan goes by. We are all very close. If there are any inconsistencies, they are minor. The only one I can think of for Seymour is that corridor where the TOD and connector road has been proposed.

**8. Update on Justice Assistance Grant for Local Law Enforcement (JAGLLE) Program**

Last month, Mr. Dunne met with the Chiefs of Police in the region to discuss targeting of grant money that was coming in from three of the four communities into the Valley Street Crime Unit. He followed up with the Chiefs subsequent to the meeting.

Mr. Dunne explained, it really boils down to a timing issue. Ansonia's funding has come in from the Federal Government – the 2005 money actually came in in 2005 and was expended, because they get direct subsidy. We are just getting the 2005 money for the other three communities to spend in 2008.

There was a fundamental issue of fairness discussed that if the investment was made in the Street Crime Unit, all the communities would have to participate. Since Ansonia's money is already expended, they don't have that money available. I talked with Chief Hale and at this time Ansonia can't make a commitment of dollars out of their own pocket to match the grant funds that are coming on behalf of the other three towns, about \$5,000 each. Pending no objection from this body, Derby and Seymour will opt to join the New Haven-based South Central application that the South Central Chiefs of Police

are sponsoring for the New Haven region. Shelton is waiting to hear what comes out of this because the possibility exists that Shelton will be able to get and keep and expend its own dollars – its own grant. It will then be the only remaining eligible community in the region. Shelton will handle their own. The VCOG won't get involved in the direct administration of this grant any longer. New Haven will administer on behalf of the two towns there, and Shelton will administer on its own behalf.

We will revisit this again next year when we know better which towns are going to be funded. We believe Ansonia will be funded the same way the other three have – their crime stats have gone down and they come out of the direct Federal program and they go into the Local Law Enforcement Program. So they're not on the Federal list for 2006 – so there will be four communities next year and we won't face this obstacle.

Chairman Koskelowski asked, if Derby and Seymour go to the New Haven region, what happens with the Valley Street Crime Unit?

Mr. Dunne replied, this was going to be additional funding for the Street Crime Unit. I'm not familiar with the overall situation of the funding of the Valley Street Crime Unit, but this would have been on top of what they already have allocated for expenditures for the year.

Mayor Lauretti stated, yes, it's a completely separate issue. The question of what happens to Valley Street Crime Unit (VSCU) is a good question. It really depends on what the four Chief Elected Officials want to do. If there is a will to keep it alive, then the four CEOs can do that, despite what their respective Chiefs may think. There always hasn't been unanimity about the VSCU; I've been a fan of it for years and I think it does provide a good benefit and a way for us to cover the integration of our boundaries with crime. That's just the way it is.

Mayor Della Volpe stated, I agree with you. We're just a little understaffed right now and that's why we can't participate.

Mayor Lauretti stated, well, I know the manpower needs fluctuate from time to time, everybody goes through that. The success of it is really going to depend on the commitment of the four municipalities – whether you want to see it continue or not. I invest in it because I think it does have a lot of merit. I'll continue to invest in it. If it's not the will of everyone else then okay. I would advocate for it.

Chairman Koskelowski stated, I agree with you. I would too. What we do is, if we move the individual out of the Valley Street Crime Unit, we put the individual in the State unit. We can always take them out of the State unit and bring them back into the Valley Street Crime Unit once everything gets straightened out. This is something that all four of us agree on what we want to do.

Mayor Lauretti and Mayor Della Volpe both stated that they have people in Statewide as well.

**Mr. Dunne** stated, for the Local Law Enforcement Grant for this year, if there's no objection, **I'll communicate with the Chiefs again. We'll get letters from the Chiefs to this agency informing us where they are going to join for the purposes of the upcoming year. Then I'll draft a letter to OPM letting them know from a regional perspective who is going where. We won't be involved in the administration of this grant until next year, when we look at it again.** OPM may change the rules and it may not be regional next year – we don't know.

**Mayor Lauretti** stated, for our next meeting next month, we should put the Valley Street Crime Unit on the agenda, and put it in Executive Session so we can talk about it a little bit.

**No action.**

### **9. Old Business**

Connecticut Light & Power representatives Chris Swan, Director of Municipal Relations and Director of Municipal Relations and Siting and Matthew Hickey, Account Executive, were present and gave the Council an update on Connecticut Transmission projects. They distributed and reviewed the PowerPoint handouts which are attached hereto as part of the record.

Mayor Lauretti asked, the construction, this is an upgrade of the transmission lines?

Mr. Swan replied, it's an upgrade, but it's really an additional 345-k-V circuit on both of those paths, so, coming in from Rhode Island to Lebanon, and coming down from Agawam, Massachusetts to North Bloomfield eventually, to Cross Bridge up in Watertown, it will be a new 345 circuit on an existing – parallel to existing lines that are already there. You've got a number of them here. Shelton has a considerable amount of transmission right-of-way going from Devon to Cross Bridge to the Dam on the Housatonic River.

Mr. Dunne asked, do you see the stabilization of electric rates?

Mr. Swan replied, CL&P just had a 1.9 percent uptick – that's for two years. UI had a similar increase last year, very small. The energy price that marked a big piece of that bar chart is being pushed down – oil prices are kind of stabilizing a bit, gas prices have come down a little bit. It won't be a big drop but we're hoping to keep whittling away and bring the rate down a little.

Chairman Koskelowski asked, we just had a 1.9 percent increase, don't you get another one next year?

Mr. Swan replied, yes, it's one percent next year. Correct.

Mayor Lauretti asked, where are you getting the most pushback from?

Mr. Swan replied, if it's in their back yard or in their view, people get concerned. In the Town of Mansfield there's a park – Mansfield Hollow State Park – with a narrow right-of-way. We have to acquire a sliver on either side of the right-of-way and that will be a little bit of a battle with the DEP. We'll either have to pay royally for it or give up some property elsewhere to try to trade off.

Mr. Dunne asked, does this additional transmission capability do anything to reduce the federally mandated congestion charge?

Mr. Swan stated, we think we reduced most of that \$150 million savings was reducing that charge so we keep pushing that charge down. Eventually her system is perfect and you can import 100 percent of your power from out of state – that goes to zero. PERC mandates that.

Mr. Dunne asked, who gets the money?

Mr. Swan replied, PERC mandated it, ISO collects it, we bill it and pass it to ISO and they distribute it to the generators. The theory was that it would promote generation being built. Nice theory, didn't work.

Mayor Lauretti asked, what was the motivation for this communication?

Mr. Swan replied, the first time we built a major project we did none of this outreach so it was a big surprise to people. Our motivation is to make you know about it – you've heard about it – when it gets on the front page of The Register or the local weekly paper, you've at least heard it was coming. We've been doing this kind of outreach for two and a half years on these projects.

Mayor Lauretti stated, I think it's a good move because often what happens is when this hits for the first time, people have their worst fears and nightmares about a project like this. The first plan of attack is, people like us.

Mr. Swan stated, well, the towns we're proposing to build in will actually have open houses and the model we have now is to have an open house on an evening during the week in a gymnasium or cafeteria with informational booths, and we invite the whole town. We especially target sending invitations to any property owners that abut the right-of-way. We answer a lot of questions and it's a lot better give and take on information that way. Keep people informed. We've learned our lessons over the last three years.

**Adjournment**

**Mayor Della Volpe MOVED to adjourn; SECONDED by Mayor Lauretti and UNANIMOUSLY PASSED 3-0.**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark A. Lauretti,  
Secretary