

VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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-MEETING NOTICE-

Regular Meeting
Valley Council of Governments
Wednesday, February 24, 2010
(postponed from Feb. 17th)
11:00 a.m. at VCOG Offices

AGENDA

Pledge of Allegiance

- 1. Public Session**
- 2. Acceptance of Minutes of 1/6/10 Special Meeting *(Enc.)***
- 3. Treasurer's Report *(Enc.)***
- 4. Discussion re: Regional Performance Incentive Program (RPIP) Update and Contract *(Enc.)***
- 5. Discussion re: Surface Transportation Program (STP) Technical Coordinating Committee Appointments**
- 6. Update on VCOG/VTD Title VI Program**
- 7. Presentation of ARRA BRLF Recommendations to the Revolving Loan Fund Loan Committee – *Regular & Executive Session (Enc.)***
- 8. Discussion re: 2010-11 VCOG Budget – *Regular & Executive Session (Handout)***
 - (a) Discussion Re: Municipal Dues Notices**

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

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
Wednesday, February 24, 2010
at VCOG Offices**

Persons Present:

Acting Mayor Stephen Blume, Ansonia
Mayor Anthony Staffieri, Derby
1st Selectman Paul Roy, Seymour
Mayor Mark Lauretti, Shelton
Sheila O'Malley, City of Derby
Chris Frey, GZA Environmental
Rick Dunne, VCOG Staff
David Elder, “
Clare Falcha, “
Arthur Bogen, “
Jan Jadach, “
Matt Fulda, “

In the absence of Chairman Della Volpe, Vice-Chairman Staffieri called the meeting to order at 11:10 a.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Following roll-call, the Vice-Chairman then asked three times if anyone wished to speak during the public session. No one spoke and the public session was closed.

Mayor Lauretti asked for an update on Mayor Della Volpe's condition. Acting Mayor Blume indicated that Mayor Della Volpe is recovering following his surgery and has been released from the hospital. He is home recuperating.

Rick Dunne then pointed out that we do not have correspondence on the agenda but he had handed out a copy of a letter from our office that went to Michael Joyce of Milone and MacBroom who is the City Engineer in Derby. Michael provided all the energy calculations for the energy grants for all of the towns free of charge to us. Rick wanted to make sure the CEOs were aware of the good job he did for each of the towns by providing this information. Mayor Staffieri indicated that he was grateful for a job well done.

Minutes – The minutes of the 1/6/10 VCOG special meeting were accepted.

Motion: By Mark Lauretti; Second: Paul Roy; Vote: Unanimous

Treasurer's Report – Rick Dunne indicated that in the packet that was sent out, there was a budget to date through December, 2009. Since this meeting has been rescheduled a few times, we have handed out today the updated one through January. It is up to the CEOs as to which one they would prefer to review. There are no substantial differences. The net income has decreased based on some additional expenditures during the month. Rick went on to say the budget is performing at roughly the same level. Advertising is over-budget due to the ARRA project, and pension, due to the re-negotiation of his contract. He then asked if there were any questions.

Mayor Lauretti asked if this required approval. Rick said they just need to accept the report. Mayor Lauretti said that obviously the most current is what we will look at. We don't need to look at December when we have the January figures.

Rick continued that the second sheet in the handout is marked "Draft-For Discussion Only". This is an update on the current year's budget that we have been discussing right along since the state has left us in limbo. If you start at the right, the original draft budget, which was the \$43,000 surplus, the approved budget which we adopted with a \$51,000 deficit, based upon the fact that the state did not know what they were doing with their State Grant-in-Aid, whether we were receiving it or not, so we anticipated not receiving it and said at the time of adoption that we would cover any deficit out of fund balance for the current year and work on it going forward when we got a better picture from the state. We still don't know, so that is why he is giving the update month by month. The third column is the one approved at our January 6th meeting, we had given the CEOs adjustments that you approved which had lowered that \$51,000 deficit to a \$34,000 deficit and then the far left column is the current recommended budget, we believe this is going to be it. We don't see the state giving us our State Grant-in-Aid since the latest info shows \$100 for the entire state, so we are out about \$56,000. We have cut down numerous expenses basically in the same manner as we discussed last month, so we are down from a \$34,000 deficit to a \$15,000 projected deficit for the year which will come out of fund balance. We had an unrestricted cash fund balance going into the year somewhere around \$70,000 - \$80,000, so it will come out of there. Mayor Lauretti said we should talk about that before we get to that point. He is not sure we should be dipping into our fund balance at this point. He understands that we approved the budget but that was in anticipation of the state being at the table. What we should do is contact some of the other planning agencies and collectively petition the state. All of the municipalities have the same problem with the road town-aid money. Nobody has received anything yet and winter is almost over. Rick said he would draft a letter regarding aid to RPOs and aid to municipalities. Mayor Lauretti said, no, just to stick to our issue with the planning agencies and see if there is a consensus about petitioning the state for our funds. Rick will draft a letter to the RPOs and then we will take it from there as to where it should be directed.

Rick then continued that the next page has to do with the 2010-11 budget. We typically send letters in January to the towns projecting their dues for the upcoming year. He handed out a sheet with the projected municipal dues. Because Shelton has a hard and fast deadline, he had to send a letter to them at the time we were working on the budget. They said to send them our worst case scenario which we did and which essentially doubled them. Rick said that at that point in January, that's what it took to close the gap—doubling town dues. That covers the missing State Grant-in-Aid. Only Shelton got the letter because only Shelton had the deadline. Since that letter went out, we have continued to work on our budget. We have assumed that we will not get State Grant-in-Aid again, particularly because it is the second year of the biennial. We have taken a very conservative approach with this and we have balanced the budget with a 5% increase to the towns. If you look at the dues sheet, you will see that we have maintained a dues freeze from 2006 through 2010. The last one was 06-07, a 3% increase and there's a 5% projected increase for this current year. That is what we are basing our budget on at this point in

time. Normally, we don't adopt our budget until much later. We would like to send revised letters out to the towns regarding 2010-11 dues showing a 5% increase to all four towns. Rick said that is his recommendation and he is looking for their authorization to take that action. Mayor Lauretti asked why 5% and Rick said that that is what it took for us to balance the budget. Rick warned the Mayors that what they have done with the budget is, we have a lot of short-term revenue. A lot of it is predicated on special projects that we have applied for, gotten grants for and will basically cover a lot of the staff time as opposed to the normal course of business. This methodology used to balance the budget depends upon special revenue and as we get to 2012-13, 2013-14, we will be facing much harder choices. Mayor Lauretti asked if some of the ARRA money would come into play. Rick replied that we do not get ten cents to run any of their ARRA projects. All we get is hard cost for your paving that goes to the towns. All the work that staff did here last year for your pavement or other ARRA projects—we are compensated under the EPA ARRA projects only for direct costs, but we get no administrative, no overhead, it's just direct costs.

Rick said in prior years we have sent out estimates of 3% increases and held the line at 0% at the end of the day. He is not saying that we can't get this back down to zero—it's going to be hard, very difficult this year but we are kind of at the end of the line and facing very difficult choices following 2010-11. Mayor Staffieri said they definitely need letters to all of the towns so that they can balance their budgets. All CEOs agreed to send the request letters with a 5% increase. Rick ended by saying that in terms of raw dollars, the increase would be about \$500 for all the towns except Shelton which is just over \$750.

Discussion Re: Regional Performance Incentive Program (RPIP) Update and Contract –

Rick indicated that in their agenda packets, they would see a letter from New England GeoSystems addressed to Mayor Della Volpe as Chairman. This is the culmination of the project that the state paid for us to re-do all of your assessor's maps and your on-line accessibility for property maps. David Elder then took over the discussion. He said the original grant was for the start-up costs. It was \$112,000 and it went to updating the GIS data that was created in 2002 through a federal highway grant. The original grant was to help us identify sensitive populations, minority populations, and people who used public transportation to get to work. It was a requirement for us to do our transit plan with the Valley Transit District and also our highway planning. Since 2002, some of the towns, particularly Seymour have continued to update their data. Seymour has a website and it gets a lot of hits from realtors. People don't have to come to the town hall for assessment information. So we updated all the towns' information. They are all updated and finished. We asked the consultant what it would cost to continue doing this town-by-town. If you look at page 5 of the document from N.E. GeoSystems, it has the breakdown of the costs by town. You will see two cost estimates. One cost is the physical or technical labor involved with updating maps, so when a town gets a new subdivision, they have to be submitted in digital format as well, normally in CAD. Then CAD is converted to GIS and we publish that out to the web so you can see aerial photographs. Primarily, it is for realtors and residents to access their property information on line. Dave went on to say that we asked originally if there was any regional savings if we did it regionally and just had a contract with the region and towns gave us money to carry it out, but some towns have

different in-house staff. Shelton has an engineering department and they have someone dedicated to doing CAD. For Derby, Milone and MacBroom hand-drafts changes onto the Assessors' maps so there is no digital copy in one place. When Derby gets a new subdivision, as he understands it, Milone and MacBroom will draft the map and print the city an assessor's map. In Ansonia, Marge does the best she can just keeping the information up-to-date, so they would benefit the most from these dollar amounts, which are all very small. One town in CT spent up to \$300,000 for this. We got a lot of work done for \$112,000.

At this point, David said he would recommend that if the towns want to continue this, they do it on a per-town contract basis with the consultant because all of your workloads are different and your products are going to be different. You may want this consultant to print off an assessor map or you may already have a company that prints off your assessor maps. The dollar amounts per town are more like placeholders. Shelton has here \$6,000 worth of updates, but if Shelton doesn't get that many subdivisions this year, they may only spend \$2,000 for that. Ansonia may get more subdivisions and may spend all \$3,000 and because of that, there is no way to run it as a region and have it be equitable because different towns are going to use it more or less. This is a recommendation we are proposing to the towns if you want to continue the GIS. These costs are relatively small for the amount of return that you will get for it. Included in this is one year of free hosting. Dave said he will send out an email to everyone so you can see the website and send it to whoever you want to in your town to see if it's worth it. Seymour is a little different because they paid for updates so they had a free year of hosting this past year. The consultant said they have already received their free year but the other towns will get a free year hosting from this point forward where Seymour has already received that. Dave thinks Seymour may possibly be able to get another free year out of it. The contract says one year free hosting from the date of update. Rick said it would seem that Seymour is getting punished for being further ahead when we started the project. Dave said just as an example of how this has become more important. Seymour started off just doing their parcels; then public works wanted to see pavement edge, where the ROW lines are; then the emergency responders wanted to see where all of the fire hydrants were, so different town departments build on this. The majority of towns in CT now have a website with on-line capability of seeing parcel information.

Rick added that last fall, we had a live presentation here by the consultant of the website and it is ready to go live. It is all done but not out in public yet. The three items in the bill are—the first item, as Dave explained, will go up and down each year based upon the activity. The second item, the hosting, is a flat number per year for each town. The third item in 2011 is a \$500 number for the CAMA bridge. This integrates the assessor's map with all the mass appraisals and information on the property card. All of that is available on the internet. Every town has to look at it differently. You may or may not replace staff. You may avoid hiring staff. Shelton has a formal engineering office that the other towns don't have. Seymour has really built their system out. The first responders can even get the layout of a building so they know when they are entering a building, what they have. David interjected that he didn't think anyone would replace staff other than perhaps Derby would no longer use Milone and MacBroom to print out their assessor's maps. Dave hopes the towns go for it as there is no sense having the website up if you are going to have old information on it. That's worse than having no information. Dave also

reviewed his contact with each town. Rick ended by saying this is for their information at this point and it is an individual municipal decision.

Discussion Re: Surface Transportation Program (STP) Technical Coordinating Committee Appointments – Rick explained to the CEOs that this is the item that was discussed at the last MPO meeting. Dave Elder has sent numerous emails to various town employees. We are trying to collect your project priorities for road projects for the Surface Transportation Program for the next five years. In a perfect world, we would have project ideas from all of your towns already. Hopefully, we will receive them in the next 30-60 days. If we get those in that time period, the MPO will formally ask for appointments to a committee. This technical committee will be made up of, typically, your public works director, your city engineer, chief of police, traffic authority— whoever you think is most appropriate. The MPO may decide to ask for multiple appointments from each town. That committee will rate and rank the projects and prioritize them. Dave Elder interjected that Derby has given us two projects and we submitted them both to ConnDOT. They are being reviewed at this time. Rick continued that they are not ranked for funding yet by the MPO. Mayor Staffieri asked if the appointee to the committee could be the redevelopment director. Rick responded that this is going to be a technical committee that is going to rate and rank the project priority between towns, so it should be someone with the technical expertise to determine the ranking of the projects. It is really a technical review based on project readiness, project need and then prioritization. Mayor Lauretti asked what the deadline was. Rick responded that we are going to take it up at the next MPO meeting to organize the committee and set up submission deadlines. We have already requested projects from the towns in the last few months. We would have rather had them in now or in the next 30-60 days. Dave added that we have a hole in our MPO schedule where we don't have projects so we want to get some projects in for review soon. Mayor Lauretti asked about the timeline. Rick said we need to start now. We don't know until the feds act on the transportation reauthorization bill which we don't expect for 12-18 months anyway. In terms of programming, historically, Valley took a good chunk of Bridgeport's money in 2007-09. Bridgeport is spending most of the money in 2010-11. In 2012, we have an issue where \$2.5 million of our money is going to Oxford for a road to the airport but we are not certain if that is coming out of our allocation. In reality, we are looking at projects to go to construction 2012, 2013, 2014. We will cover this at the MPO meeting in March.

Update on VCOG/VTD Title VI Program – David Elder informed the CEOs that in 2007, the federal regulations changed regarding outreach to minority populations, people with limited English proficiency and we had to change our plan regarding notice to people that they have a right to file a civil rights complaint against us or VTD. This is just an FYI that we updated that plan and submitted it to FTA. Although we haven't heard back from FTA, and I was told we may never hear back from them, we did submit our plan, and we should be in compliance with any changes in the 2007 Federal Register. It has been posted on both websites and published in Spanish also. There was a lot involved and we had help from Valley Transit.

Presentation of ARRA BRLF Recommendations to the Revolving Loan Fund Loan Committee – Regular and Executive Session: Rick said this is the real reason we had to meet today. We are under obligation to program 35% of the ARRA funds from EPA by the end of

February. We are actually recommending 100% programming of the funds. He handed out two documents to the CEOs on this. Arthur has done 90% of the work on this. The first page is recommendations for award. At the bottom of the page, you will see that we are recommending for approval \$1,653,865. The total available is \$1,384,662. He will explain the difference in a moment. The second page has all of our detail—when the application came in, how it was evaluated, dates of all the communications back and forth between the towns and our agency and between our agency and EPA. In the Eligibility Determination section, the last column shows when we received the EPA review and whether it was approved or denied. Only one was outright denied but many were discouraged in that interim process and never got to the final stage. It is followed up by our comments. The relevant information is copied onto the front page with the recommendations. He wanted to point out the last three columns show the availability of funds—ARRA is #1 and there is \$750,000 to grant; the RLF grant is #2 and is a separate fund where we grant and loan and there is \$253,865 available to grant; #3 is the RLF loan funding.

Rick then went back to the front page to go through the projects in order of approval. He started with our top-ranked projects.

1. **Ansonia** – BRLF Loan to Cook Industrial Associates. They need an additional \$50,000. This will be a loan repaid by the property owner to us.
2. **Waterbury – 1981 East Main Street**. This is the top priority project for the ARRA. It is an application for \$200,000. We are recommending this for a grant from the ARRA source. We think it is the most advanced and ready to go and deserving of that ranking.
3. **Shelton – 131 East Canal Street** is next. It is to leverage an investment already made in Shelton on that project. \$200,000 is sought and we are recommending a \$200,000 grant from the ARRA program.
4. **Ansonia – 497 East Main St./153 Main St., (Palmer Bldg.)** This is an ongoing project. The cleanup costs will use the money already in place so we are recommending \$70,000 from the BRLF. Again, this is one of the most advanced projects.
5. **Bristol – Park Street**. This has been ready to go and was actually approved by EPA before we even got into this round of ARRA grants. This is the oldest pending one and ready to go.
6. **Plymouth - 268 Main Street, Terryville**. This is an application for \$200,000 that we are recommending from the ARRA grant. This is for their historic Waterwheel Park area, an economic development project.
7. **Naugatuck – 58 Maple Street, Parcel C South**. They applied for \$350,000. What we are recommending is that we give them a grant for \$75,000 from the ARRA and a grant of \$33,865 from BRLF. It is not the \$350,000 they asked for but they do not want a loan.

8. **Newtown – Fairfield Hills Campus.** They applied for \$200,000 and we are recommending \$75,000 from the ARRA fund to complete the asbestos abatement. The project is ready to go.

9. **Seymour – 109 River Road** (Housatonic Wire) and potentially Seymour Lumber site. This one is not eligible for a grant so it would have to be a loan because of the private development aspect. It is a request of \$600,000. That is where the difference in the available funds vs. the award comes in. We are recommending the entire project but we only have \$335,000 available against the \$600,000. We do anticipate additional funding, probably both grant and loan.

Rick said maybe we are being a little optimistic in anticipating this but as far as we know, we are going to be the only program in Region One and probably in the country that will have obligated 100% of their funds this soon for projects so we feel comfortable that we will receive additional funds in a supplemental round. The awards will be announced this spring for the next round of assessment funds. Many of the projects that were not selected actually are not eligible because they don't have their assessment done. You had to have a complete assessment done. We are encouraging that those applications be filed with us for assessment grants. We are pretty confident that we will do well in this round since we were not funded in the last two. There will be a supplemental round probably announced by EPA for cleanup funds. We feel that with the homework we have done and the rating and ranking work we've done that we should be in pretty good shape to receive that funding when it becomes available. Rick reminded the CEOS that we administer to a 26-town region so it really spreads out pretty far. There were no questions and no executive session was required. Rick said he did need the COG's endorsement of staff recommendation.

Motion: by Mark Lauretti; To endorse the staff recommendations regarding the ARRA/BRLF Cleanup Grant Awards; Second: Stephen Blume; Vote: Unanimous.

Arthur Bogen wanted to thank the CEOs for their support and the extraordinary effort on Rick Dunne and the staff's part working this through to make it happen. It will do an awful lot of good in a lot of places. Mayor Staffieri also gave his thanks to the staff for doing such a good job.

Discussion Re: 2010-11 VCOG Budget – Regular and Executive Session – Rick indicated that we have already discussed this item earlier in the meeting so unless there was anything that they wished to take up under Executive Session regarding the 2010-11 budget, he did not have anything else.

Motion: Mark Lauretti; To adjourn the meeting; Second: Paul Roy; Vote: Unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mark A. Lauretti,
Secretary