

# VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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## VCOG MEETING NOTICE

Wednesday, April 9, 2008

11:30 a.m. at VCOG Offices

### AGENDA

(Pledge of Allegiance)

1. Public Session
2. Acceptance of Minutes of 2/13/08 Meeting *(Enc.)*
3. Treasurer's Report *(To be emailed)*
  - a. Budget Transfers *(Enc.)*
4. Discussion re: Municipal Outreach Initiative – *Deputy Commissioner Marrella, DEP*
5. Correspondence *(Enc.)*
  - a. Letter from SCRCOG re: CMED
  - b. Letter from OPM Undersecretary LeVasseur re: RPI Grant
6. Recommendation- Regional Roundtable – *Rick Dunne (Enc.)*
7. Review of Responses to FTA findings – *VCOG Staff (Handout)*
8. Approval of VCOG Resolutions: *(Enc.)*
  - a. ConnDOT Resolution
  - b. State Grant-in-Aid Resolution
  - c. FTA Resolution – Capital Projects
9. Update - Roadway Projects – *Rick Dunne (Handout)*
  - a. Routes 8 & 34
  - b. Exit 11
  - c. Route 67
10. Discussion and Schedule - STP program – *Dave Elder*
11. Discussion: Status of Plans of Conservation & Dev. Updates – *D. Elder*
12. Executive Session – Discussion re: Valley Street Crime Unit

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

**MINUTES OF MEETING  
VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
Wednesday, April 9, 2008  
at VCOG Offices**

**Persons Present:**

Mayor James Della Volpe, Ansonia  
Mayor Anthony Staffieri, Derby (arrived at 11:55 a.m.)  
First Selectman Robert Koskelowski, Seymour  
Mayor Mark Lauretti, Shelton  
Dep. Commissioner Amey Marrella, CTDEP  
Maryann Haverstock, CTDEP  
Margaret Welch, CTDEP  
Daniel Waleski, Derby  
Lauren Garrison, NH Register  
Rick Dunne, VCOG Staff  
Arthur Bogen “  
David Elder “  
Clare Falcha “  
Matt Fulda “  
Jan Jadach “

Chairman Koskelowski called the meeting to order at 11:35 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.

**Minutes** – The minutes of the 2/13/08 VCOG regular meeting were accepted.

Motion: By James Della Volpe; Second: Mark Lauretti; Vote: Unanimous

**Treasurer’s Report** – Rick Dunne indicated that the Treasurer’s Report was emailed to the COG members earlier this week. He had extra copies if anyone did not receive it. He noted that we are still running about \$27,000 ahead. We had a planned surplus of \$26,000 this year. He continued that the only issue is the line item for Professional Fees for Accounting. There is a \$3,000 increase in there that was paid. That is the result of the work that was required under the FTA Triennial Review. FTA is paying 100% of that increase in costs. In the budget transfers we are requesting, one is to increase the revenue from FTA and increase the expenditure for that item. Other than that, everything is pretty much in line. With utilities, it looks like we are going to make it, but barely. There were no questions.

Motion: By James Della Volpe; To accept the Treasurer’s Report as presented; Second: Mark Lauretti; Vote: Unanimous

**Budget Transfers** – Rick Dunne indicated there is a sheet in their packets with the amended budget and an explanation sheet attached to that. He noted this is the first time he has had to ask for a budget transfer in mid-year. He went on to say he is attempting to make improvements to the space that is our responsibility such as carpeting, painting, office furniture and the phone system. There is about \$23,000 in improvements plus the \$3,000 increase for FTA audit. We are proposing a transfer of \$13,000 from the two computer line items, from the legal fees and from the website allocation that we made in this year’s budget and transfer those so that we can

get started on those projects over the summer. Rick said we will be proposing some new capital expenditures in the following year, which he believes is going to be paid by FTA for their share of the phone system costs. We will be proposing the balance of it in the upcoming budget. He said he'd be happy to answer any questions, but he is asking permission to make these transfers.

Mayor Lauretti asked why we wouldn't just budget for those capital expenses. We are right near our budget planning session to approve a budget in a couple of months. It seems to him that we should just leave the line items alone. You can still get started with the preliminary things and when the fiscal year starts, you'll have an appropriation already in place. The Mayor continued that, in fact, you should have a better idea of what your expenses will be going forward. Rick said he could certainly do that. The only thing is we would be proposing an expenditure of fund balance to account for the items that we were going to take out of this year's budget. That money will fall to surplus on June 30 so then we would have an appropriation of fund balance for about \$13,000. He said we could certainly do that; however, the only thing he would ask is that they do approve the one amendment for the increased revenue of \$3,000 and the increased expenditure of \$3,000 for FTA. That's in the current year. Mayor Lauretti asked if the work was completed already. Rick said it was. He said we delivered the documents and we will cover that under item #7 in today's agenda. The Mayor asked why there were overages. Rick said it is not an overage. FTA requested that we devise a new cost allocation plan and an indirect cost schedule for FTA paid expenditures. So they paid for this to be prepared for us. We have already submitted for reimbursement from FTA. It came out of their Triennial Review and it is out of their grant. Mayor Lauretti asked when we expect the reimbursement. Clare Falcha responded that she would get it in 2-3 days. The Mayor asked why transfer any money at all. Clare said because it shows an overage in the account. Mayor Lauretti responded that given that it is not an extended period of time, why not just show an overage. The Chairman said since there is no action on transfers, we would move on.

**Discussion regarding Municipal Outreach Initiative** – DEP Deputy Commissioner Amey Marrella introduced herself and two other staff members from DEP—Margaret Welch and Maryann Haverstock. She said she is here to introduce the VCOG members to the Commissioner's outreach initiative which they hope will promote better dialog between DEP and the municipalities. She plans on visiting all 15 RPOs. She went on to say that the Commissioner wanted to have a Municipal Outreach Initiative because the DEP does permit some of the municipalities' activities. There are numerous ways in which they do this. They are putting together a Municipal Primer which they will be sending out in the summer. It will also be available electronically as well. This will help public works departments and other agencies understand what permitting requirements exist. They have some 29 permits that they issue. Permitting that they do for towns goes from transfer stations to a range of activities that towns have that might trigger a permit. DEP also wants to be sure they are being helpful in towns' land use efforts.

Dep. Comr. Marrella then went over the material in her handout, including a DEP Contacts brochure, a table of contents for the Municipal Primer, a copy of *The Green Plan-Guiding Land Acquisition and Protection in CT 2007-2012*, a Report of the Responsible Growth Task Force to Gov. Rell, a fact sheet on green buildings, a list of websites and copy of a letter that went out last month on the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program. She noted the deadline for submitting applications for this grant program is June 16<sup>th</sup>. Rick Dunne informed her that he recently distributed that information to our municipalities. Rick then introduced

Arthur Bogen, the VCOG Environmental Planner, and said Arthur had a sustainable practices bus tour planned for the following day. Arthur reported that this tour, which is sponsored by United Illuminating Co., is going to view a green roof installation at the SC Regional Water Authority, after which they will visit a few sites at Yale to see a fuel cell and a photovoltaic installation. The officials on the tour will get some exposure to this type of design and see that it can be beneficial to the environment.

Dep. Comr. Marrella indicated she wanted to make sure the Mayors and the VCOG staff have the DEP contact information and know that they are available to help. She noted they have a permanent ombudsman, Robert Kaliszewski, who is available for any issues. She commented that better coordination is needed on brownfields efforts. Mayor Lauretti said that regarding brownfields, DEP has simplified things and that is why they are seeing meaningful results. Arthur Bogen interjected that he has worked very closely with some DEP staff members who have been extraordinarily responsive on various projects—Diane Duva, Pat DeRosa, Doug Zimmerman and Graham Stevens, to name a few.

Rick Dunne raised the issue of the clean water fund. All of the Valley towns empty into the Long Island Sound. We find we are losing ground and it is not just compliance. With increased development, the improvements we have made are now losing ground. He indicated that to whatever extent funding can be a priority for clean water, it is really a priority in this area. Ms. Marrella responded that for stormwater, the big challenge is to minimize it. It really is a problem, particularly in major cities, and the more we can absorb rain events, the better off we will be from a pollution and flooding perspective. We need to focus on that as it is only going to get worse. Arthur Bogen said we need to get the message to our local zoning boards and building officials so that they can look to modify those requirements in support of better design for stormwater. We have had some meetings on that, but it would be very useful if we could have DEP help us. Mayor Lauretti indicated this topic is very problematic and always falls back in the municipality's lap. There will never be enough money to do all the things we want to do. Common sense needs to be employed. Ms. Marrella then said there will be two workshops planned—one for permitting obligations and one for responsible land use growth. These may be geared more for staff than CEOs.

Rick Dunne told the Dep. Commissioner about a recent article in the CT Post regarding a DEP property in Derby. It is a historic house that is basically decomposing. There is community concern about that. We would like it to be on DEP radar. Mayor Staffieri added that this had been used by DEP for the head ranger. Right now, it wouldn't cost a lot of money to bring it back. Ms. Marrella requested a copy of the article and said she would make certain that the proper department is made aware of it, but she couldn't promise anything. There were no other questions. The Chairman thanked the Deputy Commissioner and her staff members for coming.

### **Correspondence:**

**Letter from SCRCOG re: CMED** – Rick Dunne noted that in the packet there is a letter from Judy Gott of South Central Reg. COG regarding CMED. The Mayors should have received emails regarding a meeting on April 23 at SCRCOG offices. It is that COG's regular meeting and you have been invited to attend to deal with CMED issues. Topics are going to be ambulance waiting times at emergency departments, patient diversions to other hospitals and basic funding mechanism for the CMED system. Rick indicated he is planning to attend. If any of the CEOs would like to attend, they should let him know and he will RSVP for them.

Otherwise, if they give Rick their concerns, he can represent them at the meeting. Mayor Della Volpe indicated that he will attend. Sel. Koskelowski said Seymour pulled out of CMED last year. He said they don't invest in upgrading their equipment.

**Letter from OPM Undersecretary LeVasseur re RPI Grant** – Rick noted that this is a letter from OPM acknowledging that we were awarded the \$112,000 grant under the Regional Performance Incentive Grant Program which we will be using for updating the municipal parcel data and creating the central GIS database. We will be discussing with the towns how and whether we want to host it on a website. We have already been attending meetings about the expenditure of these funds. At the appropriate time, the Chairman will be asked to sign a contract. Each town is getting a different scope of work based upon where they are at this time.

**Recommendation – Regional Roundtable** – Rick Dunne informed the Mayors that this is an item that was tabled at the February meeting and there was no March meeting. This is the Governor's Executive Order 15 which creates Regional Roundtables. We were asked to create and appoint members. At the last meeting, Mayor Lauretti suggested we may want to do this as an MPO as opposed to as the Valley Region only. Rick has discussed this with Mark Nielsen at GBRPA and their conclusion is that it would probably not function well at the MPO level because there are only a very few issues that would be common across that region. The majority of the issues would be particular to the Valley. Rick indicated his proposal, that he gave them a memo on, is to form a group that consists of the people on the list attached to the memo. That group will meet four times a year and have their big meeting in December, basically to pull together a legislative agenda. The Governor wants to know that if someone is requesting a project in a town, it is supported by the region. This is not a transportation-specific approach even though the Governor asked us initially to look at new transit corridors.

Motion: By James Della Volpe; To endorse the staff recommendation for the Regional Roundtable; Second: Anthony Staffieri; Vote: Unanimous

**Review of Responses to FTA Findings** – Rick handed out a packet of responses to FTA Triennial Review findings. He does not want to go through this packet today. He is just letting the members know that the Triennial Review we went through with FTA, which was completed late last year, had several items that we needed to address. They are all now completely addressed and responded to and sent up to FTA. This includes the cost allocation plan that we dealt with the \$3,000 item in the budget. The explanation includes all the responses to the Feds. These are copies for the CEOs for their information. We will be adopting a new Policy and Procedure manual having to do with federal funds. This is one of the compliance measures that was required. He won't ask the members to adopt it until we receive comments back from FTA.

**Approval of VCOG Resolutions** – Rick indicated these are the three standard resolutions that need to be approved each year. The first authorizes execution of agreement with ConnDOT, the second is for our State Grant-in-Aid to assist in land use and planning activities, and the third is to enter into agreement with FTA for capital projects.

Motion: By James Della Volpe; To approve all three VCOG resolutions as presented; Second: Anthony Staffieri; Vote: Unanimous

**Update of Roadway Projects** – Rick noted that he did not have a handout on this as he is still working on the update. He briefly went over the projects. Route 8 Project Phase I went to public hearing last month. That is the entrance ramp 18 on the Ansonia-Derby line, primarily in Ansonia. The comment period closes Friday, Apr. 11, after which we will send the comments to the state. Mayor Della Volpe has asked for further analysis by the state before proceeding with final design. Rick anticipates that there will be further investigation and analysis of some of the alternatives, especially with regard to the taking of property based upon Ansonia's concern. That project is funded and is going forward. We believe that it would be constructed, if there were no obstacles, some time in about 36 months.

Phase II is Route 34, Main St., Derby. Funding is committed to this. It is in the TIP at \$8 million for the complete reconstruction of Rt. 34 from Rt. 8 to the downtown bridge. It is about a \$12-14 million project. The Mayor just sent a request to the DOT Commissioner's office to continue to prioritize this project and to make sure the balance of the funding is in place by the time the project starts. Mayor Lauretti asked what the reconstruction consisted of. Rick responded they hadn't gone to the preliminary design phase yet, but the initial plan is to widen the right-of-way to the south, widen the sidewalks, make sure there are appropriate parking provisions, install left-hand turning lanes signalized against traffic. He said there probably will be a center planted median for pedestrians crossing the roadway. Those are the main components that came out of the study done as part of the Rt. 8 corridor project. We are not interested in building a highway through anybody's downtown. It is about implementing measures that move traffic efficiently but allow people to stop and use the downtown. Mainly, it is a funding issue at this point. There is about \$8 million of a potential \$14 million in place.

Phase III is the larger project dealing with an extension of Pershing Drive to Main St. in Derby, a full four-way interchange and the construction of a NB lane which will close Exit 17. That project is about \$90 million. We will be continuing discussions with Congressional offices about funding that in the next transportation reauthorization bill, but we do not have a time frame for when that would be accomplished.

Routes 67-42 Connector Road in Seymour – Rick said he and David met with 1<sup>st</sup> Sel. Koskelowski this morning. That project is under contract and moving through the initial phase. David Elder is handling that project. Route 67 has a widening project at Rt. 313. We had the initiation and are awaiting contracts from the state so we can hire a consultant. This is intended to smooth the flow of traffic between downtown and the commercial area.

Entrance ramp 11 SB in Shelton off Bridgeport Avenue – We have requested the initiation of the project with ConnDOT. We will be moving through the first preliminary engineering phase as soon as we have a contract from them. The project is currently budgeted in the \$2 million range. This was originally identified in the 1999 study at \$1.1 million exclusive of utility costs and the engineering and inspection. We have \$800,000 budgeted for that project at this point.

The Chairman asked if Rick could check into the delay in installing the traffic light on Rt. 67 at Mountain Road. It was supposed to be done in March. David Elder said the off-site improvements from the pharmacy require the District to go back and look at their design because they put a curb cut closer to the intersection than the original plan for the light installation allowed. Rick continued that STC approved a permit for that corner development that did not conform with what the District had for installation of the signal. When the District found out

about the STC approval, they stopped their project and it is the issue about the distance of the curb cut from the interchange to the light. Sel. Koskelowski asked Rick to give him a call with the phone number of the contact person and he will check into this.

**Discussion and Schedule re STP Program** – David Elder informed the Mayors that this is a project we administer through the MPO and this is a good time to get local projects in to us. All the towns are in the urbanized area except for a portion in Seymour. He has already had some preliminary discussions with Ansonia. He will be sending the application to each town and wanted to check that they will be going to the proper person. This is for any new potential road projects—signalization, sidewalk, road widening, intersection improvements. He has: Robert Kulacz for Shelton, Jim Galligan for Seymour, Joe Maffeo for Ansonia and Mike Joyce for Derby. He will copy the Mayors. Mayor Staffieri asked that he copy Sheila O’Malley, and First Sel. Koskelowski asked that he copy John Criscuolo. Dave continued that the Valley only has about \$1 million every year for this. What we have done in the past, as you might remember, is shared with Bridgeport. They have around \$3.9 million, so together we end up with about \$4.8 million every year. Rick said he and Mark Nielsen will be talking to Mayor Lauretti, the MPO Chairman, before the next meeting about reviving the review committee which hasn’t met in quite a while. This committee should consist of highway directors and city engineers. He continued that they would really like to keep these projects at intersection improvements, sidewalk and streetscape improvements as opposed to the large \$3-5 million road construction projects. We will be reviewing that at the MPO meeting this month. Sel. Koskelowski asked if that money could be used for painting the railroad trestle as the state does not have a painting program. Rick is not certain if maintenance would be covered, but he will check. Rick concluded that we want to make sure we have an on-going STP Program. We have had a backlog of projects, and we haven’t met with that committee in a number of years. We are now ready to start programming projects.

**Discussion re: Status of Plans of Conservation and Development Updates** – David Elder informed the Mayors that last month, the VCOG RPC approved the draft Plan of Conservation and Development. It is being forwarded now to this board for review. The public hearing will be held on April 22 and there will be 65 days for comments. At the June VCOG meeting, the Mayors will be asked to endorse the draft plan. This plan needed to be updated to comply with the General Statutes. Dave noted that some of the census figures are out of date. When new census data becomes available in 2012, the plan will have to be updated again. He also noted that copies of the plan have been forwarded to the clerk’s office in each town.

**Executive Session** – The Chairman asked for a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss the Valley Street Crime Unit.

Motion: By Mark Lauretti; To go into Executive Session, subject to adjournment; Second: Anthony Staffieri; Vote: Unanimous

The VCOG members went into Executive Session at 12:25 p.m., subject to adjournment. Executive Session concluded at 12:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark A. Lauretti,

Secretary