

VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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MEETING NOTICE

Special Meeting Valley Council of Governments

Wednesday, June 4, 2008

11:30 a.m. at VCOG Offices

AGENDA

(Pledge of Allegiance)

1. Public Session
2. Acceptance of Minutes of 4/9/08 Meeting *(Enc.)*
3. Treasurer's Report – April, May 2008 *(To be emailed)*
4. Adoption of VCOG Budget for FY '09 *(Enc.)*
5. Approval of VCOG Holiday Schedule for FY '09 *(Enc.)*
6. Approval of Work Schedule for VCOG Employees
7. Approval of Authorizing Resolution with OPM for Regional Performance Incentive (RPI) Program *(Enc.)*
8. Update on Regional Plan of Conservation & Development – David Elder
9. Presentation re: New HOMEACT Program – David Fink, Partnership for Strong Communities

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

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING
VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
Wednesday, June 4, 2008
at VCOG Offices**

Persons Present:

Mayor James Della Volpe, Ansonia
Mayor Anthony Staffieri, Derby
First Selectman Robert Koskelowski, Seymour
Mayor Mark Lauretti, Shelton
Daniel Waleski, Derby
Rick Dunne, VCOG Staff
David Elder “
Clare Falcha “
Matt Fulda “
Jan Jadach “
Tai Spargo, VCOG Intern

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 4/9/08 VCOG regular meeting were accepted.

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

Treasurer’s Report – Rick Dunne indicated that we had planned the surplus of \$26,000 to replenish the fund balance this year. We are currently through May at \$27,599 of surplus so we are about \$1,000 over but we expect it to balance off. He continued with a couple of points on the current year’s budget. We are at about \$32,000 of unexpended discretionary spending. We have done a couple of things. We have cut back on all of our line items so that not only did we not overspend but we didn’t fully expend our budget, trying to preserve as much as possible. When you break down just discretionary expenditures, we are projecting to not expend 30%. Some of that will bite us back. For instance, we have not bought oil. You will see that our utility account is unexpended by about \$3,000 out of \$12,000, but we have delayed purchasing at least \$2,000 worth of oil. Mayor Lauretti then asked if the \$26,000 and the \$32,000 are separate monies. Rick said no, but one affects the other. The \$26,000 comes into play in that salaried personnel work overtime and projects with the State get billed for those actual hours vs. the salaried hours. Some of that gets retained by us as a reserve against comp time. Everyone but the director has the ability for comp hours. We bill the project out but we have the money. So we are projecting a \$26,000 surplus which will go to fund balance. We will have additional money, about \$10,000, which will go to a reserve for comp time and then we will have about \$32,000 independent of that which we will not expend from our discretionary line items. Mayor Lauretti then asked what the recommended course was for that \$32,000. Rick said the problem with discretionary is that some of them get reimbursed if we expend them so they are a wash. In reality, once we have accounted for the comp time liability, we will probably be left with a surplus of somewhere between \$30,000 and \$35,000 range total for the year end. The Mayor asked if that was inclusive of the \$26,000. Rick said yes, about \$10,000 more. The Mayor asked if the recommendation would be to put it toward the reserve. Rick said yes, everything is going in to replenish the fund balance so that is where we are headed with it. We will have a

preliminary year-end report probably by August, or sooner. We anticipate the auditors getting in here in August to pick up on Clare's reports. Our books close on July 15th, but we are basically done with the state as they shut down the system on June 15th. Rick said that we are in good shape and are basically ending up right where we thought we would be.

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

Adoption of VCOG Budget for FY'09 – Rick Dunne indicated he distributed the proposed budget with comparison to '08 and the actual year-to-date through '08. We are making a couple of changes in the way we budget. We have had a running discussion with the auditors about how we appropriate federal revenue on projects and consultant expenditures. They have encouraged us to book every single grant or project that we have in total, even if it is going to be beyond the 12-month period. That is why every year when we look at it, you'll see there is \$7.4 million dollars with the federal revenue anticipated, but we don't find that realistic and have been opposed to it. So this year, we are implementing what we have actually projected to be expended from those grants. That is the comparison that you will see in the Note #1 at the bottom. It gives you a comparison with the prior year on the same basis with the new budget. Rick went on to say that he, Clare and David sat down and looked at each project to make a solid guess at how much of that particular project or grant was going to be expended in the 12-month period and then that is what we budgeted this year. There is a possibility that projects could accelerate and we could spend more than that but we are going to have more income. We think this is a better picture. Rick continued that as they will see in Note #1, we project a balanced budget of revenue and expenses for federal and state revenue of \$533,000 as opposed to what we did for the approved budget for the current year of \$615,000 with expenses of \$588,000. You will notice that that is where the \$26,000 planned surplus is. The YTD at that point was \$20,937. So that is the new accounting method. That is the major change here. We held the line on utilities as budgeted. We have one position that we are assuming in the budget, which is full-time with benefits, although we do not actually anticipate at this time filling that position; however, if something should happen with our part-time employee, if he decides to leave or move on, we are prepared in this budget to fill that position. It's a wash because if we don't fill it, it's funded primarily by state transportation funding from the federal government, and it would be a wash. If we don't use it, we don't bill it.

Mayor Della Volpe then asked what the overall increase was. Rick said we are cutting projected expenditures by \$60,000. Basically, it's a flat budget. But the apples-to-apples comparison based upon how much project work we anticipate doing this year would be a cut of about \$60,000.

Motion: By James Della Volpe; To adopt the VCOG Budget for FY '09 as presented; Second: Anthony Staffieri; Vote: Unanimous

Approval of VCOG Holiday Schedule for FY '09 – Rick indicated that according to the personnel policies, there are 13 paid holidays for the fiscal year. We have scheduled them as projected. The only deviation is the floating date will be December 26th. Christmas is a Thursday so we moved the floater to Friday.

Motion: By Mark Lauretti; To accept the FY '09 holiday schedule, as presented; Second: James Della Volpe; Vote: Unanimous

Approval of Work Schedule for VCOG Employees – Chairman Koskelowski indicated that he asked that this item be placed on the agenda. In the past, we have discussed a four-day workweek. His feeling is that many towns and government offices are going to four days due to the economy in an effort to conserve energy. He would like to do a trial on this to save on utility costs. Also, employees are not getting much more than a cost-of-living raise here, so they will save a day a week in gas. They will still work a 35-hour workweek. He thinks we should give it at least a six-month trial period. With summer coming, we would save on air-conditioning and in November and December, on heat. Mr. Koskelowski continued that Seymour Town Hall has been on a four-day workweek and the public has adjusted to that. Seymour community center and library are also on a four-day schedule. In the first year, he estimates they saved over \$25,000. This year, it is projected at \$35,000 savings. He noted that if we try this, we should do it Tuesday-Friday since DMV is open on Fridays. Mayor Staffieri asked about Seymour hours. The First Selectman said they are open 8:00 to 5:30 with 45-minutes for lunch so it is an 8 _ hr. workday. It has worked out good for the Town of Seymour. Mayor Staffieri then asked if the staff would be able to get work accomplished in four days. Rick said we will be working the same number of hours. We bill projects by the hour so whether it is four or five days, we will bill the same number of hours. The Mayor then asked if we would be able to keep offices closed on Monday since staff coming in would defeat the purpose. Rick said he looked at utility usage in the past when the office was on a four-day workweek. It was about a 15% energy savings. Heat systems and meters we control would be shut down completely on Saturday, Sunday and Monday. Also, we don't have a lot of public coming in like in a town hall. The Chairman then entertained the following motion.

Motion: On a trial basis for six months, the VCOG will adopt a four-day workweek starting 7/1/08. The office shall be open for 35 hours per week over four days. The office hours shall be 8:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m., Tuesday through Friday. The VCOG Executive Committee will review this policy in January, 2009 prior to the '09-10 budget deliberations and may, at that time, determine that this policy is to be reversed.

Motion: By Anthony Staffieri; To accept the motion to adopt a four-day workweek as presented; Second: Mark Lauretti; Vote: Unanimous.

The Chairman noted that this will affect the holiday schedule. He said that with the Town of Seymour, if a holiday falls on a Friday, employees get the day before off. That is in the union contract. Rick, at this time, noted that with regard to the Christmas holiday week, we have usually offered to the employees to take vacation time for the other days and shut the office down for the week. Rick also mentioned that we are in the midst of re-working the Personnel Policies, developing a draft and getting ready to go to Tom Welch with it prior to putting it before the board.

Approval of Authorizing Resolution with OPM for Regional Performance Incentive (RPI) Program – Rick Dunne said this is the resolution for the project previously approved by the board, coordinating the map and parcel updates for the towns. This is the grant money for \$112,000. David Elder said we had a GIS contractor, Brodie Group, who, from 1999 to 2003, updated all the towns' parcels. They submitted a scope of services to us in 2004 and only

Seymour went ahead with that contract. We are hoping we can enter into agreement with them without going back out for procurement. He thinks we will get the most for our money with them and that they have the most familiarity with our region. They already have all the background information and know all the assessors. If we can use them, the first thing they would like to do is to set up an advisory committee with someone from each town. His initial recommendations would be: Milone & MacBroom and Bob Coates from Derby; Seymour Assessor Joe Kusiak; Ansonia Assessor Marge Dzwonchyk and maybe Joe Maffeo; Shelton Assessor, someone from planning and someone from engineering. We want to make certain that every town gets what they want from the money.

Motion: By Anthony Staffieri; To approve the Authorizing Resolution with OPM for the RPI Program; Second: Mark Lauretti; Vote: Unanimous.

Rick Dunne then took a moment to introduce our summer intern, Tai Spargo, to the board. He noted that she will be working on a specific project for us which is helping the towns come into compliance with the Aquifer Protection Act. Seymour is in compliance; Derby and Shelton still have some work to do. Tai has started digging into the legislation and figuring out where the towns are in terms of levels of compliance.

Update on Regional Plan of Conservation & Development – David Elder informed the board that we have submitted a draft plan to OPM for comment and only received two comments. One was to include the region's bridge infrastructure and we have done that. The second comment was that we should include a section on progress made from the 2003 plan, so we are working on that. We hope to close the public hearing on June 24th and then the RPC will endorse the plan and the COG board will adopt it. Since the COG currently does not have a July or August meeting scheduled, we may need to have a special meeting to adopt this. Rick added that we may do this by email ballot and request the COG's approval that way. The RPC will have already acted at that point.

The last item on the agenda was to have been a presentation on the new HOMECT Program by David Fink of a Partnership for Strong Communities. Rick indicated that Mr. Fink was unable to make it today and has said that he will be in touch with each town individually. Rick then explained that the HOMECT Program is new legislation that provides for overlay housing zones for density bonuses. The difference is that with this one, the towns get paid per unit if they adopt the overlay zoning. It is very similar to Shelton's PDD zone, but it has set limits for set asides of units. For the most part, they are 80% market rate units with 20% set aside. The towns get paid so much per unit when approved and so much per unit when they are built. Chairman Koskelowski indicated that he had use of this program proposed by a developer in Seymour but found that the payments to the town were too small to compensate for the real total cost to the town.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark A. Lauretti,
Secretary