

VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Railroad Station, 12 Main St., Derby, CT 06418
203-735-8688

VCOG MEETING NOTICE

Wednesday, August 9, 2006

11:30 a.m.**

at VCOG Offices

(Amended)

AGENDA

(Pledge of Allegiance)

- 1. Public Session**
- 2. Acceptance of Minutes of June 14, 2006 Regular Meeting (Enc.)**
- 3. Treasurer's Report (to be handed out)**
- 4. Old Business**
- 5. Discussion regarding Educational Cost-Sharing Grant (Enc.) –
Stephen Cassano, CT Coalition for Justice in Education Funding**
- 6. Endorsement of Collaboration with COGCNV and Litchfield Hills CEO
On Naugatuck River Greenway and Housatonic Basin Natural
Resources Restoration Project**
- 7. Endorsement of Greater Bridgeport/Valley MPO Memorandum of
Understanding and Authorization for Chairman to Sign MOU (Enc.)**
- 8. Endorsement of Seymour Senior Affordable Housing Application**
- 9. Discussion of Regional Transportation Priorities – Stephen Cassano**
- 10. Monthly Reports: (Enc.)**
 - (a) Valley Needs & Opportunities Project Report**

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

**MINUTES OF MEETING
VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
Wednesday, August 9, 2006
at VCOG Offices**

Persons Present:

Mayor James Della Volpe, Ansonia
Mayor Anthony Staffieri, Derby (arrived 11:45 a.m.)
1st Sel. Robert Koskelowski, Seymour
Mayor Mark Lauretti, Shelton
Stephen Cassano, CCJEF
Jason Newman, FHWA
Elizabeth Benton, NH Register
Rick Dunne, VCOG Staff
Jan Jadach, “
Clare Falcha, “

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

Rick Dunne introduced Jason Newman from FHWA who asked to sit in on the meeting. Rick then indicated he had handed out an amended agenda due to a last minute item regarding an affordable housing application. The Chairman asked for a motion to adopt the amended agenda.

Motion: By James Della Volpe; To adopt amended agenda; Second: Mark Lauretti; Vote: Unanimous

The **Minutes** of the 6/14/06 VCOG meeting were accepted.

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

Treasurer's Report – Rick Dunne handed out the year-end report with our unadjusted projection going into the audit. The \$35,000 at year-end is attributable to the CTAA grant for long-range transportation planning. There were no comments on the report.

Motion: By James Della Volpe; To accept financial report; Second: Mark Lauretti; Vote: Unanimous

Old Business – Rick Dunne indicated there was an item tabled at the June meeting regarding the STP Urban Process. He handed out a letter to DOT requesting a meeting between a consortium of MPOs and RPOs and the new Commissioner to discuss this issue. We have been asked to sign off on the letter requesting the meeting.

Motion: by Mark Lauretti – To empower the Chairman to sign the letter of request for a meeting and discussion with CDOT; Second: James Della Volpe. Vote: Unanimous.

Discussion regarding Educational Cost-Sharing Grant – Stephen Cassano, Executive Director of CT Coalition for Justice in Education Funding, spoke to the Mayors about the State's

Education Cost Sharing formula which he contends is seriously outdated. His organization believes that a revamped ECS formula must be supported by equitable and sustainable tax structures that will promote the social, economic and educational fabric of all CT towns. This will require shifting the primary burden from towns to the State and better meeting the fiscal challenges of urban districts. Mr. Cassano discussed property tax relief/reform. He spoke about the lawsuit that has been filed by his organization against the State of CT to enforce schoolchildren's rights under the CT Constitution to equal educational opportunity. He handed out a summary of this lawsuit. He also handed out a list of School Funding "Adequacy" Decisions since 1989, and a pamphlet about CCJEF. He noted that, as part of this suit, workgroups are being conducted on adequacy suits, tax restructuring and accountability. He asked the Mayors to contact him if they were interested in membership in CCJEF, noting he would be willing to talk with school superintendents, if necessary.

The group then decided to go to item #9 on the agenda since Mr. Cassano was involved with that discussion.

Discussion of Regional Transportation Priorities – Mr. Cassano, who serves on the Transportation Strategy Board, asked to discuss regional priorities. Rick had a concern regarding the location of the Branch "Super Hub" south of Derby. This won't alleviate traffic. It would be better to increase parking/service at existing branch stations. Rick also mentioned he was not happy with the timeline for the Metro North Branch Line Study. He requested the TSB to intervene regarding this study. Also discussed were ConnDOT staffing issues. The Mayors then thanked Mr. Cassano for attending the meeting and sharing his views with them.

Endorsement of Collaboration with COGCNV and Litchfield Hills CEO on Naugatuck River Greenway and Housatonic Basin Natural Resources Restoration Project – Rick Dunne indicated he received a letter from COGCNV regarding funds that are available through the GE settlement. There is money for restoration projects. We have been approached by COGCNV to make an application together with them and LHCEO along the Naugatuck River Corridor to expand greenway trails. This could help us study ROWs, etc. We could also expand recreational activities in the Housatonic. The focus would be on rights-of-way and creating fishing access. Rick indicated he is asking for an endorsement to work together to prepare an application. The draft application would come back to the COG for approval. The Mayors all agreed that they had no problem with this.

Mayor Lauretti asked Rick for an update on the CTAA grant. Rick noted there is a meeting next week of the partners in that grant. Mayor Lauretti also discussed action to approve funding for Transit Resource Center. He thinks we need to take another action to formalize this. Rick will look into it.

Endorsement of Greater Bridgeport/Valley MPO Memorandum of Understanding and Authorization for Chairman to Sign – Rick Dunne indicated that the MPO approved this MOU at their last meeting. This MOU is a result of a request made following our Certification Review last year to formalize roles and responsibilities. This MOU is being forwarded to all of the partners for their individual endorsement.

Motion: by James Della Volpe – To endorse the Greater Bridgeport/Valley MPO Memorandum of Understanding and to authorize the Chairman to sign the MOU; Second: Mark Lauretti
Vote: Unanimous.

Endorsement of Seymour Senior Affordable Housing Application – 1st Selectman Koskelowski indicated that Joseph Migani is going to apply to the State to develop affordable housing for senior citizens located on Bank Street in downtown Seymour. Mr. Migani is requesting a letter of support on this. Rick added that staff finds this to be consistent with the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development.

Motion: by James Della Volpe – To endorse and support the proposed affordable housing application; Second: Anthony Staffieri. Vote: Unanimous.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark A. Lauretti,
Secretary