

# VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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

## VCOG MEETING NOTICE

Wednesday, September 12, 2007

11:30 a.m. \*

at VCOG Offices

## AGENDA

(Pledge of Allegiance)

1. **Public Session**
2. **Acceptance of Minutes of 6/13/07 Meeting (Enc.)**
3. **Treasurer's Report (Enc.)**
  - (a) **Budget Discussion/Amendment (Enc.)**
4. **Communications**
  - (a) **Managing the Floodplain through the NFIP (Enc.)**
5. **Discussion Re: DEMHS Regional Funding Formula (Enc.)**
6. **Discussion Re: Regional Performance Incentive Grants (Enc.)**
7. **Follow-up Discussion Regarding VEMS Issue (Enc.)**
8. **VCOG Authorization to Apply for Next Round of EPA Grants for the Regional Brownfields Partnership**
9. **Follow-up Discussion Regarding Comcast/DPUC Issue**

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

**MINUTES OF MEETING  
VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
Wednesday, September 12, 2007  
at VCOG Offices**

**Persons Present:**

Mayor James Della Volpe, Ansonia  
Mayor Anthony Staffieri, Derby  
First Selectman Robert Koskelowski, Seymour  
John Bondos, Metcalf & Eddy  
Jeanne Falbo, NH Register  
Jodie Mozdzer, Waterbury Rep-Am  
Melvin Mason, CT Post  
Rick Dunne, VCOG Staff  
David Elder     “  
Matt Fulda     “  
Jan Jadach     “

Chairman Koskelowski called the meeting to order at 11:50 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.

The **Minutes** of the 6/13/07 VCOG regular meeting were accepted.

Motion: By James Della Volpe; Second: Anthony Staffieri; Vote: Unanimous

**Treasurer's Report** – Rick Dunne noted that Clare Falcha is out due to a sick child and he will attempt to answer any questions. He noted that we are running \$45,000 ahead at this time. This is almost entirely due to the fact that we collect most of our dues and fees in the first few months of the fiscal year. There were no questions on the Treasurer's Report.

Motion: By Anthony Staffieri – To accept the Treasurer's Report as presented; Second: James Della Volpe; Vote: Unanimous

**Budget Discussion/Amendment** – Rick reminded the members that back in June, the Board opted to approve our alternate budget since the state had not passed theirs at that time. That budget assumed that additional state funding was not coming through. We did it in such a way that we were still creating the full-time planner position. Subsequent to that, the state budget passed and additional funding was approved. The proposed amended budget is in the agenda packet. There are three notes that follow that describe the changes to the proposed amended budget. On the page that follows is a job description for Planner I. Rick indicated that he is proposing to accept the new revenue but not fill the full-time planner's position that we budgeted for. He is proposing we extend our paid intern for this summer into a part-time planner's position. It will average 19 hrs. a week with no benefits. We can then revisit the issue of creating a full-time position in the second or third year. The proposed budget projects a surplus of \$26,669.97. This is due to the inclusion of the total amount contracted with DOT for planning. If we don't bill the total amount, which we are not projecting to, then that will remain in a reserve fund at ConnDOT each year. If all goes according to plan as presented here, in the third year out, we will have created a reserve at ConnDOT of about \$75,000. By that time, we will

have instituted a full-time planner's job and we will have plenty of funds to do that without increasing dues to the towns.

Motion: By James Della Volpe – To approve the amended VCOG budget for FY 07-08 that includes the part-time planner's position; Second: Anthony Staffieri; Vote: Unanimous

Rick then updated the members regarding the audit. He indicated that the audit work was just completed and we expect a report in October. Our projection is that we ran a surplus of about \$42,000 last year. That was a result of our effort to restore our reserve fund that had been depleted by the separation of the prior executive director. The year this staff started, we inherited a deficit of \$20,130. In 2005-06, we added \$32,000 surplus to the fund balance. We project a \$42,000 surplus this year. We should have a cash reserve of \$117,000, plus the reserve ConnDOT funds that we can tap in the future. It is recommended that we have a cash reserve around one-half of the annual budget. Rick noted that this is just an update. He will distribute the audit once it is completed.

**Communications** – Rick noted that the notice in the agenda packet regarding the training on “Managing the Floodplain through the NFIP” was also sent to town officials, planners, engineers and public works. It is an educational item that is going on Sept. 24-26 in New Hampshire.

Mr. Dunne then handed out another communication that came in yesterday. He distributed it by email to all the Chief Elected Officials and the Chiefs of Police. This is from OPM asking for our opinion. At one time, there were law enforcement block grants which the towns received from the state. The municipalities with larger issues get funded directly from the Dept. of Justice. The proposal is for the funds to pass through the regions. Historically, the amounts of money that passed through to the towns were relatively small. The total for Derby, Seymour and Shelton was \$10,200. Ansonia deals directly with the Department of Justice. They are proposing that the regions apply jointly on behalf of the three towns and encouraging that we restrict the proposals to equipment or use it for a regional training program. This may be something the CEOs may want to consider. Rick indicated that they don't have to respond today. He suggested the Mayors talk with their police chiefs and get their thoughts on this. OPM would like to know the opinion of the regions regarding this matter. This office will contact each CEO in about two weeks to get the consensus about pursuing this jointly or not. If this program is adopted, we will need to file an application by the end of the year. There were no questions or comments.

**Discussion Re: DEMHS Regional Funding Formula** – David Elder addressed the COG members and explained the new DEMHS proposal from the state. As background, he said that the last year Homeland Security funds went directly to the towns was in 2004. In 2005, they went to the towns and to the regions. In 2006, there was an option to have RPOs administer the grant. We administer for Ansonia and Derby. In 2007, it was proposed by DEMHS that Region 2 create its own spending plan for the whole 30-town region. This regional funding structure is mandatory. A committee made up of the 30 CEOs in Region 2 will decide on how to spend the \$800,000 for Region 2. David indicated that he is on the REPT Steering Committee which will be responsible for creating a spending plan. By-laws will be voted on at the September 27<sup>th</sup> meeting by the steering committee after which the CEOs will be members of the REPT. One remaining issue is that an RPO is expected to be the lead. Judy Gott of SCRCOG is not sure she wants to be the lead RPO since there is some liability such as something going wrong in a

training exercise. Their COG meets on Sept. 26<sup>th</sup>. If they decide they do not want to be the lead, then DEMHS will be the fiduciary for the \$800,000. The committee still needs to create a spending plan which will be voted on. David noted that it is important to have good representation on the steering committee.

The CEOs or their proxies will be asked to meet quarterly to vote on items such as this spending plan. CRERPA has two emergency management directors on the steering committee. VCOG only has one, but we have a greater population, so we should have greater representation on the steering committee. When the steering committee votes on Sept. 27<sup>th</sup>, David said he wants their support to have an additional member on the steering committee.

Chairman Koskelowski noted that historically, smaller towns always lose out. This is his feeling based on past experience. Mayors Della Volpe and Staffieri agreed. They all have emergency plans in place, but they will probably get lumped in and pushed aside. Rick Dunne noted that the regions have already been designated by the state. The question is “can we endorse the structure that is going to govern this?” In answer to a question, Rick said the CEOs will all be appointed to vote on spending. Representation on the CEO level is proposed as one vote per town. David Elder said he would like to amend the by-laws to the effect that VCOG has two representatives on the steering committee. Mr. Koskelowski said he would like to see that our vote is weighted the same as New Haven. Mayor Della Volpe said he has no problem increasing the representation on the committee by one. The other two CEOs agreed.

**Discussion Re: Regional Performance Incentive Grants** – Rick Dunne reminded the members that he sent a memo to them regarding this on August 8<sup>th</sup>. A public act was passed this year that creates incentives for the towns to get together to provide services that are not currently being provided on a regional basis. Applications need to be in by December 1, 2007. The proposal must include services that increase the municipalities’ purchasing power or provide a cost savings initiative resulting in a decrease in a participating town’s expenses and eventually lower property taxes. Rick’s suggestion is that we should start formulating an application through the region. His idea is to have the towns appoint a working group to convene at VCOG to try and come up with some ideas among the towns and then devise an application for OPM. It can be any service that is not currently being provided on a regional basis. Anything that represents efficiency and cost-savings would be considered. He then asked the Mayors to consider appointing someone from their town who is involved in purchasing or general administration. He indicated that he would send a memo following this meeting asking them to appoint someone to a subcommittee and proceed from there.

Motion: By Anthony Staffieri; To endorse the formation of a subcommittee and to request a report by November 1st; Second: James Della Volpe; Vote: Unanimous

**Follow-up Discussion Regarding VEMS Issue** – Chairman Koskelowski began by thanking Rick for trying to get the information on VEMS that was promised to us by Mr. Schwab back in April. He said that this additional unit was supposed to be stationed in Seymour, but it was stationed in Oxford. The last response times had shown that Seymour’s have gone up and have not improved at all. He then suggested that we allow them to come back in July to give us an update on response times and if they have not improved, that the vehicle be located in Seymour. At this point, it seems that we cannot obtain any information. Rick Dunne then said for the record that we met with VEMS in April, and they were invited to come back in the summer.

VCOG did not meet in July or August. They were asked to provide information for today's meeting on response times. They have not provided that information to us and have ignored VCOG's requests to VEMS and to the coordinator at Griffin Hospital for response time data. This body represents the elected officials representing the taxpayers of the region. For them to ignore our requests is an affront to the process and they deserve strong rebuke. First Sel. Koskelowski then asked the others if they would allow him to contact his ambulance director. If it is okay with this board, he will send a letter to Mr. Schwab stating that effective October 1, 2007, the VEMS unit will be stationed in Seymour. Mayor Della Volpe noted that this was originally set up for the vehicle to be in Seymour. All we did was request response times and if they do not have the courtesy to provide them, then we should go ahead. Mayor Staffieri agreed.

Motion: By James Della Volpe – To request that the VEMS unit be stationed in Seymour as of October 1, 2007; Second: Anthony Staffieri; Vote: Unanimous

**VCOG Authorization to Apply for Next Round of EPA Grants for the Regional Brownfields Partnership** – Rick Dunne informed the members that in the last round of EPA funding, we were not chosen, primarily because we have some funding left in our petroleum account. We have now exhausted these funds. We are trying to strengthen our outreach efforts on this. The Regional Brownfields Partnership is holding a workshop on Sept. 20<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. There will be several sessions on sustainable development, community concerns, legislation and economic development. At this time, we are requesting permission from the VCOG to file applications for two grants—Hazardous Waste for \$200,000 and Petroleum for \$200,000. These are matched at 10% by the towns where the grants are given. They can be used at public or private sites provided the CEO requests it and there is general positive impact to the community.

Motion: By Anthony Staffieri – To endorse the filing of applications to the EPA; Second: James Della Volpe; Vote: Unanimous

**Follow-Up Discussion Regarding Comcast/DPUC Issue** – Rick Dunne informed the COG members that the Attorney General has requested that DPUC take another look at this issue. Following the meeting that Comcast representatives attended and offered to spend \$15,000 a year to help us run public access programming, we found out that DPUC mandates each franchise to spend a certain amount of money on public interest programming. It is done per subscriber. The old Telemedia was funded at the lowest per capita rate according to DPUC decision. Telemedia was set at \$4.00 per subscriber because they were spending \$300,000-400,000 a year for their local access programming, which Comcast has eliminated. Rick noted that we could draft a request to DPUC as to whether Comcast is complying with the prior docket requirements and request that they increase the per capita requirement for public interest programming or we can let the Attorney General handle it, along with the Advisory Committee. Mayor Staffieri suggested tabling this and giving it some thought. However, he is in favor of pursuing this matter further. Mayor Della Volpe agreed. Rick said he will compile the information he has and send the COG a memo on this.

Motion: By Anthony Staffieri – To table the Comcast issue until the next meeting; Second: James Della Volpe; Vote: Unanimous

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark A. Lauretti,  
Secretary