



# MINUTES OF THE NHCOCG MEETING

3/13/2025  
Hybrid

### Member/Representative Attendance:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Barkhamsted, Nick Lukiwsky	√	REMOTE - Harwinton, Michael Criss	√	REMOTE - Roxbury, Patrick Roy
√	Burlington, Doug Thompson	√	Kent, Marty Lindenmayer	√	REMOTE - Salisbury, Curtis Rand
√	REMOTE - Canaan, David Barger	√	Litchfield, Denise Raap	√	REMOTE - Sharon, Casey Flanagan
√	Colebrook, Bradley Bremer	√	Morris, Tom Weik	√	REMOTE - Torrington, Elinor Carbone
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cornwall, Gordon Ridgway	√	REMOTE - New Hartford, Dan Jerram	√	REMOTE - Warren, Greg LaCava
√	Goshen, Todd Carusillo	√	Norfolk, Matt Riiska	<input type="checkbox"/>	Washington, Jim Brinton
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	REMOTE - Hartland, Magi Winslow	√	REMOTE - North Canaan, Brian Ohler	√	Winchester, Todd Arcelaschi

**Others in Attendance:**

NHCOCG Staff: Rob Phillips, Rista Malanca, Sarah Better. REMOTE - Kathryn Faraci and Leo Ghio.  
 Others: Paul Harrington - Town Manager, Winsted, Jennine Lupo - Congresswoman Hayes' Director, Jen Pacacha –CT DOT, Tim Waldron –Eversource, Katherine Keifer –Salisbury BOS, Alec Linden – Lakeville Journal, Julia Jagger –Greenwoods Counseling, Jane Hall, Cornwall

**Call to Order:** Chairman Jerram called the meeting to order at 10:00AM

**Public Comment:** Jennine Lupo gave an update on Congresswoman Hayes' office, her unprecedented 4<sup>th</sup> term re-election and her appointment on the Committees for Agriculture as well as the Committee on Education and Workforce. Also mentioned the Congressional Art Challenge, district internships available and her non-support for the recent Continuing Resolution at the federal level due to lack of funding in some key areas. They are available for any assistance you may request including passports, grant funding and letters of support.

**Report of Executive Director:** Mr. Phillips referenced his monthly report for meetings and other activities of the Executive Director since the last board meeting. In addition, he provided the following updates:

- The FY24 Audit is delayed due to illness in the Auditor's office. Expect a draft report before the end of March.
- NHCOCG has started the hiring process for the Grant Financial Manager. The selected candidate was highly qualified and possesses a CPA, which was above and beyond what we were expecting in the recruitment process. I am very excited for this addition to our team.
- PWEC quarterly meeting was held the day before this meeting. Many items were discussed including roadway condition software, OSHA inspections/audits, new rates TBD, bidding on products such as road salt and capital improvement planning for asset management.
- The 2025 Annual Legislative Breakfast was rescheduled to Wednesday, March 19<sup>th</sup> at the NHCOCG office.

Doug Thompson commented that it is a good thing to have a CPA/Accounting professional to

manage grants. Otherwise, things can get awry quickly.

Mike Criss commented that there needs to be training and maintenance requirements and other management for PWEC town users as our assets are starting to be abused and neglected lately. He would like to see training and qualifications before a user is allowed access to the asset. He would also like to see a Capital Plan on asset lifetime and replacement and offered Harwinton's plan to assist.

Dan Jerram asked about the assets that may be the least used and the readiest to be auctioned off. Mr. Phillips mentioned Asphalt Hot Boxes and Hay Blowers. Jerram also mentioned the catch basin cleaners because there is less sand use in our region these days.

Dan also made comments on how the CAMA/GIS grant should be allocated per town, specifically that town who have not traditionally invested in their data should not be rewarded vs those who have. It should be similar to the COG member dues as they are based upon population. Mr. Phillips stated he would take that into consideration and review the grant requirements along with a quick history and proposed timeline on where it stands with the RFQ process (all COGs statewide in one group) and the pending workplan that it needs to be submitted to the state GIS office before April.

Legislative Committee Update: Mike Criss would like more towns to participate in the legislative process. Only about one or two have to date. This is a very long and frustrating session this year. Mr. Phillips stated that there were approximately 4,000 bills introduced this session. Mr. Criss stated that committees are just pushing bills through and not reading them and relying on the legislators that proposed or supported them. He also stated that there are a lot of bills that are going to cost towns hundreds of thousands of dollars in revenue loss and unfunded mandates. Details of several bills were then outlined such as restrictions on child day camps and require towns to pay for some staff, affordable housing bills and redirection on discretionary funding away from small towns, ban on municipal employees serving on committees, payments for multiple generations, pension offsets and PTO mandates without collective bargaining, eliminating PILOT funding, police and fire pensions to be provided by towns via MERS, PTSD requirement expansion, prohibition on zoning from requiring off street parking, allowing religious organizations to house a separate class of citizens instead of providing mental health services, disabled definitions and payments through surviving family members and it's impact on local property tax revenue, MV tax depreciation changes and other Fire Fighter health bills.

Several members discussed some of these bills being tracked and thanked Mike for his efforts in the legislative process.

Doug Thompson asked for a top 10 list of most important bills to our region. Mike Criss said he could provide that.

Mr. Phillips was asked to provide a summary of towns who have exercised the recent option to tax MVs at 90% instead of 85% Fair Market Value in the minutes based upon a poll of members. The results are below:

Municipalities implementing the alternative depreciation schedule – 12 CEOs responding / 18 of 21 NHCOC CEOs attending the meeting:

- Harwinton
- Torrington
- Sharon

- Hartland
- Salisbury –likely end of month
- Cornwall
- New Hartford
- Burlington
- Winsted
- Kent
- Norfolk
- Litchfield –planning to do it

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) RFP Results: Mr. Phillips provided an overview of the RFP response (3 bidders) and the cost difference between them all as estimated by using the last HHW collection event in fall of 2024. He also provided a recommendation to select the lowest bidder and that he had a good referral from the Executive Director of the Housatonic Resources Recovery Authority (HRRRA).

Denise Rapp requested a change to how the individual towns are invoiced; specifically changing to a per unit basis and not per vehicle. Mr. Phillips would check on how others break these events up. Also, there was a comment from Tom Weik regarding education on how towns collect certain HHW all year round and Mr. Phillips stated that if the Governor’s proposed budget passes with the dedicated MSW coordinator position, that would be a great opportunity to focus on education in the region and enhance the process.

MOTION (Rand) and 2<sup>nd</sup> (Thompson) and approved unanimously to authorize the Executive Director to enter into a 2-year agreement with MXI for HHW collection services for participating towns through 2025 and 2026.

Economic Development Update: Rista provided various updates including CT Main St and the PROMISE program Phase 2 education series and visioning process.

Mike Criss asked about the Façade Improvement grants that may be available and where that may stand and if STEAP would support. Rista responded with a general need to find grant funding sources and that STEAP no longer allows this type of work as an eligible activity under that grant.

Doug Thompson asked about the details and did fully support this expenditure. A question was raised about where it comes from. Rista responded that it was part of an approximately \$11,000 remaining balance for this work as approved in the agency budget.

MOTION (Carusillo) and 2<sup>nd</sup> (Riiska) and approved the Phase 2 NW CT PROMISE Program. (Thompson) opposed.

Transportation Planning: Kathryn Faraci updated the group on TRIP status –10 projects (~\$10M total) came from our region out of the total of 18 statewide. Awards are expected in June. She also mentioned the Community Connectivity Grant application period is now open. Deadline May 21<sup>st</sup>. 100% state funded. Approximately \$100-\$800M project sizes. Higher amounts would be paid by the municipality over \$800M. The Transit Analysis Study is underway and public input sessions are coming soon.

Members questioned the proposed STIP Amendment and lack of detail in it; it was ultimately tabled for further information and discussion.

MOTION (Criss) and 2<sup>nd</sup> (Carusillo) and approved unanimously to table the STIP amendment for more information and presentation from DOT with regard to what are the changes, funding amounts and how it relates to NHCOG region.

DEMHS Update: John Field was not present, and no report was submitted.

NHMP Update: NHMP grant application was submitted. FEMA has pulled back the NOGA temporarily to search for “trigger words”. DEMHS does not expect any changes to funding levels or delays in awarding.

Regional Opioid Response Fund (RORF) and Local Success Story: Julia Jagger, of Greenwoods Counseling, provided an update on the RORF success and shared a story of a local veteran who particularly benefitted from the municipally pooled resources and NHCOG management of the RORF in response to the National Opioid Settlement.

Administrative Items:

- a) FY25-26 PWEC Rental Rates - Tabled
- b) FY25-26 Recommended NHCOG Member Dues - Tabled
- c) MOTION (Weik) and 2<sup>nd</sup> (Raap) to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes for the February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025, approved unanimously with one correction: Page 2, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph should be “Barkhamsted” not “Torrington”.
- d) MOTION (Thompson) and 2<sup>nd</sup> (Raap) to approve the Financial Statements for January, approved unanimously.
- e) Correspondence – Letters of Support for Torrington (3 Municipal Brownfields Grants) and Burlington (STEAP Grant) MOTION (Criss) and 2<sup>nd</sup> (Rand) to approve the letters as written.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 11:51AM. MOTION (Criss) and 2<sup>nd</sup> (LaCava) and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

NHCOG staff