



MINUTES OF THE NHCOCG MEETING

1/9/2025
Remote

Member/Representative Attendance:

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

Others in Attendance:

NHCOG Staff: Sarah Better, Kathryn Faraci, Leo Ghio, Rista Malanca, Rob Phillips.

Guests: Betsy Gara - COST, Andrew Noble/Adam Salina/David Kozak - Sitestream, Brian Popovich - USA Waste Recycling, Daniel Davis/Tim Waldron - Eversource, Ellen Graham - Sen Blumenthal's Office, Alec Linden - Lakeville Journal, Jen Pacacha - CT DOT, Murray Cento - CT General Assembly, "Kurt M - unknown"

Call to Order: Chairman Jerram called the meeting to order at 10:03AM

Public Comment: Chairman Jerram led the board in a moment of silence for the recent passing of former US President Jimmy Carter as directed by Governor Lamont.

Report of Executive Director: Director Phillips noted that the NHCOG's executive director's activity log showed lower than normal activity due to the holiday season.

The annual legislative breakfast was postponed due to a lack of available legislators, leading to discussions about rescheduling and possibly changing the format to include a primer on legislative engagement.

Director Phillips also provided updates on the annual financial audit, indicating that a new auditor would begin work soon. The organization has transitioned to a .gov email domain and launched a new website aimed at improving navigation. Paul Harrington inquired about the transition process, which NHCOG described as manageable despite ongoing challenges with linked accounts. NHCOG also expressed its commitment to assist member towns in transitioning to .gov domains for enhanced cybersecurity and is planning one-on-one visitations with towns to improve communication and understanding of local interests.

The next Quarterly Compass newsletter from NHCOG will be dropping very soon.

Council of Small Towns (COST) Legislative Priorities: Betsy Gara shared insights from the first day of the legislative session, highlighting a positive atmosphere and strong

relationships among party leaders. She discussed fiscal guardrails aimed at addressing Connecticut's financial crises and the need for modifications to ensure adequate municipal aid. Energy costs and education funding, particularly for special education, were identified as significant concerns. Betsy also warned about the potential challenges small towns may face with the fair share housing allocation methodology and encouraged active member engagement to influence legislative outcomes.

Doug from Burlington raised concerns about communication from COST, expressing frustration over feeling excluded from important discussions, particularly regarding solar siting and education cost sharing cuts. Marty Lindenmayer emphasized the need for economic development to support affordable housing efforts in northwest Connecticut, calling for state attention to attract small businesses. Betsy Gara and Gordon Ridgway discussed early voting feedback, with Ridgway suggesting a shorter duration for municipal elections.

Magi Winslow highlighted the unsustainable costs of special education and early voting for small communities, while Dan Jerram raised concerns about the police accountability bill's financial implications for towns. The meeting concluded with discussions on upcoming events and traffic enforcement initiatives, including the introduction of automated traffic enforcement measures.

Chairman Jerram asked what the status was with the CT Fair Share working group. They expect a report to be finalized in early 2025 and all COG Executive Directors have been involved in specific working group meetings at the regional level. NHCOG interests have been communicated accordingly.

New NHCOG Website Walk Around: Leo Ghio led the group through a walk around of the new NHCOG website. It is still under construction but largely completed. A few suggestions were shared by members of the board and will be incorporated as we move along with the website completion.

SiteStream for Local Traffic Speed Enforcement: Members of SiteStream described in detail what their process is for automated traffic speed enforcement should any towns be interested in contracting with them for this work. Members asked general questions accordingly.

Economic Development: Rista provided an update on the Marketing and Advertising Services RFQ that concluded recently. There were a very large amount of submissions and Miranda was selected by the board.

Members were also asked if they had any current concerns about Broadband access since the issuance of the 2024 CT Broadband Report and private communications investment (fiber, etc) in the region. The board needs time to review.

MOTION by Lindenmayer/Roy to enter into an agreement with Miranda Creative for Marketing and Advertising Services for Economic Development in the region as

supported in the NHCOG operating budget for FY24-25. Approved unanimously.

Transportation Planning: Kathryn Faraci updated members on the status of the Transit Analysis Study and the previous consultant selection of AECOM. There were also several STIP amendments requiring board action.

MOTION by Raap/Lindenmayer to approve the following (Unanimously approved):

- 1. Project 0065-0114 NBI bridge painting/Metalizing**
- 2. Project 0170-3640 Service plaza mainline sign and sign support**
- 3. Project 0174-0471 Replace traffic control signals at various locations**
- 4. Project 0499-2025WO For Existing Project Section 5310 - Increase in \$28,000 to enhance mobility of seniors and individuals with disabilities.**

DEMHS Update: John Field provided a written report.

Administrative Items:

- a) **MOTION by Lindenmayer/Raap to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes for the December 12, 2024 and the Special Meeting Minutes of December 17, 2024,** unanimously approved, Hartland abstained from the Regular Meeting minutes and Kent, Burlington, Winsted and Hartland abstained from the Special Meeting minutes.
- b) **MOTION by Weik/Raap to approve the Monthly Financial Statements for November,** approved unanimously.
- c) **Correspondence - NHCOG's Leo Ghio featured in New England Rural Health Association's Autumn 2024 Rural Roots publication.** Duly noted.

MOTION by Ridgeway/Raap to adjourn meeting at 12:15PM. Approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

NHCOG staff