



# NAUGATUCK VALLEY COUNCIL of GOVERNMENTS

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## MINUTES

### Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments

Hybrid Meeting (with limited in-person attendance)

10 a.m., Friday, September 10, 2021

**NVCOG Representatives:** Sheila O'Malley, Alternate, Ansonia; Gerry Smith, First Selectman, Beacon Falls; Len Assard, First Selectman, Bethlehem; Ellen Zoppo-Sassu, Mayor, Bristol; Andrew Baklik, Alternate, Derby; James McGrath, Proxy, Naugatuck; Kristyn Rosa, Proxy, Oxford; Bob Chatfield, Mayor, Prospect; Ed Mone, First Selectman, Thomaston; Neil O'Leary, Mayor, Waterbury; Tom Dunn, Mayor, Wolcott (all attended virtually).

**Guests/Other:** Attorney Ron Shems, Attorney Nick Low, Justin Zafran; John Field, DEMHS Region 5; Sara Radacsi, CTDOT; Samantha LaBonne, Eversource; Lou Mangini, Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro's Office (all attended virtually).

**Staff:** Rick Dunne, Aaron Budris, Joanna Rogalski, Josh Lecar, Richard Donovan (all virtual), Mark Nielsen, Lauren Rizzo, John DiCarlo, Karen Svetz, Michael Szpryngel, Richard Crowther, Jr., Christine O'Neill, Desira Blanchard, Kevin Ellis (all in-person).

#### 1. Commencement of Meeting (Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call, Public Comment)

Chairman Neil O'Leary called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. Those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance and the roll was called. For public comment, Samantha LaBonne of Eversource spoke about the utility's efforts to prevent disconnects. Ms. LaBonne noted that this was her last day with Eversource as she has accepted another position.

A moment of silence was observed in remembrance of 9/11.

#### *Order of Business*

On a motion by Bob Chatfield, seconded by Ed Mone, it was unanimously

VOTED: To move Item 9.f., Kinneytown Dam Legal Strategy, to the top of the agenda.

#### **Kinneytown Dam Legal Strategy (Executive Session, if necessary)**

Aaron Budris provided a history of the Kinneytown Dam issues. He then provided updates on activity since the last NVCOG regular meeting. Submissions continue to be made to the FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) docket. Key takeaways are: 2021 was a failed fish passage season, no action has been taken by HydroLand (the dam owners) to remedy, and other issues with the facility are coming to light.

At 10:19 a.m., on a motion by Bob Chatfield, seconded by Ed Mone, it was unanimously

VOTED: To enter into Executive Session, inviting the appropriate personnel.

At 10:32 a.m., on a motion by Tom Dunn, seconded by Ed Mone, it was unanimously

VOTED: To return to regular session.

On a motion by Tom Dunn, seconded by Ed Mone, it was unanimously

VOTED: To authorize legal counsel to finalize preparation and take legal action consistent with the attorney-client discussion held in executive session. Rick Dunne is hereby designated as the primary point of contact between attorney and the NVCOG.

## 2. NVCOG Administrative Items

- a. *Approval of the Minutes of the June 11, 2021 NVCOG & CNVMPO Meeting* – On a motion by Ed Mone, seconded by Tom Dunn, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the June 11, 2021 NVCOG and CNVMPO meeting.

- b. *Draft Year-End Financial Report – 6/30/21* – Michael Szpryngel said a \$60,000 deficit had previously been projected. It has since increased to \$134,000. The main reasons are timing and the impact of COVID-19. An EDA grant was not available until the second half of the year. Money was expended on IT items, particularly security, software and hardware, and the hiring of a CIO consultant. Kinneytown Dam accounted for \$42,000 in expenses, which will be paid out of the general fund. The agency was not fully staffed until the last quarter, which resulted in some under-performance of grants. Cost recovery through the indirect rate was insufficient to cover indirect expenses. Neil O’Leary added that the agency is in pretty good shape despite the deficit. Rick Dunne said COVID-19 recovery money that the COGs were expecting from the state last year did not materialize. He added that a current year’s budget had been adopted, not the one just reviewed. That budget anticipates a roughly \$80,000 deficit due to COVID-19. He feels the deficit will shrink to \$60,000 or \$70,000. Bob Chatfield asked about a fund balance. Mr. Szpryngel said the projected fund balance for the end of 2021 is \$618,000 after the projected deficit. On a motion by Bob Chatfield, seconded by Ed Mone, it was unanimously

VOTED: To accept the draft year-end financial report.

- c. *Approval of Agency Financial Reports and Summaries for the Period Ending 7/31/21* – Mr. Szpryngel said NVCOG is 8.3% through fiscal year 2022 with a positive net position of \$210,000. On a motion by Ed Mone, seconded by Tom Dunn, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the NVCOG financial reports and summaries as presented.

- d. *Director’s Report*

- NVision 2022 Update – Rick Dunne said this regional planning conference is scheduled for March 30, 2022. Fundraising will occur and a “save-the-date” announcement was sent.
- Executive Board Updates – As was discussed in the Executive Committee meeting, said Mr. Dunne, the agency is waiting for the President’s order concerning COVID-19 to see how it might affect NVCOG.

Additionally, Mr. Dunne reviewed staffing changes and introduced Desira Blanchard and Kevin Ellis as new staff.

3. **Authorization for Executive Director Rick Dunne to Execute an MOU with the Western CT Council of Governments and the Northwest Hills Council of Governments regarding Functions and Responsibilities for DEMHS Region 5 under FFY 2021 Homeland Security REPT Grant Program**

On a motion by Bob Chatfield, seconded by Ed Mone, it was unanimously

VOTED: To authorize Executive Director Rick Dunne to execute the MOU described above.

4. **Authorization for Executive Director Rick Dunne to Execute Agreements for Previously Approved Program Applications**

Mr. Dunne said this authorization is granted on an annual basis and allows him to enter into agreements and contracts for grants NVCOG has already approved. On a motion by Ed Mone, seconded by Tom Dunn, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve NVCOG Resolution 2022-02.

5. **ARPA Funding and Discussion**

- NVCOG Scope and Tasks – Mr. Dunne said if a town is interested in having NVCOG carry out compliance, reviews, or public outreach (not select projects) for ARPA funding, negotiations will be handled on an individual basis. The cost of this service would be covered under the ARPA funds. He noted this is different from the original proposal sent to towns, which had met with limited response and thus became financially unfeasible.

ARPA EDA funding is also available with submissions through the Economic Development Districts. NVCOG will be applying under the Build Back Better Regional Challenge program of the EDA ARPA funding. The proposal is for a virtual institute to bring together a partnership including technical high schools, magnet schools, and community colleges to build upon investments in training and job opportunities in precision and advanced manufacturing and other high technology sectors. The project's phase one application is due by October 19.

6. **Municipal Shared Services Update**

John DiCarlo spoke about municipal solid waste and recycling. The closing of the MIRA facility is scheduled for July 2022. The state capacity for trash to energy will be decreasing. Several NVCOG CEOs requested a working group be formed to address anticipated major cost increases in municipal solid waste and recycling. Without plans in place, towns will be seeing mill rate increases as a result. Efforts must be taken to minimize the impact on towns and residents. It is not just towns that contract with MIRA that are facing skyrocketing costs, towns that contract elsewhere understand that it is just a matter of time until their disposal options are affected as well. The first meeting of the MSW and Recycling Working Group was held in August. CEOs and Public Works staff discussed the situation and the options to explore. The group came to consensus that a two-pronged approach is needed. One is that organic waste diversion opportunities should be explored for the region. DEEP is offering grant funds for pilot programs in organic diversion and has also agreed to cover the cost of a consultant for the working group. Kristen Brown is a consultant from Waste Zero and has appeared before the board. She is conducting Zoom meetings to gather data individually with each town. The information and data shared will help provide options to explore for as many towns as possible and be supported by as many towns as possible for a regional solution. Advocacy at the state level and collaboration at

the regional level is what is also needed for what is a statewide problem. The group will urge that CCM's municipal solid waste working group be the conduit for statewide advocacy to increase assistance to the municipalities for this impending trash crisis. Outreach to CCM has been drafted, will be brought before the MSW and Recycling Working Group, and then brought before the board for potential endorsement.

## **7. Emergency Management Update**

John Field said DEMHS is monitoring the current status of COVID-19, including the variants. The Governor's Executive Orders expire at the end of the month. The reimbursement process continues to be worked through with progress through public assistance. Damage assessments continue due to the last two storms, Henri and Ida. The Governor declared a state of emergency for both events. Those towns interested in applying for hazard mitigation funds may do so by December 31.

### **a. COVID-19 Response Update**

- Long Term Recovery Update – Joanna Rogalski said the Region 5 Regional Emergency Steering Committee met on September 8. Health and Human Services and the Workforce subgroups are reporting housing difficulties. Childcare is a high priority, as is public transportation. The Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board is offering training regarding manufacturing.
- ESF 14 FEMA Region 1 – Call for Projects – Ms. Rogalski said the FEMA Region 1 Interagency Recovery Coordination group is working with the state to solicit projects. The projects do not have to be FEMA related, but must touch upon economy, health and human services, and housing. The deadline is October 7. NVCOG can assist with submissions. The state will prioritize submissions before sending them to FEMA Region 1.

### **b. Regional Emergency Planning Team Update** – Ms. Rogalski noted the FFY 2021 Homeland Security REPT Grant that had been authorized for signature earlier in the meeting. The public works emergency support function is creating an inventory of equipment available for a major disaster.

### **c. Community Emergency Response Team Update** – The next statewide meeting is on September 23, Ms. Rogalski said. CERT teams can assist with COVID activities.

### **d. NVCOG Hazard Mitigation Plan Update** – Aaron Budris said plans are required to be updated every five years in order to be eligible for certain federal natural disaster mitigation funding programs. NVCOG has received FEMA funding to develop a multi-jurisdictional regional plan that will serve to update the plans of all 19 towns in the NVCOG region. During the last year, NVCOG has worked with a consultant and municipal officials in all towns to prepare an update that meets FEMA standards. This was developed into a regional plan with municipal annexes. The draft report is available on the NVCOG website and was submitted to DEMHS and FEMA in August. Approval, with some revisions, is expected in the fall. Once the report is finalized, NVCOG will work with the municipalities to get plans endorsed locally.

## 8. NVCOG Planning/Transportation

### a. LOTCIP

- i. Formal Endorsement of E-Vote of 7/22/21 for NVCOG Resolution 2022-01 Approving an Increase in Funding for LOTCIP Project L006-001 Beacon Falls, Beacon Valley Road, from the Previously Approved Funding Allocation of \$840,000 to \$1,215,000 – Mark Nielsen said the increase in the cost of this project had been endorsed by E-Vote over the summer but was now being brought before the board for a formal endorsement. On a motion by Bob Chatfield, seconded by Tom Dunn, it was unanimously

VOTED: To formally endorse NVCOG Resolution 2022-01.

- ii. LOTCIP Policy Guidelines: Should Streetscape/Complete Streets Elements be Participating Items? – Mr. Nielsen said towns are asking to include streetscape elements in their LOTCIP projects, which NVCOG generally supports, but CTDOT does not have clear guidance on whether these are participating items or not. Because streetscape items such as concrete pavers and decorative lighting are not necessarily considered transportation improvements, CTDOT does not routinely approve streetscape elements as participating, but generally accepts these items if located in a well-defined downtown area, but not if located outside the downtown. NVCOG has worked with both the municipalities and CTDOT to get these items approved and funded under LOTCIP. As more and more projects are including streetscape elements, staff is requesting guidance and direction on whether these items should be funded under LOTCIP or should be considered non-participating items that should be paid for by the municipality. If LOTCIP funds are allocated to these items, should a percentage cap be implemented? Rick Dunne would like to advance a letter to the board for endorsement to be sent to CTDOT. Mr. Nielsen said the TTAC group met recently and felt it was important to keep streetscape elements as part of a project. On a motion by Bob Chatfield, seconded by Tom Dunn, it was unanimously

VOTED: To include “LOTCIP Policy Guidelines: Should Streetscapes/Complete Streets Elements be Participating Items?” as part of the October 2021 agenda.

- iii. Approval of New LOTCIP Project, State Street, Ansonia – Mr. Nielsen said this project was reviewed by TTAC and they recommend endorsement by the NVCOG board. The State Street Complete Streets Improvement Project in the City of Ansonia will begin on State Street at the intersection with Main Street and East Main Street and extend east to the intersection with North State Street. The project will include the installation of ADA compliant components and streetscape elements. On a motion by Bob Chatfield, seconded by Tom Dunn, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve NVCOG Resolution 2022-03 endorsing the new LOTCIP project, State Street, Ansonia.

- iv. **Financial Plan** – Mr. Nielsen provided an overview of the LOTCIP financial plan. Thirteen projects have been completed and an additional seven projects are under construction. The total value of LOTCIP projects in all phases is \$104.5 million.
- b. **Introduction to the Active Transportation Plan** – Richard Donovan said this started out as NVCOG’s first regional bicycle plan and has now been expanded to include the regional pedestrian plan and other micro-mobility technologies and trends. The focus of the plan will be on providing connections between the existing multi-use trails in the region and existing assets such as downtown and commercial areas. Safety enhancements and economic development opportunities will be included. A project advisory committee will be created. Further information about this will be sent to the towns.

**9. Environmental Planning**

- a. **Sustainable CT – Update** – Ms. Rogalski said this voluntary certification program for towns to get credit for their sustainable practices is now in its fourth year. Ansonia is now registered for the Sustainable CT program. Cheshire, Waterbury and Woodbury are Bronze awardees and Bristol is a Silver awardee. Christine O’Neill of NVCOG will be supporting Waterbury as they work towards Silver certification.
- b. **Regional Sustainability Plan – Update** – Christine O’Neill said the RSP is funded through the Regional Service Grant. Work on the plan began in 2019. Created by staff, with support from the Sustainable CT Fellows each summer, the first draft is nearly complete. The plan will help inform municipal discussion and implementation efforts, provide support for grant applications and local budgeting, and create a consensus sustainability plan for the NVCOG region. Ms. O’Neill will be contacting the towns about their sustainable projects.
- c. **DEEP Recreational Trails Grant** – Aaron Budris informed the Board that DEEP has opened solicitation for projects to be funded under the program and said NVCOG staff can assist with municipal applications. A regional application is also being considered. The deadline is November 1.
- d. **DEEP Open Space Grants** – Mr. Budris said there are two DEEP open space grant opportunities: the open space and watershed acquisition program and the urban green and community garden grant program. September 30 is the deadline for applications for both grants. NVCOG can provide assistance.
- e. **Fall NVCOG Composter/Rain Barrel Sale** – Mr. Budris said the spring composter/rain barrel sale was successful and a fall event is being planned.

**10. Other**

Len Assard said a vaccine clinic will be held at the Bethlehem Town Hall on Saturday and Sunday. The Bethlehem town fair is also being held this weekend.

**11. Adjournment**

At 11:36 a.m., on a motion by Tom Dunn, seconded by Ed Mone, it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by  
Lauren Rizzo  
Administrative Services Coordinator  
for  
Ed Mone, Secretary



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**RESOLUTION  
OF THE  
NAUGATUCK VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
#2022-02**

**IT IS RESOLVED BY** the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments that its Executive Director Rick Dunne be empowered to sign any and all documents required in the acceptance and execution of state or federal assistance grants or programs already applied for and approved by the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments and offered by the Grantor.

Dated at Waterbury, Connecticut on this 10<sup>th</sup> day of September 2021.

Ed Mone, Secretary  
Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments

ANSONIA • BEACON FALLS • BETHLEHEM • BRISTOL • CHESHIRE • DERBY • MIDDLEBURY • NAUGATUCK • OXFORD • PLYMOUTH  
PROSPECT • SEYMOUR • SHELTON • SOUTHBRURY • THOMASTON • WATERBURY • WATERTOWN • WOLCOTT • WOODBURY





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**RESOLUTION 2022-03**

**ADD STATE STREET COMPLETE STREETS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT, ANSONIA  
TO THE NVCOG LOTCIP PROGRAM**

I certify that the following is a true copy of the vote of the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments at its virtual meeting on September 10, 2021, at which a quorum was present.

**WHEREAS**, the NVCOG is responsible for selecting and distributing funds to member municipalities under the Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program ("Program").

**WHEREAS**, the city of Ansonia has submitted a pre-application for LOTCIP funds to implement various complete streets improvements along State Street from Main Street to North State Street.

**WHEREAS**, the preliminary cost estimate is about \$1,600,000.

**WHEREAS**, LOTCIP funds are available in the NVCOG LOTCIP Financial Plan to support the project.

**WHEREAS**, the NVCOG Transportation Technical Advisory Committee has reviewed the project and voted to recommend project approval by the NVCOG Board.

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the NVCOG Board approves adding the State Street Complete Streets Improvement Project in Ansonia to the NVCOG LOTCIP Program and allocating \$1,600,000 in LOTCIP Program funds attributable to the Naugatuck Valley planning region to the Project.

Dated at Waterbury, Connecticut, on September 10, 2021

Agency: Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments

Signed

Ed Mone, Secretary

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