

Capitol Region Council of Governments

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES CRCOG Office September 7, 2011 Noon

Attendance

Mary Glassman
Richard Hines
Jon Colman
Dick Barlow
Dave Kilbon
Scott Kaupin
John Adams
Jim Boucher
Scott Shanley
Steve Wawruck
Steve Cassano

Town/Organization

Simsbury
Avon
Bloomfield
Canton
East Granby
Enfield
Granby
Hartford
Manchester
Windsor Locks
CRCOG Foundation

Others

Peter Souza

Windsor

Staff

Cheryl Assis
Bill Austin
Winsome Barnaby
Maureen Barton
Jennifer Carrier
Mary Ellen Kowalewski
Jennifer March-Wackers
Lyle Wray
Pauline Yoder

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Roll Call

Chair Glassman called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Colman made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 11, 2011 Executive Committee meeting. Mr. Kilbon seconded. All voted in favor of the motion.

Chairman Remarks and Executive Director Report

Mr. Wray reported that CRCOG has had a busy summer, with four RFPs going out and the Sustainable Communities grant. He reported on his vacation to Istanbul, where he checked out their Bus Rapid Transit system, which is used by 800,000 people a day and has turned a 2 hour crossing into a 20 minute ride. Mr. Wray also introduced Maureen Barton, who will take over administrative duties for the Executive Committee and the Policy Board.

Mr. Wray then spoke about the aftermath of Tropical Storm Irene. The Governor is convening a panel for an after action review, and Mr. Wray wondered if CRCOG might want to do a similar review, if members think it is worthwhile. Chip Beckett e-mailed some suggestions for questions to look at in the event of this kind of review, such as what communities should do if wireless service is down, or can people be deputized to handle clearing trees. Ms. Assis reported on CRCOG's Public Safety Department's response to the storm. Hartford Distributors loaned them trailers, and CRCOG delivered water and meals ready to eat (MREs) to the capitol region towns that were going to be out of power for several days.

Senator Cassano mentioned that there was an after action review after the explosion and fire at the NAMCO store in Manchester and that some other questions came up, including consideration of people with disabilities – municipalities might not know who they are. There is no central place to go to get oxygen for people who need it. Regionally, we do a good job responding, but a local response is necessary for things like Tropical Storm Irene.

Chairman Glassman asked if members planned to attend the upcoming legislative hearing. She then asked about using Twitter or Facebook in these kind of weather events, and if anyone uses social media to communicate in an emergency. Chief Austin said that some ESFs use it, and he can show her how they use it. He stated that FEMA uses Twitter to share information as well. Chairman Glassman suggested a training, perhaps an hour before an upcoming Policy Board meeting.

Ms. Assis then mentioned the Citizen Preparedness website which Public Safety is developing, which is a UASI funded program. This will connect with all CRCOG town websites. Mr. Wray stated he would issue a survey to ask about interest in a CRCOG facilitated After Action review. There was discussion about individual municipality experiences in dealing with Tropical Storm Irene. Towns are now in FEMA reimbursement stage.

Mr. Wray informed the committee of an upcoming regional housing forum being held at The Lyceum.

Resolution Authorizing Execution of Memorandum of Understanding in Support of Transportation on Demand in the Capitol Region

As part of the application requirements for the Transportation on Demand grant for \$5 million, Ms. Kowalewski requires the approval of the Executive Committee. A fully executed application is due by September 14. The money is not guaranteed. Mr. Colman expressed concerns that the signing municipalities aren't being required to make a commitment to the project. It is possible that a TOD plan will come out of this that does not get implemented. Some of the signing municipalities have already approved their projects. All the TOD projects infer density increases. Mr. Kilbon asked how the money would get distributed if CRCOG wins a smaller share. Ms. Kowalewski stated that the door is open for adjustments based on the award they receive. Ms. Kowalewski responded to Mr. Colman's concern by stating that municipalities that show a strong commitment will receive a higher rating.

Mr. Kilbon made a motion to approve the resolution. Mr. Colman seconded. All voted in favor of the motion.

Discussion of Service Sharing

Mr. Wray explained that CRCOG has been looking at the cost of the services CRCOG provides, and asked members to comment on which of three possible paths CRCOG should pursue when it comes to service sharing: A.) to maintain the current level of service sharing and dues; B.) to aggressively ramp up service sharing projects, by establishing an enterprise fund that includes upfront costs, which would call for a dues increase; or C.) to slowly ramp up service sharing, which would call for a smaller dues increase. Another round of OPM money for service sharing is in the pipeline, but CRCOG already does not have enough funding to cover the overhead costs for the projects we are already pursuing. Ms. March-Wackers distributed a survey that she will send out to see which option is most favorable to members. There will be a memo distributed with the survey which will outline the various pathways and funding options. CRCOG can no longer access the fund balance to subsidize the overhead of projects. In addition to the OPM grant money, there is also an equipment sharing grant coming down the pike. Without the necessary staff to do the work, CRCOG may have to forgo grant opportunities. Mr. Hines stated he was in favor of aggressively ramping up, but only on projects that are deemed to be high priority. Mr. Adams stated that now was the time to ask, before budgets are being established. Mr. Shanley stated that it's hard to know the full value of the services CRCOG provides, and that members don't necessarily see that value until they see what is happening outside our region. He also said it was important to know what municipalities are willing to finance, because CRCOG does not want to ramp up past what people are willing to pay for. Mr. Shanley suggested that CRCOG should send individual letters to each town to show what services they are getting from CRCOG. It may be difficult to get smaller towns on board. A suggestion was made to send the survey to Town Administrators and CEOs, since they may have a stronger sense of what CRCOG does. Mr. Shanley suggested that the communication appeal to a regional effort; he mentioned that the Manchester EOC was open during the storm, providing regional services. Mr. Beckett submitted his feedback

via e-mail prior to the meeting, and stated that he was in favor of aggressively ramping up, and feels that a dues increase is necessary. Mr. Shanley volunteered to write a letter making an appeal to the regional services CRCOG offers. There was discussion about which additional information should be included with the survey. Mr. Wray stated he felt he had enough direction from the board to proceed.

By consensus, members approved of distributing the survey and additional communications.

Adjournment

Prior to adjournment, Mr. Wray pointed out two letters from CRCOG's Transportation department regarding fare increases and possible route reductions to the Commissioner. By consensus, the committee approved the letters. Mr. Wray also mentioned that there is talk of a committed broadband pipe for police and fire departments, which he thinks should simply be directed for general government usage. Mr. Wray also informed the members that there will be a Shared Services conference on November 14.

Mr. Adams made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Colman seconded. All voted in favor to adjourn at 1:20 p.m.