

Capitol Region Council of Governments

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES CRCOG Office May 11, 2011 Noon

Attendance

Mary Glassman
Richard Hines
Jon Colman
Dick Barlow
Dave Kilbon
Scott Kaupin
Chip Beckett
John Adams
Jim Boucher
David Panagore
Pedro Segarra
Lou Spadaccini
Steve Wawruck

Town/Organization

Simsbury
Avon
Bloomfield
Canton
East Granby
Enfield
Glastonbury
Granby
Hartford
Hartford
Hartford
Manchester
Windsor Locks

Others

Kathie Lutz
Michael Bloom

Rome Smith & Lutz
Rome Smith & Lutz

Staff

Cheryl Assis
Winsome Barnaby
Mary Ellen Kowalewski
Jen March-Wackers
Deborah Rihm
Lyle Wray

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Roll Call

Vice Chair Adams called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Chairman Remarks and Executive Director Report

The Annual Meeting has been set for June 9 at the Boathouse at noon for lunch. Mr. Wray said that he is trying to get a speaker. Some options included: DEP Commissioner Esty, the UCONN President, Tom Carroll from MetroHartford Alliance, and there has been no response from the Governor's office. Mr. Wray asked Mayor Segarra to give the welcoming remarks at the beginning of the Annual Meeting, and he agreed.

Chairman Glassman took over chairing the meeting at this point.

Mr. Wray passed out copies of the sustainability map which will be used at the May 24 First Knowledge Corridor Consortium Meeting at the Windsor Town Hall. There is a June 2-3 workshop on leveraging commuter rail to NYC.

A positive cartoon was put into the newspaper in response to the bad publicity the busway has been getting. Mr. Wray rode the 10.6 mile bus rapid transit system in southwest Bangkok. It used the same fare card as the subway and elevated trains and had an exclusive roadway most of its distance. A monitor on board showed exactly where you are in the system at all times.

One of the problems with our busway project is that there are two project leaders instead of one as the spokesperson. There has not been much public information. There is no marketing plan. The Hartford, West Hartford, and Newington concerns need to be addressed. There is still not a permanent Commissioner in place. The new Commissioner needs to be someone who is an effective vehicle connected with DC, can be a friend with the Governor, and has to be able to sharpen up the agency performance. We are extremely dependable upon the federal funds we receive from DOT.

Mr. Hines suggested that there be five or six short points ("elevator talk") that people can use in conversation when someone is discussing the busway in a negative tone. The busway will move Hartford and New Britain residents into West Hartford and Newington where there are jobs available. Connecticut is a car dependent state and therefore people don't understand the concept because we don't have it here yet. It is a cultural change. DOT needs to make this a priority and have a public information campaign. The message needs to get out to the newer population too, i.e., young artists, entertainers, etc. 45% of the Hartford population is under age 25.

A small group of people need to hold a meeting (DOT, Senate & House Transportation Chairs, Lyle, etc.) and go to the Governor's office with a high level communication strategy. Then the Governor will need to go to the DOT Commissioner and put pressure on them.

Adoption of Minutes

Mr. Colman made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 16, 2011 special meeting as submitted. Mr. Kilbon seconded. All voted in favor of the motion.

Consideration for Approval of CRCOG Budget for FY 2011-2012 for Recommendation to the Policy Board

Mr. Wray reviewed the proposed budget with the Board. The Board members followed along with their handout. This budget calls for a 2% increase for all employees (the first increase in three years). There is an increase in grants due to the HUD revenues. The town dues are remaining flat again for this year, but the Municipal Services Committee (MSC) is working on putting together a fee schedule for next year. All towns have received a Survey Monkey questionnaire to prioritize their service sharing needs. MSC will work with the Finance/Personnel subcommittee to come up with a detailed analysis for what we are subsidizing with dues and how to decide what should be "pay as you go" programs. Core services versus fee services need to be balanced across the Board by town. Hartford said they received a better natural gas price than through the Purchasing Council. Hartford also has a great IT infrastructure. Possibly a town with an area of expertise could share that expertise with all the towns for everyone's benefit. Any CRCOG area town that is not part of CRCOG will have to belong to CRCOG in order to utilize the purchasing council. The Finance/Personnel subcommittee will report back to the Executive Committee with their strategy for going forward.

Other budget information:

- Local assessments currently comprise 17% of CRCOG's operating budget;
- There is less transportation study money in FY 13 and beyond;
- Some Homeland Security funds are unretain in FY 13 and beyond;
- The HUD sustainability grant ends during FY 14;
- FHWA is approximately 45% of the operating budget;
- There was a 30% health insurance increase in FY 11 with an assumed 25% increase in FY 12.

The Committee discussed homelessness sharing. Timing is difficult now to add a new line item in the town budgets. The towns had varying opinions regarding this topic. Journey Home may be the best way to explain to the towns. Journey Home is a resource for a town without a shelter to get a homeless person to a shelter. Canton does not send people to the Hartford shelters. Manchester has their own shelters and they are not looking for a contribution from anyone, but they are not willing to make a contribution to another town either. This will be a continuing discussion with a decision made by November since many towns begin working on their budgets by then.

Mr. Colman made a motion to recommend this budget to the Policy Board for approval on May 25, 2011. Mr. Kilbon seconded. All voted in favor of the motion.

Resolution Authorizing Execution of Agreement with the CT DOT for the New Britain/Hartford Busway Transit Oriented Development Implementation Project

Mr. Colman made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kilbon, to approve the resolution to execute the agreement with CT DOT for the New Britain/Hartford busway TOD implementation project. All voted in favor of the motion.

State and Federal Legislative Update

The Governor has until May 30 to give a progress report on the Union concessions. The legislature then has a week to enact on the Governor's plan. It will probably take tax increases and cuts to implement. In Plan B, TAR, ECS, PILOT and Pequot grants are reduced or eliminated. The state budget has been adopted so you have to use the Governor's budget numbers when putting together your town budget. If the Governor makes changes to the budget, you may have to re-do your budget.

Other Business

Mr. Wray reminded the Committee that a quorum is required at the May 25th Policy Board meeting in order to pass the CRCOG budget. If you are unavailable to attend, please try to get a substitute in your place.

Adjournment

Mr. Colman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:28 p.m. Mr. Kilbon seconded. All voted in favor of the motion.