

Draft

MINUTES OF
MUNICIPAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING
OCTOBER 20, 2009

ATTENDANCE

Members and Guests

Steven Wawruck, Acting Chair
Mike Wilkinson
Robert Skinner
Joyce Stille
Jeff Bridges
Barbara Gilbert
John Salomone
Bill Taylor
Geoffrey McAlmond
Mary Ellen Kowalewski
Maureen Barton
Jennifer March-Wackers
Lyle Wray

Town

Windsor Locks
Tolland
Canton
Bolton
Wethersfield
Rocky Hill
Newington
East Hartford
Enfield
CRCOG
CRCOG
CRCOG
CRCOG

Acting Chair Steven Wawruck called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

1. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Joyce Stille made and Barbara Gilbert seconded a motion to adopt the minutes of the September 29, 2009 meetings. The motion was adopted by unanimous voice vote.

2. DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Orlando Rodriguez, Manager of the Connecticut State Data Center, presented information on demographic trends and dependency ratios. Mr. Rodriguez began by telling the Committee that Connecticut has the third oldest population in the United States, behind only Florida and Arizona. Based on long-term trends, Mr. Rodriguez predicts continued low growth. Connecticut is also very close to negative population growth. The only thing keeping Connecticut from actually entering negative population growth are immigrants. Going forward to 2030, Mr. Rodriguez predicts that the white population will decrease, the Hispanic and Asian populations will nearly double, and the African-American population will stay roughly the same. Aside from that, there will be more ethnic mixing, and Mr. Rodriguez stated that by 2030, there will be no "Hispanics" left, that having heritage from a Spanish speaking country will be akin to having Irish or Italian heritage. The primary focus of Mr. Rodriguez' presentation, however, was about the aging population and how that affects dependency ratios. Based on long-term trends, a quarter of Connecticut's population will be over age 64. Municipalities and the State have to look at whether there will be enough workers to support the non-working population in the future. In addition, the jobs that are being created in Connecticut right now are low wage jobs. Mr. Rodriguez defined the

dependency ratio as the number of non-workers per 100 workers. In 2000, there were 69 non-workers for every 100 workers, but the projection for 2030 is there will be 82 non-workers for every 100 workers. Municipalities will need to think about the costs to educate a student for 13 years versus the cost to provide services for retirees for 13 years or longer. Mr. Rodriguez stressed that it is in towns' best interest to get everyone to fill out the short form Census questionnaire, which will be coming out in March of 2010. Barbara Gilbert also recommended people contact the Connecticut State Data Center if there is a movement in their town to build new schools, since the data in many towns reveals a decrease in the number of school-age children.

The discussion after the presentation was about whether there are any positive trends for economic growth and development. Lyle Wray encouraged Committee members to look at the Connecticut Economic Resource Center's (CERC) benchmarks, which do not have positive news. There are currently no short term initiatives for economic growth and development, but there are some longer term programs in place. Mr. Wray mentioned a push to prevent high school drop-outs, and Project Achieve, which helps students get through community college, but stated that we still need jobs. Based on CERC's benchmarking, replacement workers will be needed, but we need to help industry recover here in Connecticut. Mr. Wray expressed that he believes we should think like Switzerland, which has a lot of industry, and not race to the bottom to provide a low-tax, low service environment. Mr. Wray also indicated that he thinks one of the major problems in doing business in Connecticut is the speed of regulation. No one can give a straight answer to the question of how long it will take to permit a new building, and the cost of utilities, particularly electricity, can mean the difference between making money and losing money. Connecticut does have a lot of assets, but is playing catch-up in a lot of areas.

3. PROJECT STATUS REPORTS

Regional Performance Incentive Grants

Jen March-Wackers reported that little has changed from the last update on the Service Sharing projects. All projects are progressing as expected and staff are pulling together the quarterly report for OPM due next Friday.

Solid Waste Management

Ms. March-Wackers main focus right now is on the proposed Solid Waste Authority. Interest forms are due by November 2, 2009, but she stated it was not a hard deadline. Thus far, there has been a lot of interest, and she or Lyle Wray will be happy to answer questions or present information at a Town Council meeting. As the proposed Solid Waste Authority moves forward, parties who have expressed interest will have the opportunity to stay informed and continue to participate or leave the group. Savings will be significant, to the tune of million and a half dollars on overhead alone.

Purchasing

The Capitol Region Purchasing Council will hold its Annual Meeting on Friday, October 23, 2009 at 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the West Hartford Town Hall, Room 400, 50 South Main Street, West Hartford. The theme of the meeting is "Getting Your Money's Worth". Ms. Gilbert reported that Rocky Hill has used the EZ-IQC program

and got quotes that were higher than expected, but Joyce Stille reported that she had the opposite experience, and on one project, the costs from the EZ-IQC quote were almost half of the other quotes received. Ms. March-Wackers thanked them for their feedback. The Natural Gas Consortium will solicit new members in the spring, and are currently meeting to decide whether they will continue to go out to bid or try a purchasing tool like reverse auction, which the Electricity Consortium did in July with great success.

4. MUNICIPAL INFORMATION SHARING AND OTHER BUSINESS

Lyle Wray reminded the Committee that CRCOG has G-TRACS for performance measurements, and it is available for free to CRCOG members. John Salomone hosted Manchester Community College at the October monthly CTCMA meeting regarding low cost training, and got positive feedback from participants. Funding for low-cost training may be available via federal grant money through Capitol Workforce Partners. Even without grant funding, the training is very affordable. MCC may even provide some seats for free for CRCOG members.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Barbara Gilbert made a motion to adjourn the meeting, John Salomone seconded, and Acting Chair Steven Wawruck adjourned the meeting at 1:20 p.m.