

Draft

**MINUTES OF**  
**MUNICIPAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**MARCH 16, 2010**

**ATTENDANCE**

**Members and Guests**

Peter Souza, Chair  
Jeff Bridges  
Peter Graczykowski  
Robert Skinner  
Blythe Robinson  
Lisa Pellegrini  
Maureen Barton  
Mary Ellen Kowalewski  
Jennifer March-Wackers  
Jocelyn Mathiasen  
Lyle Wray

**Town**

Windsor  
Wethersfield  
Vernon  
Canton  
Avon  
Somers  
CRCOG  
CRCOG  
CRCOG  
CRCOG  
CRCOG

Chair Peter Souza called the meeting to order at 12:11 p.m.

**1. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

Mr. Souza accepted the minutes without a motion.

**2. THE EVOLUTION OF CDHPs/HASs IN THE CT PUBLIC SECTOR**

Ron Theriault and Robert Buss from Ovations Benefit Group gave a presentation on Consumer Driven Health Plans/Health Savings Accounts for public sector employers, and how they've changed since their introduction. Ovations surveyed a group of municipalities for information on healthcare costs, premium increases, and plan designs. Annual premiums have increased an average of 7.6%, and the increase in public sector premiums has outpaced private sector increases. Mr. Theriault explained that this is primarily because private companies have a lot of flexibility and can change their plans at any time. There has also been a slow trend in the public sector to increase the amount employees contribute to their premiums. There have been incremental changes to the cost of co-pays for prescriptions and hospital visits, and many municipalities have delayed changes in health care in exchange for salary freezes. Mr. Theriault stated that since health care costs are increasing at a higher rate than salaries, it is worth looking at implementing changes to health care rather than freezing salaries.

Regarding HSAs, there are three components: deductible levels, cost share, and employer funding. In the public sector, most HSAs are at the lowest entry point of \$1,500 for single and \$3,000 for families. In their survey, Ovations found that 29% of public sector employers funded the whole deductible, and 58% funded 50% or more of the deductible.

The rate increases for HSAs are expected to be much higher than traditional plans. Mr. Buss explained that at Ovations, employees can choose to participate in various programs that will lower their costs, like having a physical, or going to educational events. Members asked if Mr. Theriault and Mr. Buss were familiar with the discussion of regional pooling for health coverage that's been going on, and where would the breaking point be. Mr. Theriault and Mr. Buss responded that any regional pool would need thousands of participants to work, but smaller groups could benefit. The problem that has occurred with attempts at regional pooling in other areas are that each participating municipality might have to make multiple ordinance changes. In addition, the State has union issues that will have an impact on whether regional pooling will be possible.

### **3. PROJECT STATUS REPORTS**

#### **Regional Performance Incentive Grants**

Jennifer March-Wackers reported that the Regional EOC had their formal opening on February 15, 2010 and the Farmington Valley Trail Maintenance group has purchased all their equipment, so that grant will be closing by June 30, 2010.

#### **Solid Waste Management**

Ms. March-Wackers reported that she has been busy complying with multiple FOI requests for significant amounts of documentation from CRRA. CRCOG has distributed a final version of the model ordinance for local passage. There is a June 1, 2010 deadline to pass the ordinance. Once two municipalities pass the ordinance, the authority is legally formed and work begins on the by-laws.

#### **Purchasing**

Natural gas will move ahead shortly with open enrollment. The Natural Gas Purchasing Consortium has also decided to go ahead with a reverse auction.

### **4. MUNICIPAL INFORMATION SHARING AND OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Souza and the rest of the committee offered thanks to Blythe Robinson, since she will be leaving the Town of Avon. Mary Ellen Kowalewski asked if the committee would be interested in hearing about CRCOG's Sustainable Communities Initiative as a future topic. Ms. Kowalewski stated that she and Emily Moos from the Community Development department attended the Climate Summit on Sunday and that she could ask Lynn Stoddard to come in and talk about resources for municipalities. Ms. March-Wackers suggested that this be combined with information from Wethersfield about their innovative electric rate program that provides revenue to the town.

### **5. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Peter Souza adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.