

Draft

MINUTES OF
MUNICIPAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING
DECEMBER 21, 2010

ATTENDANCE

Members and Guests

Peter Souza, Chair
Steve Bartha
Robert Skinner
Bill Taylor
Bonnie Therrien
Julian Freund
Jeff Bridges
Emily Moon
Steve Wawruck
Bob Dean
Maureen Barton
Mary Ellen Kowalewski
Jennifer March-Wackers
Lyle Wray

Town

Windsor
Avon
Canton
East Hartford
Hebron
Manchester
Wethersfield
Windsor
Windsor Locks
FRCOG
CRCOG
CRCOG
CRCOG
CRCOG

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

1. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Steve Wawruck made and Bonnie Therrien seconded a motion to adopt the minutes from the November 16, 2010 meeting. The minutes were adopted by majority voice vote, with one abstention (Steve Bartha).

2. FRCOG REGIONAL ACCOUNTING PROGRAM

Bob Dean, the Director of Regional Services for the Franklin County Council of Governments, discussed the FRCOG Regional Accounting Program. The program is a fee-for-service program which provides all municipal accounting services for the participants. Franklin County is the most rural county in Massachusetts, and 23 of the 26 towns in their county have populations under 5,000; 18 of them have populations under 2,000. FRCOG currently serves 11 towns, with 5 staff members, 2 full-time and 3 part-time. They comply with the Uniform MA Accounting System, using Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. Town's participate through a contract agreement with FRCOG, which is the host agency that administers the program. They provide financial management, including an annual audit, staff payroll, invoice processing and program assessment billing, procurement services, legal counsel, personnel policies and workplace practices, including hiring and benefits administration. FRCOG contracted with Data National to provide shared Fundware software to participants, their license agreement allows Towns with populations under 2,000 to use the FRCOG software license. The software is stored on the server at

FRCOG and can be accessed remotely. There is one set of policies, procedures and chart of accounts across all towns. The data is fully secure, backed up daily, and available 24/7. The participants share all program costs, through a formula that is based on anticipated hourly needs per week per Town, averaged over the fiscal year. Staff track actual time so adjustments can be made, if necessary. The costs to Towns are the annual assessment, a one-time data conversion fee to move to the shared software, and they will only have limited face time with their staff accountant, although the staff are available by phone and e-mail. The benefits to Towns are a professional, qualified trained staff accountant, back-up available, access to software on a shared license at a reduced cost, reduced human resources costs, and the knowledge that their accounting is being completed in adherence to Massachusetts law and UMAS/GAAP. They are growing the program slowly, and their priority is to serve FRCOG towns. Their recommendations for anyone considering this kind of shared service is to find the efficiencies, take advantage of position vacancies, and to keep the support ongoing. Some other services FRCOG also provides are cooperative inspections in both building and health. Some services that have been suggested are assessing and animal control.

Most of the CRCOG towns are large enough to have their own accounting staff, but something like this might be valuable to bring to COST. Mr. Wray suggested looking at something like cooperative ERP software, which does a lot more than accounting. One problem is that there is no State Chart of Accounts in Connecticut. Human Resources is an area that might work better for CRCOG. Ms. March-Wackers informed the committee that ADP will be on the Municipal Services agenda in March or April 2011, they are doing true human resources on contract for South Windsor, and not just payroll. Mr. Wray asked members if CRCOG had two available Human Resources representatives to lend to CRCOG communities if they would use those services. Mr. Souza suggested that we need to know what is out there before we proceed. Ms. March-Wackers stated she could do a survey to determine where the gaps are for these kinds of services. Ms. Therrien stated she would bring this presentation to COST.

3. 2011 MEETING SCHEDULE

A motion to adopt the schedule was made by Bonnie Therrien, and seconded by Steven Wawruck. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote, and the schedule of Municipal Services Committee meetings for 2011 has been adopted.

4. PROJECT STATUS REPORTS

Purchasing

The Capitol Region Purchasing council has opened bids for Traffic Guidelines and Gasoline. To lock-in fixed pricing for gasoline, the deadline is January 5th, 2011. To lock-in differential pricing, the deadline is February 14, 2011.

Service Sharing

Ms. March-Wackers reported the RFQ committee met just prior to this meeting, and they are looking to release the RFQ on 12/29/10, to be due in early February.

Ms. March-Wackers included a draft of a fee schedule, which is not yet complete, so

members can see the fees that programs cost them as well as the expenditures CRCOG is making on those programs. Mr. Wray stated he would like to include this schedule in the budget as an appendix. Mr. Souza asked when the committee could discuss this, and Mr. Wray stated that March would be a good time to do it. Mr. Souza again said he likes the idea of using this year to assess where everything is.

5. MUNICIPAL INFORMATION SHARING AND OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. March-Wackers distributed a flyer from Capital Workforce Partners regarding incumbent worker training grants, which would provide training for municipal staff members to perform energy audits and building maintenance. Members stated that this was not a program they would use right now.

Ms. Kowalewski went to an RPO director's meeting, and the discussion was about restoring recreational liability protection – there is a current legislative push to get municipalities back under that umbrella. Members were supportive and suggested it be passed on to the CRCOG Policy Board for action.

6. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Mr. Souza adjourned the meeting at 1:20 p.m.