

Draft

**MINUTES OF  
MUNICIPAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING**

**FEBRUARY 19, 2008**

**ATTENDANCE**

**Members and Guests**

Bonnie Therrien, Chair  
Emily Moon  
Peter Souza  
Rich Toce  
Joyce Stille  
Mike Wilkinson  
Geoff McAlmond  
Lee Erdmann  
Blythe Robinson  
Barbara Gilbert  
John Salomone  
Jared Clark  
Dan Vindigni  
Lynn Nenne  
Jack McCoy  
Alan Desmarais  
William F. Vermile  
Tammi Saddler  
John Mehr  
Lisa Hancock  
Julian Freund  
Annette Gaynor  
Nancy Wyman  
Martin L. Heft  
Karen Buffkin  
Thomas Woodruff  
William Perez  
Cheryl Assis  
Kristin Dean  
Mary Ellen Kowalewski  
Lyle Wray  
Maureen Barton  
Winsome Barnaby

**Town**

Wethersfield  
Windsor  
Windsor  
East Hartford  
Bolton  
Tolland  
Enfield  
Hartford  
Avon  
Rocky Hill  
Newington  
Hebron  
Enfield  
Enfield  
Manchester  
Manchester  
Avon  
Berlin  
Rocky Hill  
Wethersfield  
Manchester  
Hartford  
State of Connecticut  
State Comptroller's Office  
State Comptroller's Office  
State Comptroller's Office  
East Hartford Fire Department  
CRCOG  
CRCOG  
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CRCOG

Chairperson Bonnie Therrien called the meeting to order.

**1. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

Barbara Gilbert made and Joyce Stille seconded a motion to adopt the minutes of the January 15, 2008 meeting. Minutes were adopted by unanimous voice vote.

**2. MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM (MEHIP)**

State Comptroller Nancy Wyman gave an overview of the MEHIP program. MEHIP is a self-insured program, unlike the health insurance program for state employees. The comptroller's office is asking for information from the towns, including the two most recent year's claims data, data on age, sex and contract size demographics, latest monthly billing statement showing current premium rates as well as prior rate period billing, current benefit descriptions identified by sub-groupings, and any changes to benefits during the two years of claim data reported, conversion rates, and proposed renewal rates. Ms. Wyman's department would staff a Cost Containment Committee. Municipalities and labor will need to negotiate for premium share first, and benefits would be negotiated further down the road. The point of the program is to help towns that are struggling with health insurance costs; Ms. Wyman does not want towns to leave a lower cost plan if they have one.

Several questions were asked and answered during the discussion.

Q: Will Health Savings Accounts be an option under MEHIP?

A: No

Q: Will each town negotiate their premiums?

A: A larger group will sit down to negotiate premium; each participating municipality will then negotiate individually to determine their share of that premium.

Q: Are the rates showing in the distributed material tentative?

A: The top rate listed in the material is the current plan price. The final price will depend on the size of the pool. The town will negotiate what the town vs. the employee pays.

Q: Will the plan change to offer an insured plan, like the State's?

A: No, this is self-insured. The State's plan costs more money.

Q: Will there be a process for assuring towns have the ability to pay claims?

A: The Comptroller's office would like to set-up a reserve fund. The rates have been calculated with the assumption of a central reserve fund.

Q: Day 1, what does the Comptroller's office require from the participating towns?

A: Payment of the premium.

Q: Is there any risk sharing?

A: Yes

Q: What would happen if the costs were higher than their contributions, or their contributions were higher than their costs?

A: If the contributions are higher than the cost of claims, the overage would go into the central reserve fund. If a town's costs are higher than their contributions, they would go to the central reserve fund for the difference.

Q: Will towns have to re-open labor contracts if the benefits change?

A: Unions are one of the groups that asked for this plan, and they have been widely receptive.

Q: What about post-retirement benefits?

A: This program is for active employees.

Q: Will the program be open to anyone other than municipalities?

A: The Comptroller's office would love to open the program up to businesses, but there are different rules governing business.

Q: Who will administer the plan?

A: The Comptroller's office.

Q: What sort of commitment is required for participants?

A: They are asking for a three year commitment, will ultimately decide between three to five year commitments.

Ms. Wyman encouraged those with additional questions to contact her office.

### **3. CAPTAIN FIRE PROGRAM**

Kristin Dean, Public Safety Planner for CRCOG, gave an overview of the CAPTAIN Fire Program, which will equip Fire Departments in the region with a wide area, mobile, fire information center. This program is an expansion of the successful police CAPTAIN mobile data communications program. Chief Perez from East Hartford walked through the hardware and software requirements. East Hartford is one of the towns participating in a pilot CAPTAIN Fire Program, which gives Fire Departments the ability to access hydrant maps, mutual aid information, instant messaging to talk to fire and police respondents in emergency chat rooms for specific incidents. The program also contains utilities for pre-planning, which would give first responders access to information about a site before they are on the scene, as well as the ability to report from the scene. The bulk of the cost of the program is start-up costs, typically \$900 per unit for departments requiring 30 units or more; \$950 per unit for departments requiring less than 30 units. The CEO of a town will have to sign-off, and CRCOG orders the equipment. Installation is an issue for fire departments, whoever is picked to install the computers for the fire departments would need to be very familiar with the equipment.

### **4. PROJECT STATUS REPORT**

Job Order Contracting – CRCOG is developing a new approach for a workable JOC program. Bolton will be testing the process, which will involve piggybacking off the USPS JOC program. The results of the trial will be presented, and if the savings are determined to be adequate, CRCOG will enter back into negotiations.

Purchasing- The Capitol Region Purchasing Council will open the Fuel Oil & Diesel bid on February 27, 2008, and the Recycling Bins bid on February 28, 2008. Towns will be notified as soon as the tabulation packets are complete. The CRPC will be releasing Invitations to Bid for Police Ammunition & Fingerprinting Supplies and for Swimming Pool & Water Treatment Chemicals on March 5, 2008, both of which are scheduled to open on March 27, 2008. In addition, CRPC staff will be working with the DAS and DPH to distribute the results and ordering information for Flu Vaccine, starting on March 7, 2008.

Service Sharing – Mary Ellen Kowalewski reported that CRCOG is still waiting for a formal announcement, but we are anticipating news this week. The draft budget bill contains permanent funding for this grant program. CRCOG met with the Governor's office this week to suggest changes to the process, and if any members have any comments or suggestions on that subject, they should contact Ms. Kowalewski.

**5. MUNICIPAL INFORMATION SHARING AND OTHER BUSINESS**

At the next Municipal Services Committee meeting, Jocelyn Mathiasen will give a presentation on permitting and inspecting, as well as report on the data gathering project. If anyone has suggestions for future topics, please contact Mary Ellen Kowalewski or Bonnie Therrien.

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

Barbara Gilbert made a motion to adjourn, Joyce Stille seconded, and Chair Bonnie Therrien adjourned the meeting at 1:35 p.m.