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Chester, Clinton, Cromwell,
Deep River, Durham, East Haddam,
East Hampton, Essex, Haddam,
Killingworth, Lyme, Middlefield,
Middletown, Old Lyme,
Old Saybrook, Portland, Westbrook

**Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments
and Lower Connecticut River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization**

DRAFT MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, February 28, 2018

RiverCOG Members:

Chester: Lauren Gister *
Clinton: Christine Goupil *
Cromwell: Anthony Salvatore *
Deep River: Angus McDonald, Jr.
Durham: Laura Francis *
East Haddam: Emmett Lyman *
East Hampton: Michael Maniscalco
Essex: Norm Needleman *
Haddam: Lizz Milardo *
Killingworth: Cathy Iino *
Lyme: Steve Mattson
Middlefield: Ed Bailey
Middletown: Daniel Drew
Old Lyme: Bonnie Reemsnyder *
Old Saybrook: Carl Fortuna *
Portland: Susan Bransfield *
Westbrook: Noel Bishop *

MPO Members:

Middlesex Chamber of Commerce: Darlene Briggs *
Estuary Transit District: Joe Comerford
Middletown Area Transit: Lisa Seymour

Others Present:

Pat Bandzes, Eversource
Edgar Wynkoop, CTDOT
Ellen Graham, Senator Blumenthal's Office
Dan Giungi, CCM
Pam Roach, Take 2 Recycling
Christine Nelson, Old Saybrook Town Planner
Melvin Woody, Gateway Commission
Tom Maziarz, Bureau Chief, CTDOT Bureau of Policy and Planning
Jamie Bohli-Cormier, 9 Town Transit

* Members Present

Staff Present:

Samuel Gold, AICP
Judy Snyder
Rob Haramut
Margot Burns
Janice Ehle/Meyer
Dan Bourret
Torrance Downes

1. CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS, PUBLIC SPEAKING

Chairman Bonnie Reemsnyder called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. in the conference room at the RiverCOG, 145 Dennison Road, Essex, CT and thanked the members for attending. Roll call was taken and Sam Gold, AICP, Executive Director introduced the guests and asked if anyone from the public wished to speak at this time.

2. LCRVMPO BUSINESS

- a. Update on the Special Transportation Fund and Impacts on Transportation Projects – Tom Maziarz, Bureau Chief, CTDOT Bureau of Policy and Planning

Sam Gold distributed a list, (attachment #1), created by Robert Haramut that identifies CTDOT capital projects that have been postponed as of 1/10/18. Other programs that have been postponed are the elimination of weekend and off-peak weekday Shore Line East rail service, fare increases, a 15% cut in funding to transit districts in July '18, and a 50% cut in funding in July '19, cancellation of the planned Route 81 bus route, ferry fare increases, TAR program, and LOTCIP.

Sam Gold introduced Tom Maziarz, Bureau Chief, CTDOT Bureau of Policy and Planning. Mr. Maziarz showed a Power Point presentation entitled; "Special Transportation Fund (STF), The Problems, Impacts, and Potential Fixes" (attachment #2). He said that he was going out to each MPO to explain what the problems are, what the impacts are, and what some of the potential fixes are.

He explained his uses of the words "budget" and "special transportation fund" (STF). The problem is in the special transportation fund but it directly affects the CTDOT budget and many projects that the towns are interested in. He explained the problem in the special transportation fund. This is the fund that all the state transportation revenues go into. It is also the fund under which pays for all of our capital projects, all of our operating costs, and the repayment of any debt services on previously capital projects that we bonded.

He stated that in 2015 the State knew there was a problem but underestimated how bad it would be and the revenues for the state are dropping faster than anticipated. An increase in the gas tax is not enough to off-set all the debt. Another source of funding for STF comes from petroleum products called the gross receipts tax. The wholesalers and the distributors pay this tax and unlike the gas tax this is a sales tax.

The problem in the short term is the inability to sell bonds. In order for CTDOT to sell bonds in the capital programs CTDOT has to be able to demonstrate that the STF is solvent for a five-year period. The problem is how do we issue bonds and keep existing projects that are underway going. Long term we know the problem will only get worse. For the short term the Governor enabled the sale in bonds to keep capital projects moving and cut the operating budget. Staff is down about 400 people with those vacant positions not being filled and there will be another 100 lost jobs in the next month or so. There will also be transit service cuts and fare increases. Capital projects have been scaled back to make do with the bonding we have and we are trying to fund only those federally funded projects that require 20% down. Trying to do projects with 100% state funds will be very difficult. The big impact on this COG will be LOTCIP and town aid roads which are 100% funded by the state. Other programs that are 100% funded by the state will be put on hold such as the biking program, trails, and paving projects.

Mr. Maziarz said that the impact of these cuts is to change the 5 year forecast for selling bonds. The cuts are bad but at least we will be able to sell bonds. This is the intent of all these cuts. The impacts on the operating budget cuts will be to reduce CTDOT staffing, reduce PAYGO budget maintenance and road paving programs, completely close rest areas, reduce maintenance staff and this will impact service levels for snow events and routine maintenance, eliminate non-ADA local bus service subsidies, a 15% bus fare increase for FY 2019, transit district 15% subsidy cut for FY 2019 and 50% subsidy cut for FY 2021, additional CMAQ subsidy for CTfastrak, 5% bus service reduction in FY 2021, 10% rail fare increase for FY 2019, 5% rail fare increase for FY 2021 and 5% rail fare increase in FY 2022, Metro-North non service expense reductions FY 2019, no weekend and some off-peak service reductions, 50% reduction in Shoreline East Service for FY 2019 and many other capital projects such as highways, bridges and rails are at risk.

Mr. Maziarz said the legislator needs to act primarily to fix the five year problem for short term revenues. The Governor's short term proposed fix is to increase the gas tax by a tier increase of 7 cents starting in FY 2019, a new tire fee of \$3 per tire sold, and accelerate transfer of sales tax on new cars from the General Fund to STF starting in FY 2019. The long term proposal is for tolls to be installed statewide.

Laura Francis said that she had received conflicting messages about the transportation funds and that in each year funds were diverted, budgeted for but diverted away from the STF. Tom Maziarz answered that about three years ago a portion of that was going to be moved from the general sales tax to the transportation fund. However that movement was delayed.

Carl Fortuna commented about the gross receipts tax being down, but it has essentially doubled in the last ten years. So between the gas tax and tire tax we are not getting tolls for at least five years. That's not part of the short term solution, not if the Governor was to get his way. Mr. Fortuna asked if a gas tax and tire tax were implemented what does that do to the \$400 million in projects, does it help at all.

Tom Maziarz answered it would allow us to move forward on all the projects we have deferred.

Noel Bishop asked if the legislators were here now what would you have them do in 30-60 days, immediately what do they have to do from your point of view.

Tom Maziarz said take an action. Implement the gas tax and new car tax. The tire tax is not going to help us that much.

Sam Gold spoke about the transit cuts. He will be testifying tonight on the Shore Line East issue and it is his understanding that right now there are no proposed cuts for CT Transit, but there is a 15% budget cut proposed on the transit districts which will cause service cuts. At the same time CTDOT has not asked the municipalities that are served by CT Transit to contribute towards those operations similar to how the transit districts operate, but municipal subsidies were not given any consideration to doing that.

Tom Maziarz said that has not come up. When funds are cut on one side it's hard to go back and ask for more.

Sam Gold asked if there are any plans because there are no hearings set for any of the service cuts.

Tom Maziarz said there are fare increases scheduled for CT Transit. They will be subject to the same fare increases. The towns the CT Transit services have not been approached.

Sam Gold asked why the department is treating the Transit Districts differently than CT Transit.

Tom Maziarz said the same reason that has existed for 20 years, it's the way it was set up. He doesn't think the Commissioner would be opposed to changing that.

Norm Needleman said that there were two ways of collecting the gross receipts tax. The first probably should have been a fixed amount, indexed somehow to insure consistent revenues and the other one in theory actually penalizes the user when the price goes up and is not favorable to the state when the price goes down.

Tom Maziarz agrees with Mr. Needleman. He said that this is not the favorite source of revenue for CTDOT but the gas tax is flat and a lot of other states have gone to indexing it. For instance the tax is set at .25 per gallon, what it currently is in Connecticut, then what other states are doing is setting it at .25 per gallon, but then they index it for inflation, so it grows with it instead of being stagnate.

Susan Bransfield also agrees with Mr. Needleman. Portland is looking at over a 1.4 mil impact for the cut that occurred over a six month period. This is not only bad for our municipality and state but for our economy. Her second point is when it said there is a \$400,000 million potential for projects not to occur. While that has an impact of our state budget it has a greater impact on our economy, the jobs and people's livelihood.

Lauren Gister spoke about the Chester Hadlyme ferry. There is a public hearing this afternoon about the proposed rate increases for the ferries. She is getting lots of calls from both sides of the river, but what she is hearing from Hartford is that it may have already been decided that the ferries will have a limited schedule and may not run at all on Sundays due to staffing shortages. This is the first time she has heard about that.

Tom Maziarz said that is why staffing levels at CTDOT enter into this. We need a certain number of captains to maintain that service seven days a week and one of the captains retired and that position cannot be refilled. So it will probably come down to eliminating service one day a week.

Lauren Gister said that people are calling her because they commute on that ferry.

Bonnie Reemsnyder spoke about the subsidies per ticket that are given to the Metro branch lines. Shore Line East gets a subsidy of \$49 per ticket. The cost to the CTDOT is huge. This kind of information is important for people to understand what the costs are.

Carl Fortuna stated that he thought Mr. Maziarz and Commissioner Redeker are doing a wonderful job and both are very approachable.

Bonnie Reemsnyder thanked Tom Maziarz for coming.

b. Approval of Minutes of the January 26, 2018 LCRVCOG and LCRVMPO Meeting

Upon motion of Tony Salvatore, seconded by Lauren Gister, it was unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the January 18, 2018 meeting.

c. Transportation Improvement Program

- i. 2018 TIP Amendment 8 - Delete replacement of bridge 02708 over Plum Bank Creek and bridge 01386 over Back River project 0105-0209 in Old Saybrook

Robert Haramut explained the project. Carl Fortuna stated that this will impact recreational activities while being replaced as many people run/walk over that bridge.

Upon motion of Carl Fortuna, seconded by Laura Francis, it was unanimously voted to approve the 2018 TIP Amendment 8 - Delete replacement of bridge 02708 over Plum Bank Creek and bridge 01386 over Back River project 0105-0209 in Old Saybrook.

- ii. Authorizing resolution on Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Transportation Planning and Funding in the Hartford Urbanized Area

Upon motion of Tony Salvatore, seconded by Laura Francis, it was unanimously voted to approve the Authorizing resolution on Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Transportation Planning and Funding in the Hartford Urbanized Area.

d. Transportation Planning Updates

- i. Corridor Studies Route 66 and Route 81

Robert Haramut said that we should be getting the Route 66 corridor study revised scope shortly, revisions can be made, if necessary, and then this will need to be signed. The Route 81 study has a signed agreement and the consultant has done some data collection.

Sam Gold stated that the Route 66 study has been slow and the consultant, Tighe and Bond has been difficult to deal with.

- ii. Transportation program updates (5310, LOTCIP, corridor studies, performance based planning, etc.)

Robert Haramut said that the 5310 applications for elderly disabled lift equipped vehicles are due this Friday and our COG is split into two urbanized areas, New Haven and Hartford. At the March or April meeting Mr. Haramut will present the prioritized list for the members to review and rank.

Sam Gold said he spoke to Joe Comerford regarding a proposal for a regional mobility manager. He stated that technically we are in a joint project with South Central COG, however they hired a mobility manager more than a year ago. Mr. Gold and Mr. Comerford met with the person and found out that he is doing mobility management work in our region. Mr. Gold hopes to have him at a future COG meeting to introduce him to the members. Mr. Haramut stated that there has been a very high turnover rate in mobility managers. Mr. Gold said that the job of the mobility manager is to work with social services, work for the towns, and deal with the transportation and transit issues that come up.

Tony Salvatore asked if we are supposed to work with them prior to hiring them. How do we convey our displeasure with them?

Sam Gold said that we could send a letter to South Central and thank them for meeting the mobility manager, but we expect the mobility manager to be present at COG meetings. The mobility manager is giving reports to the South Central board but not attending our meetings.

Upon motion of Tony Salvatore, seconded by Lizz Milardo, it unanimously voted to approve that Sam Gold and Bonnie Reemsnyder compose a letter to South Central COG regarding the mobility manager.

Sam Gold, Chairman Bonnie Reemsnyder will work with Joe Comerford and Lisa Seymour on the letter.

Robert Haramut gave an update on the LOTCIP program. The Old Saybrook project is nearly complete and Millbrook in Middletown is out to bid. Durham and Cromwell have commitment letter and at this point Haddam and Chester are on hold with the budget issues. If the LOTCIP program proceeds these project will be funded, if not probably some form of the STP urban program will take over.

Laura Francis asked if the LOTCIP program is gone will we go back to the STP Urban funds. Tom Maziarz said he hopes not. It's best to keep the LOTCIP program.

Robert Haramut wanted to speak of the performance measures. He said that the bridge and pavement performance measures are coming up for review. The intent is to go along with the state's measures. The next step is to incorporate these measures into the TIP and Long Range Plan.

e. Updates from MAT and 9 Town Transit

Jamie Bohli-Cormier, 9 Town Transit said that the funding of fares will decrease and cuts are possible at the transit district. The Dial-A-Ride service has been cut and there are concerns for the passengers and the employees.

Sam Gold said that he would update the members about MAT. He said he is taking on an intern from Wesleyan and he has created a transportation proposal getting Wesleyan on the state bus U-pass program. The proposal is to have a better connection between Middletown and the new Meriden commuter rail station that will be opening this spring.

Laura Francis said that Lisa Seymour is doing a great job.

Laura Francis stated that in Durham there is a problematic state road intersection that she has been working on with CTDOT for a number of years. She said that finally a real good concept design to fix the congestion problem has been presented. She has spoken to Mr. Haramut about possible funding from LOTCIP or CMAC. She asked Tom Maziarz if a tax credit program could be developed where maybe the businesses that would be most affected, buy into this intersection improvement if they could get a tax credit. Mr. Maziarz said potentially a STIF account could be created to raise the money to do the improvements. Ms. Francis stated that the intersection is at Routes 157 and 68. Sam Gold said that the problem with tax incrementing financing is that you are taxing the increment of additional value that's added to the property based on your public improvement, but if the property values drop at this time you get no money. That's the risk.

3. LCRVCOG BUSINESS

a. RiverCOG Office Space, Authorization of Chair to Enter Into a New Three Year Lease

Sam Gold said that a new lease has been negotiated, with our attorney, and the landlord and he felt confident that this is the best way to process at this time.

Upon motion of Noel Bishop, seconded by Norm Needleman, it unanimously voted to authorize Sam Gold to sign a three-year lease agreement with the provision that subletting was a possibility.

b. Electronics Recycling – Pam Roach, Take 2 Recycling

Pam Roach said that the Take 2 Recycling is an approved program in the state of Connecticut. This is a rebate program for the electronics brought in. The more brought in the bigger the rebate for the town.

In Connecticut we are able to collect all the electronics for a year and still charge the manufacturer for it. In other states there is a cap. These states with a cap are only allowed to bring in a certain amount of electronics and then cut off for the remainder of the year. She stated that she would come to the towns and speak to the transfer station attendants about recycling electronics and/or hold a collection event. Last year 63 events were held.

Laura Francis asked about the security of hard drives. Ms. Roach said that the electronics go to their secure facility and is either wiped clean or crushed. If electronics go to a transfer station there is no guarantee that someone won't go in and take the hard drive.

She will send the presentation to Judy and it will be distributed to the members.

c. Long Island Sound Dredging Spoils Lawsuit - Amicus Brief

Sam Gold said that he had received a call from Jim Butler at Southeast COG and this is a bigger issue for them, but it is an issue for all the communities that have harbors, marinas and dredging.

Connecticut and New York are involved in a legal battle between where the dredging spoils can be disposed of. New York is suing Connecticut in federal court. Senator Joe Courtney is asking the municipalities affected by this to file amicus briefs in support of Connecticut's position.

Bonnie Reemsnyder said that she is a member of the Connecticut Port Authority and she was approached by some of the members to reach out to the other municipalities to seeing if together we could file a brief instead of each municipality filing individually. She said she understands there is a group coming together, the Connecticut Maritime Trades Association and several others that are joining forces. The law firm of Robinson and Cole has given an estimate of \$15,000 to file the brief. She imagines if we went with the same attorney it's going to be in that range. She has been asked to present this to the members and see if any other towns would be interested in filing a joint brief.

Sam Gold said that the COG could possibility join with Southeast COG in a brief. He stated that the rivers that feed into Long Island Sound are on our side and the silt from all those rivers in New England builds up faster in our harbors and marinas rather than the New York side of the Sound. New York is contending that the spoils from dredging are hazardous and should not be disposed of in Long Island Sound. If the materials were trucked out the cost would be much more expensive.

Bonnie Reemsnyder said that the EPA has already approved this site. This is why New York is suing to stop it. They did all the studies and there are restrictions of what can go in there. She wanted to talk about how we pay for this. Sam Gold said we could do this as a COG with listing of all the towns, or jointly with Southeast COG. Southeast COG has reached out to all the towns along the shoreline. Bonnie Reemsnyder said she would be interested in joining.

Noel Bishop asked if Senators Blumenthal and Courtney were involved. Carl Fortuna said he sent an e-mail but has not heard back. Lizz Milardo spoke about the problems this past winter with the ice build-up in the Connecticut River. The larger cutter boats could not be used because the river was not deep enough for them to get through with the ice.

Sam Gold said that there is a transcript of this from the teleconferencing call with the Attorney General's office and they will make any documents available to whomever we have prepare the brief. The deadline for comments is April 2nd.

d. Ratification Changes in RiverCOG Employee Tax Advantaged Benefits (IRS Section 125)

Sam Gold said that recently an ALFAC benefit policy was made available for those staff members interested. This is of no cost to the COG, but because it is a tax advantage program we need ratification of that offering. We also have tax advantage deferred compensation 457 plan and we need a ratification of that too.

Upon motion of Cathy lino, seconded by Lizz Milardo, it unanimously voted to approve the ratification for the ALFAC benefit plan and the deferred compensation 457 plan.

4. LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY LAND TRUST (LCRLT) BUSINESS

a. Introduction from Past LCRLT President Melvin Woody, Ph.D.

Sam Gold said that this is the non-profit that we have taken over as of January responsibility for from the Gateway Commission. (attachment #3)

Sam Gold introduced Past President Melvin Woody of the Land Trust to give a brief history of this land trust. Mr. Woody stated that about 50 years ago the Gateway Conservation Zone came into being because towns in the valley were concerned about development along the river especially in the estuary. A bill was passed that authorized the towns to make a compact to set up a conservation zone along the river mainly to insure that it included the ridges and the major estuaries. At town meetings all eight estuary towns voted to join and agreed to set up common planning and zoning standards within the conservation zone. The towns decide on the boundaries of the conservation zones and the state also joined. The state agreed to fund an operating budget of the commission that administrated this and the legislation bonded \$5 million to buy scenic easements. In 1981 Julian Rosenberg from East Haddam, with others, settled with Northeast Utilities for \$1.25 million because the power lines stretched across the river in two or three areas and they wanted the lines submerged in the river. In the settlement \$250,000 went to Middletown for the waterfront and the rest went to the Gateway Conservation Zone and Commission which he always supported. Those funds supplied the Gateway with an endowment. At that point the state withdrew support and stop paying the bills. This made the local commission independent from the state. That endowment meant that we could buy and hold land and we could turn over property and easements to local land trusts and towns rather than to the state. We then became concerned if we could hold land. So we set up a land trust and in order to hold the land. We regularly donated land to the local land trusts. When we distributed some of these parcels we discovered that this was never registered on the town records as belonging to the land trust. It was in the Gateway Commission name, but it was legal. We found out we didn't need the land trust. RiverCOG started a land trust exchange among the land trusts in the valley, most of them within the conservation zone and the Gateway thought this would be a great opportunity to support the local land trust.

Mr. Woody said that Margot Burns was preparing a conservation plan for the whole area. He said that this is the only major unspoiled estuary on the Atlantic coast of the U.S. What was worked out with Sam Gold was that RiverCOG will use it to forward the interest for preservation and conservation in the valley.

b. Presentation on the LCRLT

Sam Gold said with the 501c3 we could now apply for funds and the 501c3 is an incorporated entity. The RiverCOG is an unincorporated association of municipalities. This gives us an entity that is permanent to use for various projects. The first project will be the Land Trust Exchange and using this land trust as a vehicle for raising money for the region's land trusts, but also this could be the vehicle for other grants. There are a number of grantors who want to give to a 501c3 and are not willing to give to a government.

c. Election of a Board of Directors and Officers

Susan Bransfield asked how far north does this go. Sam Gold said that now all 17 towns in the region are members of this land trust. The Gateway Commission also maintains a membership and that brings up the next issue which is a board of directors. The annual meeting according to the by-laws is in June. So this would be an interim board of directors. Mr. Gold has spoken to the current RiverCOG Executive Committee and they are willing to serve in the interim and that would be Bonnie Reemsnyder, Chairman, Michael Maniscalco, Vice Chairman, Noel Bishop, Secretary and Carl Fortuna, Treasurer, Cathy Iino and Tony Salvatore as the additional at large board members and Melvin Woody would be the representative from the Gateway Commission.

Christine Nelson asked for an explanation of the interaction between regional land trust and the local conservation commissions. Margot Burns said that remains to be seen. However, many of the members of the town's conservation commissions are also members of their local land trust commissions. Ms. Nelson said she would like to see the municipal conservation commission benefit from this additional entity.

Sam Gold stated that this land trust currently has no assets or property so really the only value here is the incorporation, but there is the opportunity for using it as a vehicle for fund raising for various projects and implement conservation projects for regional significance and to apply for grants.

Susan Bransfield asked to see the by-laws (attachment #4) and when will the meetings be held. Bonnie Reemsnyder felt that the business could be done with the COG meeting.

Upon motion of Laura Francis, seconded by Lizz Milardo, it unanimously voted to approve the following as the interim board members for the Land Trust Exchange: Bo Bonnie Reemsnyder, Chairman, Michael Maniscalco, Vice Chairman, Noel Bishop, Secretary and Carl Fortuna, Treasurer, Cathy Iino and Tony Salvatore as the additional at large board members and Melvin Woody as the representative from the Gateway Commission.

d. Results of Land Trust Exchange Survey

Margot Burns said that she has received survey results and the consensus is that there should be some kind of formal arrangement for the LTE as a committee. What this means is an officer(s) or a chair or vice-chair to be in charge of the funds that they raised.

Susan Bransfield said that Portland has the ability to purchase 5.7 acres of brownfield land abutting the river and any help that this organization could give would be great. Margot Burns stated that this is something we could do.

Bonnie Reemsnyder thanked Melvin Woody for his presentation.

5. CHAIRMAN'S AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

Sam Gold stated that we received our first check from OPM for regional services grant. There should be another payment in the fourth quarter of the year.

Margot Burns sent a memo to the members that their hazardous mitigation plans need to be updated in the next year or so.

Tony Salvatore asked where do we stand with the river damage. He has been contacted by someone who had damage to their facility along the river. Is there an opportunity to pass that on and can we join in still or is it too late. Sam Gold suggested that he speak to Mary Dickinson in Portland. Lizz Milardo said that she sent a letter to John Field. Laura Francis said that FEMA has a "declaration". Normally what happens is the state will be asked for all of the damage information and the cost estimates. Then they compile all the damage information and submit it for consideration as a presidential declaration. Ms. Francis stated that she wasn't sure if there is any money available. Sam Gold said they look at the damage in the county. Lyme and Old Lyme don't count, but the threshold of damage is \$600,000 but thinks we can meet that. Cathy Lino asked if the amount claimed for damages has to exceed what the previous cost damages were. Mr. Gold stated that the way it was explained to him the threshold is based on population. It's \$3.00 of uninsured loss per person per county.

Laura Francis said that she would like to see the COG do the plan as a region. In her experience it is very difficult to access the hazardous mitigation money. Susan Bransfield agrees. Tony Salvatore asked what can we do now. Laura Francis suggested that the towns that had damage contact DEMHS and ask what they are doing in other areas. Mr. Salvatore asked if there is a way the COG could take the lead. Sam Gold said he would like a meeting where everyone could learn this together.

Christine Nelson said that their plan will expire in one year and the consequences are that you are less eligible for funding. The main funding source is "PDM" (Pre-Disaster Mitigation) is only issued once a year, usually in July and takes months to go through all the applications.

Sam Gold stated that he had submitted a letter regarding Raised H.B. 5172 "An act concerning state agency data management and processes, the transmittal of town property assessment information and the suspension of certain regulatory requirements" (attachment #5).

6. OTHER BUSINESS

a. DEMHS Update

Torrance Downes stated that Region 2 will start working on the budget for the 2018 grant. The MOAs have gone out to all the CEO and EMD for the 2017 grant.

b. Regional Agriculture Commission Update

Janice Ehle/Meyer said that the Agriculture Council survey was sent out and several responses were received. She invited the members to look at the agriculture website that Torrance Downes had done. She asked the members to please post on their town websites a link to the agriculture website and survey. Tony Salvatore asked for that information to be forwarded to the members.

Laura Francis warned the members to be sure that their town's zoning regulations are agreeable with agriculture. She said that the Farm bill is up for reauthorization and town Agriculture Committees should watch this. Janice Ehle/Meyer said that the Agricultural Council was trying to get numbers and types of animals that these farms have. Mr. Francis asked that model language be sent to the towns.

Janice Ehle/Meyer said that the household hazardous waste collections and paper shredding events will begin shortly. There is a new listing of "What's In, What's Out" on the RiverCOG or Recycle CT websites.

Cathy Iino asked about the disposal of shredded paper and smoke detectors. Ms. Ehle/Meyer answered that shredded paper should be brought to a paper shredding event to be properly recycled. Some smoke detector companies have a send back policy, but that can be costly for the consumer.

Laura Francis asked about discussing some pending legislation. The MBR is huge. Sam Gold said he will be sending out a list of bills of interest.

Tony Salvatore asked if we are taking a position on what CTDOT is proposing.

Sam Gold said that at the Regional Planning Committee meeting transportation was discussed and what the vision is for the proposed tolls on roads. He said other states that have done this have a plan, a goal where this money is going to be used.

Tony Salvatore said that the speaker is adamant about eliminating the car tax. The members agreed that is a huge mistake.

Laura Francis asked what is going on with SALT. Sam Gold said there is a bill that he will be sent out. The Governor is proposing a bill that would allow you to give credit on your tax bills to a charitable foundation in your town. So right now the new federal tax bill you are capped at a \$10,000 deduction for state and local taxes. Many people's state and federal taxes exceed \$10,000. The towns could create a charitable foundation and then you can write this off your taxes under charitable contributions.

Laura Francis said an alternate is needed on the Work Force Alliance board.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion of Lauren Gister, seconded by Cathy Iino, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Snyder
Recording Secretary

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