

**CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY COUNCIL OF ELECTED OFFICIALS**  
**MINUTES**  
**February 23, 2011**

Attendees:

Tom Marsh, Chester  
John Flanders, Cromwell  
Dick Smith, Deep River  
Laura Francis, Durham  
Mark Walter, East Haddam  
Cathy Iino, Killingworth  
Jon Brayshaw, Middlefield  
Tim Griswold, Old Lyme  
Noel Bishop, Westbrook

Guests: Geoff Colegrove, MidState  
Mathew Lesser, State Representative

CRERPA:

Linda Krause, Torrance Downes, Jay Northrup, Pat Anthony

1. **Call to Order**: The meeting was called to order at the Time Out Taverne in Durham Cromwell CT by Chairman Walter at 12:20 p.m.
2. **Approval of Minutes**: The motion was made by Tim Griswold and seconded by Laura Francis to approve the minutes for January 23<sup>rd</sup>. All were in favor.
3. **Legislative Report**: It was noted that Phil Miller won the election as State Representative. He will continue in his position as First Selectman of Essex until the November election.
4. **Joint Bid Process**: Laura Francis distributed packets outlining the bidding process for line striping, catch basins and street sweeping. General Specifications were discussed, and Laura asked that the signed agreement be returned by Monday, February 28<sup>th</sup>. It's a 3-year bid agreement with options to renew. Bids will be awarded on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Laura asked that the selectmen read over the contract and note any concerns they may have.
5. **COST Meeting**: Dick Smith briefly discussed the tax issues discussed at today's COST meeting. The cuts in STEAP funding to small towns and the presumed ramifications of the cuts was discussed.
6. **Regional Issues**: Linda said there is money in the State budget for the RPAs in two forms: \$500,000 from State Grant in Aid (SGIA), split among the 15 RPAs, and \$300,000

proposed as incentives for smaller agencies to combine. The latter allocation would be used to assist agencies with the transition.

To initiate the process to combine a request for a boundary change must be sent to the OPM outlining the intended boundary changes. Secondly, a request to consolidate the RPAs must also be sent to OPM.

Form, function and funding are the key issues in the current discussion of “regionalism”. Form may be the consolidation of the smaller RPAs.

*Matt Lesser, State Representative, was then introduced to the selectmen and a roll call was taken. Noel Bishop asked what Mark’s perception was on the Governor’s budget. Municipal local revenue options were discussed. Mark said there is nothing written in stone as yet regarding the budget proposal. Another key question was the taxation on boats and planes. Mark reiterated that the suggested increase in taxes were optional right now. Dick Smith felt the lack of STEAP grant funding of \$20million will adversely impact the smaller municipalities and will result in a huge increase in funding to the larger cities.*

Laura wanted to know when we should “cut bait” regarding consolidation. She doesn’t want to be the last man standing with no money, and the consolidation funding availability is a definite enticement.

Linda suggested there could be several consolidations: Valley Region might combine with Bridgeport. Northwest and Litchfield Hills are likely to combine and Central CT and Naugatuck Valley is a possibility.

A discussion commenced on the advantages and disadvantages of the 17-town consolidation.

Geoff and Linda have discussed how the consolidation can be done, the personnel issues, and how the two agencies are similar and dissimilar.

Linda explained that CRERPA has had to be creative in seeking grants; for example, forestry grant, community garden, land trust exchange, boat counting and dock study. Linda would like to see the agencies through the transition and has discussed the issue with Geoff.

The town of Middletown was discussed, and Laura said Durham shares services with Middletown. It was the general consensus of the group that Middletown is a concern for everyone. In fact, it was suggested that it may be a topic at the next Rockfall meeting—“Middletown, its role in the Region”

The selectman agreed to set up a special Regional Transition Sub Committee to review the issues and concerns of the consolidation. The Committee will consist of Jon Brayshaw (Middlefield), Cathy Iino (Killingworth), Tim Griswold (Old Lyme), and Mark Walter of East Haddam. The first meeting will take place in the Mid State facility in Middletown. Geoff Colegrove will make the arrangement for the meeting.

It was also agreed that topics be selected for the upcoming agendas. Budget issues, unions, binding arbitration, health care plans, DOT fees and public health are some of the issues the selectmen want to see as agenda topics. Linda said that the 9-

town selectmen (LCVSA) have asked Senator Andy Maynard, Chairman of the Legislature's Transportation Committee, to talk at its April 13<sup>th</sup> meeting

**Memorandum of Intent:** John Flanders distributed a memorandum of intent for the CRVCEO and how the Councils want to have a voice in the discussions on regionalization in CT. The CRVCEO strongly encourages communities to work together to provide superior service to their citizens and to reduce the property tax burden they bear to provide those services. The CRVCEO recommended an approach that they call "Regions without Borders." The document strongly requests that the CRVCEO have a seat at the table when plans are being discussed, and an opportunity to be heard before assignment to any state mandated regionalization.

The March meeting will be held at the Westbrook Town Hall on Wednesday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> at NOON. The main topic for discussion will be contract negotiations. Luncheon will be provided by First Selectman Noel Bishop.

**Adjournment:** The motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Chairman Walter at 2:35 p.m. John Flanders seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Anthony, Clerk