

**Connecticut River Valley Council of Elected Officials
Minutes
February 22, 2006**

Attendance: Please see attached list.

I. The meeting was called to order at noon at Bistro by Bignino on the corner of Route 82 and Route 151 in East Haddam. Host Brad Parker welcomed the group, explaining that Bistro by Bignino opened in November and has rapidly gained popularity in town. He then called for round table introductions.

II Election of Officers

Host Brad Parker asked to amend the order of business to elect new officers and hand over the chair. The amendment was approved by consensus.

Acting in his capacity as Chairman of the nominating Committee, Selectman Parker reviewed the process. He and Alan Bergren polled the membership seeking candidates willing to lead the Council. Mike Pace of Old Saybrook and Phil Miller of Essex each expressed a willingness to lead the group. Selectman Parker proposed that Phil Miller be nominated to serve as Chairman and that Mike Pace is nominated to serve as vice-chairman. He noted that Mike Pace serves as Chairman of the Lower Connecticut Valley Selectmen's Association and it seems best to share the responsibility.

Committee Chairman Parker explained that since no one came forth to serve as Secretary, Alan Bergren expressed a willingness to serve "if no one else is willing to".

Dick Smith moved that the nominations be closed. The motion was seconded by Jim McLaughlin and unanimously approved.

The slate was unanimously elected.

III. Business

A. Welcome

Chairman Miller assumed the chair and thanked the members for the honor of chairing the Council. He urged members to identify common challenges. He stated his intention to invite state officials to address the Council. He mentioned the voting machine issue and revaluation as two immediate issues. He welcomes suggestions.

B. Legislation

1. Linda Krause reported that a letter was received from Jamie Spallone explaining that Wednesdays are busy at the Capitol and he will be unable to attend meetings during the session.

2. Betty Wagner reported that Rob Simmons has signed on with the opposition to the sale of the contract to operate American ports by a company based in the Arab Emirate. Rep. Simmons is in Taiwan. The Taiwanese Government is considering buying diesel submarines. Rep. Simmons is urging them to consider General Dynamics as the supplier.

Chairman Miller asked if this will please the People's Republic of China. Mike Pace noted that diesel subs operate more efficiently in shallow water than the larger nuclear vessels. He asked if the US should rethink its policy.

Betty handed out information about Rob seeking an increase in funding for Amtrack.

Linda Krause asked if there is any news from Washington regarding Broadwater. There is not.

Brad Parker asked if the Council should go on record as being opposed to the sale of the control of American ports. It was agreed upon by consensus and Betty will deliver the message.

Mike Pace suggested that it may be time to suggest a quasi-public affiliation of national and state interests to operate ports.

Alan Bergren revisited the issue of “earmarks”, citing that Connecticut does not get its fair share of federal assistance. Small towns fare even worse than cities. East Hampton is faced with the need to invest \$51,000,000 in a water supply system for the down town region that has been contaminated by MTBE. He noted that keeping the population healthy is part of national security. He noted America pays for the infrastructure in foreign countries but not here.

IV Old Business

A. Meeting Locations

Chairman Miller explained that the Council meets in a different town each month. The CEO of the host town arranges for the location within the city or town. Mike Pace commented that the restaurants are nice but they are not good for conducting business. He suggested that a space such as the Pavilion in Old Saybrook might be more suitable.

It was agreed that a media-ready room would be more appropriate for presentations and discussions. Lunches can be catered.

Susan Bransfield offered the meeting room at the Portland Library for the March 22 meeting.

Jim McLaughlin will have facilities ready in the new Durham Town Hall after July.

The April meeting will be in Chester. The May meeting will be in Old Lyme. Deep River will host the June meeting and East Hampton will host the July meeting.

Linda Krause asked if next year, the meeting places can be arranged a year in advance. She has been concerned about FOI. CRERPA had traditionally sent the list of proposed dates for the following year, together with the proposed town, to the Secretary of State in the last week of December. The exact location is sent to the Secretary of State when the agendas are circulated. The date and the location is posted on the CRERPA web site

Linda explained the history of the CRVCEO. She mentioned that there is a bill before the current session of the Legislature proposing that all Regional Planning Agencies or Councils of Elected Officials must become Councils of Governments.

Mike Pace returned to the matter of meeting places and suggested that the Council agree on two or three places and alternate between them.

Alan Bergren moved that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman form a committee of two to assess and assure compliance with Freedom of Information requirements and to determine suitable meeting places for the CVCEO. The motion was seconded by Susan Bransfield and unanimously approved.

B. Council Committees/projects

1. Health District

Mike Pace reported that the formation of the District is progressing, although he was disappointed by the poor attendance at the last committee meeting. Dick Smith is addressing the question of personnel and Mike is

addressing the financial aspects. He believes the assessment will be \$11 per capita. He had hoped for \$10 but a couple of towns seem to have lost interest since the election. He is hoping that the District can be operating prior to June 1, 2006. This would enable the Health District to receive funding for FY2005-2006 and FY2006-2007.

2. CRRA

Mike reported that CRRA has reduced TIP fees by \$1.00 per ton. The North Meadows land fill is scheduled to close. CRRA is working with DEP to find a new ash disposal site. Out of state locations are also being considered. Recycling is being expanded. Junk mail is now acceptable. Electronic collections are being established.

Chairman Miller announced that Essex has accepted the Smart Power option. Middletown and Portland are already participating in the project.

3. Health of Water

Mike Pace suggested that the health of the Connecticut River should be of concern to the Council. Portions of the river are "silting in". Dredging schedules depend upon the amount of commercial traffic. As the silting increases, the traffic decreases and makes the river less eligible for dredging. Mike announced that Old Saybrook now is establishing Dock Regulations.

4. Workforce Development

It was agreed to invite Bill Villano to meet with the Council and bring the group up to date on Workforce Development.

5. OPM

Linda Krause reported that former CRVCEO member David LeVasseur, now Under Secretary of OPM, would be happy to meet with the Council and bring them up to speed on happenings at OPM and what impact they may have locally.

6. Attainable Housing

Mike Pace outlined some of the approaches that are being considered in Old Saybrook to provide attainable housing.

7. Business Analysis

Phil Miller reported that Essex provided the Economic Development Commission with funds to do a one time survey of businesses. It counted over 700 businesses. Many are small and home based.

Chairman Miller reaffirmed that the next meeting will be in Portland on March 22.

Seb Guiliano moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Sue Bransfield. The meeting was adjourned. At 1:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Bergren, Secretary