

Connecticut River Valley Council of Elected Officials
March 24, 2005
Minutes

Attendance: Please see attached.

I. The meeting was called to order by Chairman David Denvir at 12:13 PM at the Killingworth Café, on Route 81, Killingworth, CT. Linda Krause reported that Dorothy Papp would take minutes in place of Wini Olson who is home recovering from a heart attack. Wini is doing well and looking forward to coming back soon. Well wishes were expressed.

II. Guest Speaker

Chairman Denvir introduced Katherine Marx from the Governor's eastern Office who said she was attending the meeting to listen. She assured the selectmen that she is willing to help where she can, whether one is from her designated district or not.

III. Minutes

Phil Miller moved that the minutes of the February 24, 2005 meeting be approved as circulated. The motion was seconded by Jim McCusker. Maryann Boord had a correction to the legislative update that she "did testify on unfunded mandates." The minutes were approved as corrected with Phil Miller and Martin Heft abstaining.

IV. Legislative Update

A. Congress

1. Betty Wagner reported that Representative Rob Simmons currently in Israel. As part of his work for the Homeland Security Committee he is a member of the Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing and Terrorism Risk Assessment.
2. Betty further reported that Rob voted "no" on the federal budget due to potential cuts in Medicare, Medicaid and Veteran's Health Benefits.

V. Committees

EMS

Tony Palermo reported for the EMS subcommittee, consisting of himself, Mike Pace and Tim Griswold, that the information received from the Northeast COG is still under consideration. It was reaffirmed that none of the region's towns have included EMS monies in their budgets. David Denvir reiterated Linda's suggestion from last month's meeting to invite NECOG director John Filchak to speak to the CRVCEO.

Probate Courts

Brad Parker reported meeting with Judge Lawler to express concern about proposed legislation setting a \$5 per capita cap on state funding for local probate courts. He said Judge Lawler did not appear receptive to the concerns of the probate courts of smaller towns. David Denvir talked to Representative Jamie Spallone who said it appears the bill will come out of committee favoring the cap. CCM has signed off on the proposal but COST will not.

ACIR

There was no report from the Advisory Committee on Intergovernmental Relations.

VII. New Business

David Denvir reported that Killingworth will receive \$50,000 from FEMA for Costs associated with January's blizzard.

Phil Miller requested a poll of the status of each town's budget process.

Killingworth has managed an 8% decrease in spending and hopes to decrease taxes by one hundredth of a mil.

Westbrook has had a 5.1% increase in expenditures and is not yet sure how it will translate to the mil rate.

Durham is facing a \$1.5 million dollar increase in education expenses alone.

Cromwell has kept the town side expenses to a 3.3% increase while their Grand List has increased by 5% due to an aggressive assessor and tax collections are \$900,000 over estimates.

Clinton's Grand List is up by 3% while spending is up between 3.5 and 4%.

East Haddam has proposed a 5.6% spending increase or .72% mil rate increase to their Board of Finance.

East Hampton has had a 5.6% increase in the Grand List and has proposed 1.68 increase in the mil rate though expects to get closer to 1.4.

Chester's Grand List has gone up 1.6%. The town is still in preliminary workshop sessions with the Board of Finance.

Old Lyme's Grand List has also increased by 1.6% but has a 4.25% increase in education expense and must find money to close its landfill.

Essex has had a 1.54% increase in the Grand List and the increase in education expense has been more modest than usual so the town wants to use the opportunity to put the savings back into maintaining the town's infrastructure.

Jim McCusker asked Katherine Marx if she knew anything about the cuts in State bonding which are affecting towns' clean water projects. Martin Heft said Chester is running into similar problems. Katherine said she was not familiar with the situation but will look into it.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:55.

Respectfully submitted,

Dorothy Papp, Staff