



# MINUTES OF THE NHCOG SPECIAL MEETING

## 1/29/2026

### Remote Only

#### Member/Representative Attendance:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Barkhamsted</b> , Meaghan Cook	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Harwinton</b> , Michael Criss	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Roxbury</b> , Patrick Roy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Burlington</b> , Doug Thompson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Kent</b> , Eric Epstein	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Salisbury</b> , Curtis Rand
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Canaan</b> , David Barger	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Litchfield</b> , Denise Raap	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Sharon</b> , Casey Flanagan
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Colebrook</b> , Bradley Bremer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Morris</b> , Tom Weik	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Torrington</b> , Molly Spino
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Cornwall</b> , Gordon Ridgway	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>New Hartford</b> , Dan Jerram	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Warren</b> , Greg LaCava
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Goshen</b> , Seth Breakell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Norfolk</b> , Henry Tirrell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Washington</b> , Jim Brinton
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Hartland</b> , Magi Winslow	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>North Canaan</b> , Jesse Bunce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Winchester</b> , Todd Arcelaschi

#### Others in Attendance:

**NHCOG Staff:** Robert Phillips, Rista Malanca, Annmarie Ryan

**Others:**

**Call to Order:** Chairman Jerram called the meeting to order at 11:01 AM.

**Public Comment:** NONE

#### BUSINESS MEETING

1. FY25-26 budget amendment of \$200,000 in supplemental Regional Services Grant (RSG) funding for the remainder of the current fiscal year, through June 30, pursuant to the requirements of Public Act 25-1.

The discussion focused on discussing funding opportunities and proposed actions related to Public Act 25-1, which provides \$400,000 annually for housing initiatives. NHCOG explained that they are requesting \$100,000 for affordable housing work and \$100,000 for MSW work, with the funds to be expended by June 30th. They emphasized that this funding does not require a local match and will not necessitate dues increases. NHCOG also highlighted the need for staffing support, particularly a regional planner position, and mentioned that a detailed plan for implementing the housing initiatives will be shared once developed by all nine COGs in the state.

Rista and Rob discussed the need for a housing specialist who could also work on Main Street initiatives, given the overlap between housing and downtown development in their region. They emphasized the importance of this position in meeting regional requirements and advancing ongoing Main Street efforts. Additionally, they highlighted the challenges related to solid waste management and recycling, mentioning the establishment of the Northwest Resource Recovery Authority and a \$350,000 grant to support its development. They proposed bringing in a consultant to assist the board in making strategic decisions about waste management and recycling, while also addressing questions from municipalities interested in joining the authority.

The board inquired about reporting requirements and spending flexibility, to which NHCOC confirmed annual reporting is necessary and unspent funds must be returned. Rista presented a comparison between hiring a full-time employee and using independent contractors, finding that a full-time employee would be more cost-effective and provide better regional knowledge, though consultants would still be needed for specific tasks like data gathering and plan development. The board also raised concerns about increasing full-time staff at the COG level. Rista and Rob clarified that the position is fully funded through the grant and is part of a combination effort to meet the requirements of PA25-1, which involves both consultants and internal management to handle specialized work and reporting. They emphasized that this hiring would not result in additional financial burden on communities, as the budget is already covered by existing funds.

Rob also discussed office space needs, revealing they had the option to take over the entire third floor of the current building (approximately 750 square feet at about \$10/sq ft) to create a more cohesive work environment, and would only increase overhead costs that can be spread across grant sources. This would be further presented at the board's next regularly scheduled meeting on February 12th.

**MOTION (Barger) and 2<sup>nd</sup> (Raap): To amend the current FY25-26 budget and authorize the Executive Director to accept \$200,000 in supplemental Regional Services Grant (RSG) funding for the remainder of the current fiscal year, through June 30, and to take all actions necessary to administer and expend said funds in accordance with grant requirements and Public Act 25-1, including the use of funds to support additional staffing capacity as necessary to carry out eligible program activities.**

**Motion Approved. Winsted/Winchester opposed.**

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 11:33AM. **MOTION (Barger) and 2<sup>nd</sup> (Raap)** and unanimously approved.