



MINUTES OF THE NHCOG MEETING

1/8/2026

Remote Only

Member/Representative Attendance:

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

Others in Attendance:

NHCOG Staff: Robert Phillips, Leonardo Ghio, Erik Shortell, Sarah Better, Annmarie Ryan

Others: Eddie Velazquez, Genevieve Perruccio, Ellen Graham (Rep Blumenthal), Jennine Lupo (Rep Hayes), Katherine Kiefer (Salisbury), Michael D'Elia (The Kennedy Collective), Riley Klein (CT Mirror), Taijah Anderson (Gov Liaison), Jen Pacacha (CT DOT), Patrick Donnelly (NRWIB), Tim Waldron (Eversource), Stephen Ivain (Torrington BOS), and speakers on agenda where noted.

Call to Order: Chairman Jerram called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM.

Public Comment: NONE

Report of Executive Director: Mr. Phillips referenced his monthly report for meetings and other activities of the Executive Director since the last board meeting. In addition, he provided the following updates:

Mr. Phillips referenced his monthly report detailing meetings and other activities undertaken since the last Board meeting. In addition, he provided the following updates:

- The Legislative Committee had planned discussion that could not be finalized due to scheduling conflicts and will be brought back at the next meeting.
- The annual legislative breakfast was reported as successful, with follow-up planned via a participant survey.
- Staff will locate and provide Executive Committee agendas and minutes from the past few years and post them on the website.
- Eversource is scheduled to meet with the Council in March to discuss energy structure and public benefits.
- February and March meetings will be held remotely due to weather considerations
- Sales of the underused Public Works collaborative equipment, including two asphalt recyclers, two straw blowers, and one catch basin cleaner were discussed. The sales increased our balance to approximately **\$482,000**, which is the maintenance and rental fund for future asset acquisition planning.
- The Road Supervisor group also discussed the increased likelihood of OSHA inspections and explored the potential benefit of a regional safety compliance service to assist municipalities in preparing for inspections and avoiding fines.

Administrative Items:

1. Approval of NHCOG Regular Meeting Minutes for December 11, 2025 (**MOTION: Rand, 2nd: LaCava**)

Anne-Marie provided a financial update, reporting that approximately **50% of operating income** has been received, with expenses tracking as expected. Additional updates included:

- A scheduled appointment with Northwest Community Bank to review a low-interest CD and, if appropriate, move funds into a higher-yield STIF account.
 - The annual audit was filed with the State of Connecticut with **no findings**.
2. Approval of Monthly Financial Statement – year to date through November (**MOTION: Arcelaschi, 2nd: Roy**)
 3. Correspondence Received – Letter of Support for Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) from the Federal Highway Administration for safety improvements on Route 4 along the Appalachian Trail – Town of Sharon

Transportation Planning:

The Safe Streets for All Safety Action Plan grant was officially accepted by Federal Highway Headquarters. This will allow NHCOG to develop a comprehensive safety plan for all member towns.

Discussion also included a letter related to a federal lands program along Route 4, which focuses on improving safety at a specific intersection.

Salary Survey Review:

NHCOG reported that five municipal responses have been received to date. Member municipalities were encouraged to complete and submit their salary survey data by **February 1** to support budgeting and analysis.

DEMHS update:

Updates were provided from DEMHS / DESPP, including:

- The retirement of Deputy Commissioner Brenda Bergeron.
- The departure of Attorney Kim Zigich.
- The appointment of Alexis Paquette as Public Information Officer.
- Continued work on Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention initiatives, Behavioural Threat Assessment Team training, and planning related to major events.
- Updates to the Local Emergency Operations Plan template, with final revisions due in January 2027

Legislative Committee: TABLED

Economic Development: TABLED

Other Business:

1. Resident State Trooper Discussion with DESPP

Lieutenant Colonel Chris Fongemie provided an overview of the Resident State Trooper Program, emphasizing customer service, transparency, and data-driven policing. Discussion included:

- Ongoing recruitment and retention challenges, including declining applicant numbers.
- Staffing shortages at both the troop and statewide levels, contributing to overtime demands.
- Leadership continuity efforts in the northwest corner, including recent appointments.
- Plans to introduce a data analytics dashboard providing towns with real-time crime and calls-for-service data.

A meeting with all Western District Resident Trooper towns is scheduled for **January 20 in Bantam**, where troop-level staffing and deficit data will be presented.

2. 2025 CHNA/CHIP Findings and Fit Together Initiative

Representatives (Carla Angevine and Brian Mattiello) from Charlotte Hungerford Hospital presented the Community Health Needs Assessment findings, highlighting that social determinants—particularly food access, housing stability, healthcare access, and environmental conditions—are the primary drivers of health outcomes in Northwest Connecticut.

The **Fit Together** initiative was presented as a regional collaboration focused on promoting active living and healthy eating through environmental, policy, and systems change. Accomplishments include rewritten school wellness policies, partnerships with paediatricians, installation of fitness equipment and gardens, and community physical activity programs.

Council members discussed youth health trends, including screen time impacts, and emphasized the importance of physical activity and continued collaboration.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned (**MOTION: Thompson / 2nd: LaCava**) at 11:19AM. Next meeting February 13th – fully remote.

Respectfully submitted:

NHCOG Staff