NAUGATUCK VALLEY
COUNCIL of GOVERNMENTS
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MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
10:00 a.m., Friday, May 15, 2026

This meeting may be viewed on the NVCOG YouTube channel: CNVMPO-NVCOG MEETING - May

COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING
The meeting was called to order at approximately 10:20 a.m. by Chair Pete Hess. All attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance, and the roll was called.

NVCOG CEOs (v=virtual): N. Warren "Pete" Hess, Mayor, Naugatuck; Frank Tyszka, Mayor, Ansonia (v); Gerard Smith, First Selectman, Beacon Falls; Raymond Butkus, First Selectman, Bethlehem; Ellen Zoppo-Sassu, Mayor, Bristol; Joe DiMartino, Mayor, Derby (v); Jennifer Mahr, First Selectwoman, Middlebury; David Sekorski, Mayor, Plymouth; Bob Chatfield, Mayor, Prospect; Annmarie Drugonis, First Selectwoman, Seymour (v); Mark Lauretti, Mayor, Shelton (v); Paul Pernerewski, Mayor, Waterbury; Mark Raimo, Town Manager, Watertown (v); Paul Zulpa, First Selectman, Woodbury.

GUESTS: Matthew Abbott (CT DOT) (v); Jennifer Brady (FHWA) (v); Lou Mangini (DeLauro) (v); Katie Hedberg (CT DOT) (v); Felix Gottdeiner, Land Use Administrator, Bethlehem.

NVCOG Staff: Executive Director Rick Dunne, Drew Baklik, Trish Bauer, Desira Blanchard, Patricia Bruder, Aaron Budris, Demetre Coles, Heidy Coronel, Richard Crowther, Rich Donovan, Thomas Dougherty, Kevin Ellis, Lana Harrison, Shahadat Hossein, Anthony Lagana, Tim Nolan, Tayo Olaleye, Christine O'Neill, Inez Ortiz, Kate Pipa, Emely Ricci, Ricardo Rodriguez, Joanna Rogalski, Nicole Sullivan, Michael Szpryngel, Daniel Thomas, Faith Thurmond.

PUBLIC COMMENT
None.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL
Paul Zulpa MOVED to approve the minutes of the 4-17-2026 NVCOG meeting; SECONDED by Raymond Butkus. Motion carried unanimously.

Financial Report for the period ending 03-31-2026
The financial report shows budget-to-actual at 59% and G&A expenses at 54%.

Bob Chatfield MOVED to approve the Financial Report for the period ending March 31, 2026; SECONDED by Paul Pernerewski. Motion carried unanimously.

Director's Report

Items from Executive Committee

Organizational Structure and FY 2027 Budget

Rick reported that the preliminary budget that was adopted in January has one substantive change: an anticipated $400,000 increase in the Regional Services Grant didn't pass. To close the gap, transportation planning funds were increased by $280,000 and $120,000 of work was deferred to FY 2028.

A new organizational chart, approved by the executive board, will be implemented on July 1. This structure clarifies reporting lines for reviews and professional development.

Rich Donovan has been officially named Deputy Director. Transportation and Community Planning will merge into "Integrated Mobility and Community Planning", led by Rich Donovan, to better align land use and transportation planning. Lana Harrison and Kate Pipa will serve as supervising planners.

Richard Crowther and Desira Blanchard will be named Directors of their respective divisions.

A verbal offer has been made to a candidate for the Operations Manager position. This person will oversee policies, processes, and internal coordination.

Gerry Smith MOVED to adopt the recommendation of the Executive Committee for the FY 2027 Budget and Organizational Chart; SECONDED by David Sekorski. Motion carried unanimously.

Relocation

Rick explained that we have been working in cooperation with the City to prepare for occupancy in the new office space at 21 West Main Street, 6th floor. The space is expected to be available in mid-June 2026, though the move-in may not occur until July or August. The facilities committee continues to discuss moving logistics, security and renovations. Should the current building become unusable (e.g. HVAC temperatures over 80 degrees) we will switch to a full-time remote schedule.

Office transition expenses are planned for May-June and will be billed against the fund balance in the new budget.

Lease – State of Connecticut – 41 Main Street, Derby

The updated Valley Transit District lease was received via email yesterday. This is the ground lease with the State of Connecticut for our facility at VTD in Derby. The land has been subdivided to exclude the train station. DOT will own/operate the station, and VTD will lease the perimeter of the property where their facility and operations sit.

Bob Chatfield MOVED to authorize the Executive Director to execute the Ground Lease between the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation and Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments; SECONDED by Jennifer Mahr. Motion carried unanimously.

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

Naugatuck River Stormwater Retrofit Assessment

Tom Dougherty reported that NVCOG was awarded a $200,000 grant to develop green stormwater infrastructure designs to improve water quality along the Naugatuck River, covering Thomaston, Watertown, Waterbury, Naugatuck, and Beacon Falls. NVCOG will reach out to the municipalities in the near future to coordinate.

Regional Composter & Rain Barrel Sale Reminder

Christine O'Neill asked the Board for help in promoting the ongoing sale due to very low participation. Flyers were included in the meeting book. Orders are open until June 11, 2026. Pickup on June 13th in Seymour or Thomaston.

Sustainable CT Fellow Reminder – Christine O'Neill

A reminder was given that the summer Sustainable CT Fellow, Grace, will be available to assist municipalities with Sustainable CT certification and other sustainability projects. Please do respond when you receive her email.

BROWNFIELDS DIVISION

Project Status Update

Ricardo spoke on two completed projects - 281 Canal Street in Shelton and 300 Broad Street in Bristol.

Open Solicitation for Assessment projects - Inez Ortiz

Inez Ortiz reported that there is an open solicitation for Brownfield Assessment projects up to $75,000 (10% match of amount requested required from the applicant). The funding is available for municipalities, nonprofits, and private entities.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Municipal ADA Transition Plans – CTDOT Assistance Project

Joanna Rogalski explained that NVCOG is the pilot region for a CT DOT program to help municipalities with ADA Title II compliance. The 18-month project, conducted by the consultant, Beta Group, will involve self-evaluations, creating transition plans, and providing training. NVCOG was chosen for its data quality and will serve as the data repository.

Katie Hedberg from CT DOT explained more about the project. Her presentation may be viewed on the NVCOG YouTube channel CNVMPO-NVCOG MEETING - May at approximately 49:16.

NVCOG and the project team will hold a hybrid regional kickoff meeting – date TBA. Joanna will be reaching out to the municipalities to get the names of their ADA Coordinators and find out which towns have an ADA Commission or Committee.

COMMUNITY PLANNING

Hiring Updates

Lana Harrison reported that NVCOG has hired two new Senior Community Planners. Tucker Beckett, Senior Community Planner, will begin working in June and Sophie McAdara, Senior Housing Planner is relocating from out of state and is expected to start in August.

PA 25-1 Assistance

Lana explained that we have been receiving inquiries from the municipalities about the services and assistance we can provider relative to PA 25-1. She explained that NVCOG is able to present on legislation to P&Z Commissions and talk with Land Use Administrators to exchange ideas and information. WestCOG has an approved vendors list available to the municipalities.

She explained that the proposed 8-30g changes were not adopted.

HB 5521

"May adopt… conservation and traffic mitigation districts in which the municipality may require a minimum number of off-street motor vehicle parking spaces for a residential development that contains **sixteen or fewer** dwelling units."

MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

Emergency Management

The CT Military Department is offering cybersecurity and resilience workshops for municipalities. Contact Conner.finch@ct.gov if you're interested.

There will be an informational meeting on Flood Mitigation Assistance from 1-2 p.m. Tuesday, May 19th. It will provide an overview of the amended FY24 FMA NOFO. Refer to an email sent out on May 12th.

NVC EDD

The CEDS draft is currently in its 30-day public comment period. Comments can be submitted directly to Drew Baklik at dbaklik@nvcogct.gov. Endorsement from the NVCOG Board is sought for the June 12, 2026 meeting.

ROUNDTABLE

None.

ADJOURNMENT

At approximately 11:10 a.m., Paul Pernerewski MOVED to adjourn; SECONDED by Mark Lauretti. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Bruder
Executive Administrative Clerk