

Connecticut River Valley Council of Elected Officials
Minutes
June 29, 2006

Attendance: Please see attached.

I. Chairman Phil Miller called the meeting to order at noon in the conference room at the Deep River Public Library. Host Dick Smith provided a delicious buffet lunch. Chairman Miller called for round table introductions. (See separate attendance list.)

II Minutes

Tim Griswold moved that the minutes of the May 25, 2006 meeting be approved as circulated. The motion was seconded by Mike Pace and unanimously approved.

III. Guest

Chairman Miller welcomed Bill Villano of the Workforce Alliance. The Alliance covers 30 towns and is governed by an executive committee composed of seven Chief Elected Officials, three of which belong to the CRVCEO. Bill displayed a map showing the 30 towns involved featuring the One Stop centers in Meriden, Middletown, New Haven and Hamden and delineating the labor market. The Alliance is dedicated to upgrading the skills of workers. Most of the activity is along the I91 corridor in the manufacturing and health care industries. The Summertime Initiative is providing municipal jobs for 14 and 15 years olds. It is concentrated in New Haven. Interest was expressed in expanding it to smaller towns.

Transportation contracts for the Workforce alliance are with the DSS (Department of Social Services). To qualify for transportation assistance, one must be TANIF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) eligible. Mike Pace asked about the underground economy. He expressed concern about the economic drivers of low-pay industries and the cost to towns. He explained that Old Saybrook has 18 good kids who attend school regularly who are living in motels.

Bill displayed and commented on the 2006 State of the Workforce. He noted that Connecticut has had no significant growth in employment since 1989. The jobs that were lost paid an average of \$54,000 plus benefits. The jobs that have been gained pay \$32,000 and only half provide benefits. Many are at \$27,000 or \$28,000 without health care. Anticipated jobs will require education. In the past, job training usually remained current for twelve to fifteen years. Now employees should expect to upgrade their skills every 30 to 36 months. An effort has begun to require students to stay in school until they are 18 or receive a diploma. There is no place in the workforce for anyone without at least a high school education. Fourteen years of education now equals the previous twelve year level. The Workforce Alliance recommends that anyone maintaining a "C" average and having less than \$45,000 annual income be granted full tuition to college. He noted that college is much less expensive than jail.

IV. Reports from Legislators

A. Betty Wagner reported that Rep. Simmons will be in Madison on July 6 for a regional Public Hearing on the Long Island Sound Stewardship Act. The hearing will be held at 7:30 PM in the Old Town Hall.

Betty reported that since the House and Senate versions of the Immigration Act vary so significantly, the House will hold hearings in various parts of the country. She expects that one will be held in Connecticut.

The Federal Budget is out of the individual committees and has been sent to Ways and Means.

Tim Griswold asked when the FIRK hearing will held for Broadwater. Betty will inquire.

B. Rep. James Spallone reported that there is awareness in the legislature of the problems in the job market. He made reference to several accomplishments of the previous session that addressed various aspects of the problem. As Vice-Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Jamie reviewed the progress and frustrations of FOI vs. Clark.

V. Old Business

A. Revitalization

Chairman Miller spoke on behalf of the Revitalization Committee. He noted that there are currently 7 or 8 \$50,000 loans, each tailored to fit the client. He hopes to create a "one size fits all" loan format. The group is asking the legislature for \$350,000 more. He stated that he would like to provide the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce with more money for administering the committee.

VI. New Business

Chairman Miller announced that NIMS training will be available to all CRVCEO members on July 26 at the Estuary Council of Seniors headquarters in Old Saybrook. Series 100, Series 400 and Series 700 sessions will be held starting at 8AM. Lunch will be available at noon at the ECS, followed by the regular CRVCEO meeting. Training for Department of Public Works Personnel will be available starting at 1PM.

Since no town is eligible to receive federal disaster funds until the CEO has completed all three series and has become NIMS certified, members are urged to attend. Chester is the only town in the region that is NIMS certified.

CRERPA staff was asked to send repeated memos urging all CEOs to obtain NIMS training and making them aware of the time and location of the session.

Chairman Miller thanked Dick Smith for his hospitality.

Mike Pace moved that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting was adjourned at 1:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Wini Olson, Staff