

Council of Governments
June 26, 2008

Tompkins County Council of Governments
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Meeting Minutes

Approved 9-25-08

Members Present: T/Ulysses – D. Austic
V/Groton – E. Congers
T/ Danby – R. Dietrich C/Ithaca - C. Peterson
T/Enfield – F. Pudofalski
T/Dryden – M. Sumner
T/Groton – G. Morey
Tompkins County – Martha Robertson; Michael Koplinka-Loehr
T/Ithaca – B. Goodman

Municipalities not in Attendance:

T/Caroline, T. Lansing, T/Newfield, V/Cayuga Heights, V/Dryden, V.Freeville,
V/Trumansburg

Others: P. Dougherty (Deputy Clerk); L. Shawley, Danby; M. Lynch, Tompkins County Public Information; D. Lauper, Tompkins County Administration; L. Shurtleff, Tompkins County Emergency Response; D. Coogan, K. Schlather, Cornell Cooperative Extension; E. Marx-Tompkins County Planning Department.

Meeting called to order at 3:05 p.m.

Mr. Austic announced that agenda items would be moved around so that SPCA could have more time at the end of the meeting.

Mr. Whicher informed the group that starting with the July 24 meeting Michelle Pottorff, Administrative staff for the County Legislature, will be taking the minutes and working with the Chair to set agendas for the regular monthly TCCOG meetings. Ms. Pottorff's contact information is:

E-mail address: mpottorff@tompkins-co.org

Telephone Number: (607) 274-5434

Jackie Kippola, Risk Manager for Tompkins County, will be out of the office from July 2 to September 2, 2008. Ms. Kippola coordinates efforts for the Health Benefits Steering committee. If you need information regarding health benefits contact Administration and someone there will assist you.

Motion: To accept the May meeting minutes.

Made by: C. Peterson

Second: M. Robertson

Carried unanimously

Introduction of Attorney John Powers of Hancock & Estabrook Law Firm:

At the April TCCOG meeting a resolution was passed in support of hiring the Hancock & Estabrook Law Firm as legal counsel for the Health Benefits Consortium. On May 21, 2008, resolution number 100 was passed by the Tompkins County Legislature authorizing agreement for legal counsel for the Health Benefits Consortium with the Law firm of Hancock and Estabrook. Mr. Whicher introduced Attorney John Powers of Hancock and Estabrook who has been appointed as our consortium attorney.

Mr. Powers stated that he performs a variety of legal services but the most applicable to this group would be his firm's representation of the Central New York Health Insurance Fund, which is a health insurance cooperative of various school districts in Onondaga, Cortland and Madison (O-C-M) Counties. Hancock

and Estabrook assisted the O-C-M Consortium in creating a revised and amended consortium agreement. This process involved ensuring the agreement complied with the recent amendments to Article 5-G of the New York General Municipal Law, which governs such consortiums. An essential part of this process was to ensure that the agreement permitted the Board of Directors, and respective constituent districts, enough flexibility to react to changing conditions in the health insurance market and the needs of individual districts in their own budgeting and labor negotiation processes. Through representation of the O-C-M Consortium, Hancock and Estabrook have been called upon to provide legal opinions on corporate, insurance, and employment issues. Mr. Powers is the attorney assigned to our Consortium, however, he is able to draw information and support from a deep bench of attorneys experienced in many different areas of law that may affect municipal consortium activities. Attorney Powers believes we have an advantage working with Locey and Cahill, he considers them one of the most knowledgeable consultants in the State.

Attorney Powers stated that the most significant part of his work would be at inception, setting everything in place. The best value legal counsel can provide is with good risk management, he said. Some areas Attorney Powers can provide advice and counsel for the County Health Benefits Consortium are:

- Initial formation of the agreement itself
- Shepherding the approval and ratification of the agreement
- Policy decisions and amendments
- Contract review
- Compliance with all legal issues
- Corporate Governance
- Process and procedure
- Litigation issues
- Legislative processes
- Compliance with Article 47 of the NYS Insurance law
- Compliance with Article 5G of the General Municipal Law (the statutory provisions that govern a cooperative of this type)

Mr. Whicher asked that questions and concerns go through Administration and TCCOG before being sent to Mr. Powers, in the interest of saving time. The agenda stated that Attorney Powers would give an opinion on our proposed agreement, however, he was handed the agreement when he arrived at the meeting. The time frame for producing an opinion is 60 days.

Cooperative Extension-Training Initiative for Municipalities:

Dick Coogen, President of the Board and Ken Schlauther, Executive Director for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County gave a brief presentation regarding training opportunities. Mr. Coogen came before this board last summer to discuss municipal training, however, there was a lack of direction as to what types of training the municipalities would like. He asked what types of trainings, if any, TCCOG members/municipal governments would like Cooperative Extension to provide.

Mr. Schlaugther advised the group that Cooperative Extension offers a variety of trainings all over the country. As an example, Mr. Schlaugther brought in an informational document on training ideas from the University of New Hampshire regarding "Engaging Citizens in the Community".

They can offer:
Planning Board Trainings

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Zoning Board Trainings
Training on Board Interactions
New Board Member Trainings
Trainings that do not cross municipal laws
Simple or very comprehensive trainings

What they need is for TCCOG members to advise Cooperative Extension as to what they would like. Mr. Austic asked TCCOG members to send him information pertaining to the types of training they would like to see Cooperative Extension offer the municipalities.

Emergency Management Report:

Emergency Response Teams: Mr. Shurtleff reported that there are three levels of emergency response teams.

1. Emergency Management Strategic Group (EMSG)-Chair, Shawn Martel Moore: Members of this group consist of Tompkins County Department Heads and senior staff who are organizing Continuity-of-Operations Plans (COOP) for the departments within the County and the County as an organization.
2. Tompkins County Emergency Management Planning Committee (TCEMPC)-Chair, Cheryl Nelson: Membership for this committee encompasses County, City and other municipal governments as well as organizations and agencies within Tompkins County. This committee is working on a collaborative effort to utilize community resources in the event of a major emergency.
3. Tompkins County Department of Emergency Response Center-Director, Lee Shurtleff: This entity interacts with State and Federal Government as well as local municipalities. Emergency Response office is charged with coordination of fire, emergency medical services and emergency management activities as well as public safety communications.

Emergency Response is working on a reverse 911 system that has the capability to use the telephone system and contact the public in emergency situations. For example, in a hazardous waste spill or flooding, the people who are affected can be contacted via the telephone and evacuated.

Tompkins County has entered into a period of very intense emergency-management planning, that started in the 1990's and was enhanced in 2001. Over the years the Emergency Planning Committee (EPC) has had to adopt an all-hazard approach including, but not limited to: terrorism; bio-terrorism, influenza epidemic, hazardous waste spills, utility failure, and natural disasters. The EPC has also grown in membership from fire departments, law enforcement, and emergency medical services: to also include public works, public health, and municipal involvement. In working with the County internal group we hope to integrate County resources (including all municipalities), equipment, and assets into an overall emergency plan. When a large event occurs the goal is to keep everyone at a local level self-sufficient for at least 72 hours.

Four areas included in Emergency Management are:

- Preparedness: Prepare the public so people can provide for themselves for at least 24 hours.
- Mitigation: Hazard mitigation plan is being developed. Emergency Response is working with the County Planning Department and looking for grants.
- Response: This is a continual planning process with drills and exercises.
- Recovery: This is the largest component to work on. It entails working with the State and Federal Governments.

Newer aspects of the Comprehensive Emergency Plan include:

- Working closer with the school districts.

- A transportation task force headed by Nancy Oltz at TCAT.
 - Looking at what is out there and how to facilitate action plans.
- The Red Cross is looking to update sheltering agreements.
- The State Department of Health has decided that County shelters have the responsibility to meet the medical requirements of special needs citizens.
- Animal care issues are being looked into.
- There is now a Human Needs Taskforce Chaired by Patricia Carey, Commissioner of Department of Social Services.
- The County Public Health Department has a Bio-terrorism group to cover epidemic scenarios.

Emergency Communications System Update:

The County's new 800-megahertz system is up and running. Mr. Shurtleff displayed a map of the area the system covers and stated that our goal is to provide a solid, common communications system for all public agencies to utilize. The construction phase is essentially complete. We have signed full acceptance of the radio system. In May the County and Motorola tested every sector of the County and had good communications 95 out of 100 times. The coverage exceeded what the County was promised. Adjustments are being made to the system and strong gains are being accomplished.

We are moving into Phase 2, which includes the wireless telephone system. One step up from that will be with pictometry, which will provide aerial views of roadways and buildings. Mobile Data is the last piece to fit in place. (Putting computers in the cars for electronic messaging.)

Liability Agreements Among Tompkins County Municipalities For Shared Personnel and Equipment in a Major Emergency: Mr. Shurtleff explained that there is no agreement at the State level. Something went out a couple of years ago but Lee did not know what happened with that. He believes there is a shared-services agreement at the municipal level.

Fire regulations, section 209, established mutual-aid guidelines for Fire and EMS. Those guidelines should be applied across all venues, but legislation is stalled at the State level.

Other issues Mr. Shurtleff discussed were:

The possibility of a countywide workers-compensation plan. He will need assistance from each municipality with establishing a population base and in identifying loss and claim records.

Looking at health benefits being offered to volunteer firefighters as an incentive for their service.

Cornell Housing and Transportation Initiatives:

Mr. Marx stated that Cornell University made a commitment to invest \$20 Million into the community over the next ten years: \$10 Million each in affordable housing and transportation initiatives. It is a major step for Cornell to identify the housing and transportation critical need in this area and to work with the community to improve conditions. (An article regarding this is in the June 26 Ithaca Journal.)

Housing: Cornell has been collaborating with the Affordable Housing Action Group, an ad hoc group assembled by the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce representing major housing groups in the county.

There are four primary areas that need improving in the housing market:

1. Inclusionary and incentive zoning
2. Employer assistance with housing
3. Community housing trust

4. Providing funds for pre-development costs to help get projects of the ground

Cornell plans to assist the community with numbers 2, 3 & 4. They also plan to spend some funds on direct development in housing close to the CU campus.

Transportation: Cornell suggested that Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council put together a program of projects that could be done over the next ten years. Cornell investment is intended to leverage State and Federal funding. Cornell will share the local costs not covered by grants. These projects will not cover things like road paving. The items covered will be to enhance alternative transportation programs such as pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit.

These integrated housing and transportation projects will contribute to a more sustainable community. Principles of the County Comprehensive Plan were incorporated into this project. Hopefully, this is just the beginning of a fruitful partnership with Cornell.

Dog Control/SPCA:

Motion: To table voting on the Dog Control resolution until the July meeting.

Made by: R. Dietrich

Second: D. Barber

Discussion followed, key topics:

- How did the committee become just two members?
- Cannot vote on this until other municipal members have reviewed and approved
- Not in the best interest of the taxpayers
- Need to do the RFP
- Funding can be another discussion, in tandem with RFQ
- We need to compile a list of information from each municipality regarding:
 - Licensing fees collected for 2007
 - Amount each local law has established for dog licensing fees
 - Latest dog census information available
 - Total number of dog-control-related responses from the SPCA
- Original intent of licensing was to cover costs of dog control

Vote on the Motion:

6 for and 3 opposed

Carried

Voting on the proposed resolution for Dog Control is tabled until the July 24th TCCOG meeting.

Mr. Austic will compile the data from the municipalities, and requests that the information be in his office by, Wednesday, July 2nd.

Simultaneously, the Request For Proposals (RFP) will be sent out. The proposed RFP was available at the meeting for review. Any substantive comments will need to be submitted to Mr. Whicher by Wednesday, July 2nd to allow Administration to release the RFP next week. Critical timeline for municipal budgets is August. The RFP timeline is approximately 60 days. We will do our best to have information to the municipalities by the end of August.

Mr. Dietrich asked that a special meeting regarding Dog Control be set up today. Mayor Peterson said that the Controller would represent the City at that meeting. Information and suggestions can be sent out via email. Everyone will need to submit proposals for fee formulas before that meeting to Mr. Dietrich or Mr. Engman.

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Next Meeting Topics:

Dog Control. Topics for discussion:

1. Request for proposals
2. SPCA dog call figures
3. Funding formulas
4. Municipal information on census and licensing fees

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 4:40 pm

Made by: D. Austic

Second: M. Sumner