

Attachment A

Minutes of July 30th, 2020
MPO Meeting

DRAFT

Special Meeting
Greater Bridgeport & Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization

****ALL ATTENDEES ATTENDED REMOTELY****

June 11, 2020 at 10:00 AM

Connecticut Metropolitan Council of Governments
1000 Lafayette Boulevard, Bridgeport, CT 06604

Name

Representing

David Casseti, Mayor (conference call)	Ansonia
Joseph Ganim, Mayor (Ken Flatto, Proxy)	Bridgeport
Richard Dziekan, Mayor	Derby
David Bindleglass, First Selectman	Easton
Ken Kellogg, First Selectman	Monroe
Kurt Miller, First Selectman	Seymour
Laura Hoydick, Mayor, Chairman	Stratford
Vicki Tesoro, First Selectman	Trumbull
Joe Kubic	GBT
Patrick Carleton, Deputy Director	MetroCOG
Matthew Fulda, Executive Director	MetroCOG
Colleen Kelleher, Finance Director	MetroCOG
Meghan Sloan, Planning Director	MetroCOG
Rick Dunne, Executive Director	NVCOG
Mark Nielsen, Planning Director	NVCOG
Christian Meyer	NVCOG
Doug Holcomb	GBT
Sara Radacsi	CTDOT
Jennifer Carrier	FHWA

Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by the chair, Mayor Hoydick, at 10:34am.

Mr. Fulda performed a roll call.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. September 29, 2019 (Attachment A)

A motion to approve the minutes from September 29 was made by First Selectman Kellogg and seconded by First Selectman Miller.

A roll call vote was taken.

First Selectman Tesoro – yes

First Selectman Kellogg – yes

Mayor Hoydick – yes

Mr. Flatto – yes

First Selectman Bindelglass – yes

First Selectman Miller – yes

Mayor Dziekan – yes

Mayor Cassetti – yes

The motion carried unanimously.

2. June 11, 2020 (Attachment B)

A motion to approve the minutes from June 11 was made by First Selectman Miller and seconded by Mayor Dziekan.

A roll call vote was taken.

First Selectman Tesoro – yes

First Selectman Kellogg – yes

Mayor Hoydick – yes

Mr. Flatto – yes

First Selectman Bindelglass – yes

First Selectman Miller – yes

Mayor Dziekan – yes

Mayor Cassetti – yes

The motion carried unanimously.

3.

IV. ACTION ITEMS

1. **Redesignation of GBVMPO: Resolution 2020-01 (Attachment C)**

Mr. Fulda explained that as discussed previously federal regulations require an affirmative vote from the Chief Elected Officials representing 75% of the population of the MPO along with an affirmative vote from the CEO of the largest city in the MPO, in this case Bridgeport

The interpretation from Federal Highways is that an alternate would be permitted if you have a local framework in place. From Federal Highway's perspective a proxy vote is allowed as part of a redesignation vote

Mr. Dunne clarified that there had been prior discussion among staff and members regarding the 75% plus the concurrence of the primary city. In the past this had been discussed as two separate actions where the vote of representatives representing 75% of the population had to vote in the affirmative and the Chief Elected Official of the center city needed to concur.

Mr. Fulda added that based on the population requirements, without the City of Bridgeport voting in the affirmative, the 75% threshold would not be met.

Mr. Dunne wanted to note that there were not two separate actions.

Mayor Hoydick inquired if Mr. Nielsen was weighing in or had Mr. Dunne covered everything.

Mr. Nielsen announced that Mr. Fulda and Mr. Dunne had covered everything but reiterated what Mr. Fulda indicated. We were working under the assumption that we needed the CEO to be present for the vote. The ability to have a proxy made it a little easier.

Mayor Hoydick noted that Mr. Flatto is the largest city's proxy and understood he has had discussions with Mr. Fulda. Mayor Hoydick requested bringing the resolution to a vote and commented that if Mr. Flatto would like to address it, it can be done after the motion is made and seconded.

Mr. Flatto confirmed after the motion is seconded he would like to start a discussion.

A motion to approve the resolution for redesignation of the GBVMPO was made by First Selectman Miller of Seymour and seconded by First Selectman Dziekan of Derby.

Mr. Flatto explained that on behalf of Mayor Ganim, Mr. Flatto was appointed proxy for a couple reasons; one being Mr. Flatto served on the MPO for many years and even chaired the MPO twice during that period, so he has a good working knowledge of MPO matters. In addition, Mayor Ganim's scheduling, a lot of things over the last few months have taken a lot of time, during later morning hours he is often on calls. Bridgeport's reservations about this matter still exist and is partly because of the confusion as to how this benefits the Metropolitan Planning Organization or the Greater Bridgeport Valley Region. Mr. Flatto is trying to understand so he can explain to his administration the benefits that would accrue to them and so far, has not heard a rational explanation as to why this is positive. What Mr. Flatto is concerned about personally, on behalf of Bridgeport, is that if this action were taken it would make the MPO's number way smaller than any other MPO in the state. This causes significant reservations and then on top of that there has not been unanimity in the Valley. With all the uncertainties, as a proxy, Mr. Flatto cannot take affirmative action and would have to abstain. The Mayor has asked for more information, Mr. Flatto is trying to get that and appreciates the funding ramifications of this change should our MPO be reduced. Should we remain as a reduced size MPO, there may not be any ramifications now but Mr. Flatto does not know how to guarantee that there won't be a change down the road with how the state allocates its formulas based on MPO size or per capita size, so Bridgeport has a lot of concerns. Mr. Flatto is hoping someone can explain some of the rationale or what they think the benefits are, which would be helpful. Mr. Flatto appreciated everyone's patience and understanding of Bridgeport's position.

Mayor Hoydick thanked Mr. Flatto and based on the COG meetings, thinks that she can address Mr. Flatto's question as to why the realignment was important to the Valley and the Greater Bridgeport Region. The Valley was aligning itself with Waterbury, as their largest city, and therefore focusing more of the resources and planning to the Route 8/84 corridor which is symbiotic to that section of the middle of the state, and for us it is exactly the opposite where we are aligned on the Metro-North/ 95 corridor. Our hope would be that after this redesignation happens we would be able to align ourselves with the towns on the Long Island Sound and 95 corridor. There have been discussions about this over the last two

years with Chief Elected Officials of other towns, most are in favor but there a few who are not so we would be doing this process again. Like the One Coast One Future grant that we had when Congressman Shays was in office, we saw the alignment of the coastal cities and municipalities in Fairfield County working very well to support all of our efforts, not just with transportation, which Mayor Hoydick understands the MPO body is about, but with marketing, housing, transportation and entertainment clusters that we experience. That collaborative model had just gotten off the ground when the grant funding was eliminated. That is Mayor Hoydick's perspective and she encouraged others to share their thoughts.

First Selectman Miller of Seymour added the three Valley towns are on board with this move so First Selectman Miller is unsure as to why Mr. Flatto is saying that the Valley is not in agreement. Shelton does not want to make the move and to the chairman's point, something that has been discussed for three years now, Shelton is staying and Ansonia, Derby and Seymour would be the three towns that are moving. To Valley's point they feel that they align better with the Waterbury MPO because of things like the Waterbury branch line and Route 8/84. Those are things that are extremely important to the Valley and this MPO is more focused on the 95 corridor and that makes 100% sense, it's just a matter of where the importance lies for each group and for Valley it makes more sense to be with the Waterbury group. First Selectman Miller noted that this is not a new thing, as it has been discussed for several years. If Mayor Ganim has questions Valley would be happy to meet with him and have those discussions, but to date Valley has been unable to get a meeting with Mayor Ganim.

Mr. Fulda asked Ms. Carrier, regarding the question Mr. Flatto has about funding. Mr. Fulda reached out to DOT last week regarding surface transportation block grant funding that exists for the Bridgeport Stamford urbanized area. Mr. Fulda forwarded this information to Mr. Flatto as well as the chairman. In accordance with federal regulations and as practiced by CTDOT, STP Urban, the money allocated to the Bridgeport Stamford area for transportation improvements, is not sub allocated or broken out by MPO. It is distributed to the entire urbanized area which is basically the majority of what is the Southwestern MPO, the Greater Bridgeport Valley MPO and does include some municipalities outside of the MPO because of the way some of the urbanized areas are aggregated and drawn statistically. That funding mechanism is never broken down by MPO so a modification to the MPO boundaries does not change how that funding is used. Mr. Fulda deferred to Ms. Carrier at Federal Highways, but all of the funding mechanisms from Federal Highways, outside of LOTCIP funding which is state funded and given to the COGs, all of Federal Highways money is allocated based on either urbanized area or other statistical aggregations of areas that Federal

Highways uses to group municipalities together in regions for funding. To Mr. Flatto' question regarding future funding, there are no funding mechanisms that Mr. Fulda is aware of from the Federal Highways Administration that fund directly to any MPO and Mr. Fulda does not expect that to change, it has never been the case, it has always been statistical aggregation of the area that the funding is provided for.

Ms. Carrier appreciated Mr. Fulda's comments and is sure many are familiar with the Surface Transportation Block grant funding or STPBG, many items that are getting approved in the TIP regularly. It is correct that FHWA is looking at the urbanized area and the TMA or Transportation Management Areas. Primarily Bridgeport, Stamford, Trumbull and Shelton makes up the Bridgeport/Stamford urbanized area. The state may be able to talk a little about the LOTCIP funding and Mr. Fulda and Mr. Dunne can talk to that but Ms. Carrier thinks that that's collaboratively coordinated at the MPO level but that is something that Ms. Carrier does not expect to be an issue. Ms. Carrier noted that Mr. Fulda's comments agree with that.

Mr. Fulda commented that LOTCIP is allocated by the CT Legislature and distributed by COG regions and not the MPO, so again Naugatuck Valley is already receiving the LOTCIP portions for the four valley municipalities and that would not change based on the MPO redesignation, nor would anything that comes to MetroCOG for LOTCIP.

Mr. Nielsen added that Valley is part of the Bridgeport Stamford transportation management area, and because of that the MPOs in that area, SWRMPO and GBVMPO, created a Transportation MOU that talks about how we coordinate transportation planning and sets priorities for the federal transportation dollars in that TMA. There would be separate MPOs but staff works collaboratively on a wide range of issues. Even separated there would still be a lot of collaboration and the Transportation MOU requires the COGs to share documents and review and comment on each other's documents and come up with a consistent coordinated transportation plan.

Mr. Dunne noted that nothing really changes except for three items; we all have to sit in these interminable meetings where as Mr. Flatto's predecessor from Fairfield said at the last vote there is not common interest, Fairfield and Trumbull at the time didn't see any commonality with the Valley. The second thing, the MPO is wasting money frankly and the regions' staff is being shorted funding because they're forced to sub allocate dollars for planning from MetroCOG to Naugatuck Valley for these towns. Work is getting duplicated. Valley is doing

work, technically MetroCOG has to check it out, there may be some overlap, small overlap, but overlap nonetheless and unnecessary. The last thing is, Mr. Dunne has not discerned a single reason not to do this that anyone has expressed that is practical and not political. Mr. Dunne welcomed Mr. Flatto to explain the positioning and opposition from Bridgeport.

Ms. Radacsi added that funding wouldn't be reduced in the sense for the work plan right now, the money comes and is allocated through MetroCOG and as NVCOG staff is working on using staff time it is just an administrative shift of the money that CTDOT would have to do in the future and would not be taking money away from the planning funds because that's the way it is set up now. It's administratively a minor process to change and transfer the money over.

Mr. Flatto appreciated everyone's comments and understood it had been discussed in the past and belabored and acknowledged everyone's frustrations. It is a bit awkward, if it was a unanimous situation it would be an easier situation, but as the Valley is aware there is a member who is not happy about this suggestion and would be voting in opposition, making it difficult from some perspectives. Mr. Flatto promised to redouble efforts and have internal discussions in Bridgeport. To First Selectman Miller's point, Mr. Flatto is unsure if anyone was able to reach Mayor Ganim but if Mr. Flatto can facilitate, which he has tried; but he will redouble his efforts and appreciates everyone's understanding and his having to abstain, which is not what some people want to hear. Mr. Flatto thanked everyone for explaining so thoroughly.

First Selectman Miller made a point of order, and noted he was not an attorney, that an abstention is an agreement with the majority in Robert's Rules if he is not mistaken. Bridgeport has to vote yes or no and if they abstain the vote should count.

Mr. Dunne deferred to Ms. Carrier but believed that the requirement is an affirmative vote from the major city.

Mr. Fulda responded that having read the regulations recently, he believed the federal regulations would supersede Robert's Rules, and required an affirmative vote from the largest city in the MPO, an abstention would not carry as an affirmative vote.

First Selectman Miller would like to understand Bridgeport's position, so he has it clear, even though there have been multiple valid points brought up by professional staff, this move makes sense. It would make sense and would not

have any impact on the monetary aspect of it. The reason Bridgeport is not sure or does not want to move forward with this is because one city, that's not affected by this, that's not even moving, doesn't feel that this is the right direction. The City of Bridgeport, essentially, is taking its cues from the city of Shelton.

Mr. Flatto responded that the concern from Bridgeport is the size of the MPO and the reduction in the size of the MPO. The goal is to be a larger MPO at some point which is the rationale some of the predecessor members had expressed in the hope of doing it, but it didn't get anywhere. Mr. Flatto thinks it is more than that, at the same time there are some valid points that he hears about the corridors and the difference in the corridors. Mr. Flatto has an administration that he works with and must weigh that aspect as well. The best suggestion that he can make is to find a way to get through this one way or the other, he knows it's been a long time and everyone has been patiently asking about it for a while.

Mr. Fulda promised to provide a verbatim text of the discussion from each person's perspective so Mr. Flatto can have it for his discussions.

Mr. Flatto responded that that would be helpful and thanked Mr. Fulda.

Mayor Hoydick noted that there is a motion on the floor and pending the outcome, but based on how Mr. Flatto said he intends to vote, she anticipates this will fail. Mayor Hoydick thinks that another step the board can do is reach out to the Southwest MPO again and ask Chairman Stevenson to meet with MetroCOG to discuss all of this and the alignment with their largest cities who have been supportive of this change previously. We would have to revisit this again and maybe they would consider entertaining it and the vote can be simultaneous between the COGs and the two MPOs. Mayor Hoydick inquired if there was any other discussion.

Mayor Dziekan commented that he meant no disrespect but felt that it was ridiculous that the three communities are being held hostage the way they are. Until a better solution can be determined for the City of Bridgeport, Mayor Dziekan felt the action was unfair and not right.

Mayor Dziekan added that Bridgeport had this lined up as to how they were going to vote, they knew this years ago probably and to have the CEOs constantly here, who are all busy running cities, for Mayor Ganim once again not being present is showing total disrespect, especially to the three Valley towns who want to leave. Mayor Dziekan requested that Mr. Flatto sends that message to Mayor Ganim,

personally from Mayor Dziekan that he is never here and Mr. Flatto get in contact with him and have a conversation, total disrespect. Mayor Dziekan wishes Bridgeport would rethink this, the evidence is there saying that it will be better for Bridgeport and the Valley. Its better for Naugatuck Valley and that's what Derby is a part of. Mayor Dziekan notes Bridgeport has the 95 corridor and that's what Bridgeport is more concentrated on. Mayor Dzieken commends them, and wants to see them do well, but needs the Route 8 sector being taken care of too and doesn't see it working this way with the MPO.

Mr. Flatto commented that he doesn't believe Bridgeport is aiming to disrespect anyone and was sorry that is the way it was being perceived. He noted that some Mayors have been there for a while, this Metropolitan Planning Organization has been in existence for a number of decades, Bridgeport is very involved in the Route 8 corridor, Bridgeport is very concerned about the Route 8 Corridor just as they are concerned about the I-95 corridor. For all of those decades no one has made a suggestion for a community not to want to stay in this region up until 2 years ago. It has not been a longstanding policy effort and he understands it's been a long effort from personal perspectives but from the MPO perspective this is not a long-term goal. Mr. Flatto will take back all the positive points, not to sound too negative, and try to figure this out.

Mayor Hoydick asked if there is any other discussion and requested that Mr. Fulda call the roll.

Mr. Fulda called the roll:

First Selectman Tesoro, Trumbull– Yes

First Selectman Kellogg, Monroe– Yes

Mayor Hoydick, Stratford – Yes

First Selectman Bindelglass, Easton – Yes

Mr. Flatto, Proxy Bridgeport – Abstained

First Selectman Miller, Seymour- Yes

Mayor Dziekan, Derby – Yes

Mayor Cassetti, Ansonia – Yes

Mr. Fulda announced the motion carried 7-0 with one abstention but as previously discussed federal regulations require a vote from the largest city in the MPO, in this case the City of Bridgeport with an abstention. Although the motion carried it did not pass the requirements of Federal Highways and therefore does not pass.

Mr. Flatto inquired if there was a possibility of reconsideration in the next few months what would that process be.

Mr. Fulda explained that because it was a motion that had a first a second and a vote, we can add the voting item to any action item. There would be no reason we could not raise this item again, there is nothing prohibiting that.

Mr. Flatto noted that he would try to communicate through the Chair over the next month.

First Selectman Miller clarified that for any business to be transacted by this MPO it takes two quorums, and a quorum of the Valley is 3 out of 5 to be clear.

Mr. Fulda concurred that VTD has a vote on this board.

First Selectman Miller inquired what would happen if Seymour, Ansonia and Derby chose not to go to meetings anymore.

Mr. Fulda responded that there would be no quorum achieved as happened in late winter and early spring with the safety performance targets, in which case a meeting could not be called to order and no action items could be taken up. Per the bylaws of the GBVMPO it would require a quorum from the Greater Bridgeport Region as well as the Valley region.

First Selectman Miller thanked Mr. Fulda and wanted to clarify on the record.

Mr. Flatto expressed hopes that the board would recognize its responsibility as members to the MPO and how important business is needed.

Mayor Hoydick clarified that the redesignation vote was in the affirmative with one abstention but because it does not pass the Federal Highways criteria the redesignation vote fails.

Mr. Fulda stated that is correct.

2. Amendment FFY 2018-2021 TIP/STIP, FTA Projects, Resolution 2020-05 (Attachment D)

- i. 0410-xxxx, Greater Bridgeport Transit: Fareboxes & Cross Street Facility Rehab

Mr. Fulda explained the resolution and turned the discussion over to Mr. Holcomb who noted the resolution is for the continuation of previous work.

- ii. 0036-xxxx, Valley Transit District: 2020 Administration Program

Mr. Nielsen explained that every two years money is allocated to purchase administrative equipment.

A motion to approve the resolutions was made by Mr. Flatto and seconded by Mayor Cassetti.

A roll call vote was taken.

First Selectman Tesoro – yes

First Selectman Kellogg – yes

Mayor Hoydick – yes

Mr. Flatto – yes

First Selectman Bindelglass – yes

First Selectman Miller – yes

Mayor Dziekan – yes

Mayor Cassetti – yes

The motion carried unanimously.

V. **OTHER BUSINESS**

1. Next Meetings:

i. September 24, 2020

ii. November 19, 2020

VI. **ADJOURN**

A motion to adjourn was made by Mayor Cassetti and seconded by First Selectman Tesoro. The meeting adjourned at 11:17am.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Fulda, Executive Director,
MetroCOG
MPO Co-Secretary

Rick Dunne, Executive Director,
NVCOG
MPO Co-Secretary

DRAFT