

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Honorable Town Council Members

FROM: Karl F. Kilduff, Town Manager

DATE: March 4, 2020

Please find my report concerning various items of interest to the Town Council and community.

1. Council Business:

- a) **FY2020-21 Budget:** To prepare the Council to act on the budget before referring it to a public hearing, I prepared an update comparing the Town Manager's Proposed Budget to the Town Council's Budget (discussed as of February 25, 2020).
- b) **Union Negotiations:** As many of you are aware, all of the Town's collective bargaining agreements will expire at the end of the fiscal year. To that end, the Town is moving forward with our unions to start the discussion toward successor agreements. The process begins with setting ground rules for negotiations. We are at the point of setting ground rules and establishing early dates for negotiations. There will be more to report as progress is made. Ultimately, the negotiated agreement will have to be acted upon by the Town Council.

2. Upcoming Events:

- a) March 5, 2020 Police Department Promotion and Award Ceremony (6:00 PM)
- b) March 9, 2020 Board of Police Commissioners (6:00 PM)
- c) March 9, 2020 Planning & Zoning Commission (6:00 PM)
- d) March 10, 2020 Economic Development Commission (6:30 PM)
- e) March 18, 2020 Town Council Regular Meeting (7:00 PM)
- f) March 18, 2020 Zoning Board of Appeals (7:00 PM)

3. Connecticut Conference of Municipalities:

- a) No report at this time. The CCM Legislative Committee will meet on March 5, 2020.

4. River COG:

- a) The River COG met on February 26, 2020. Topics of note that were discussed included;
 - Community Rating System (CRS) – DEEP presented the CRS, which is a voluntary activity under the National Flood Insurance Program which could aid in reducing flood insurance premiums. The CRS requires staff involvement to complete the application, participate in a FEMA audit and keep records of activities performed. The COG presentation revolved around participating in the CRS for only open space acquisition (as it has a lower administrative burden). This is an item worth further review.

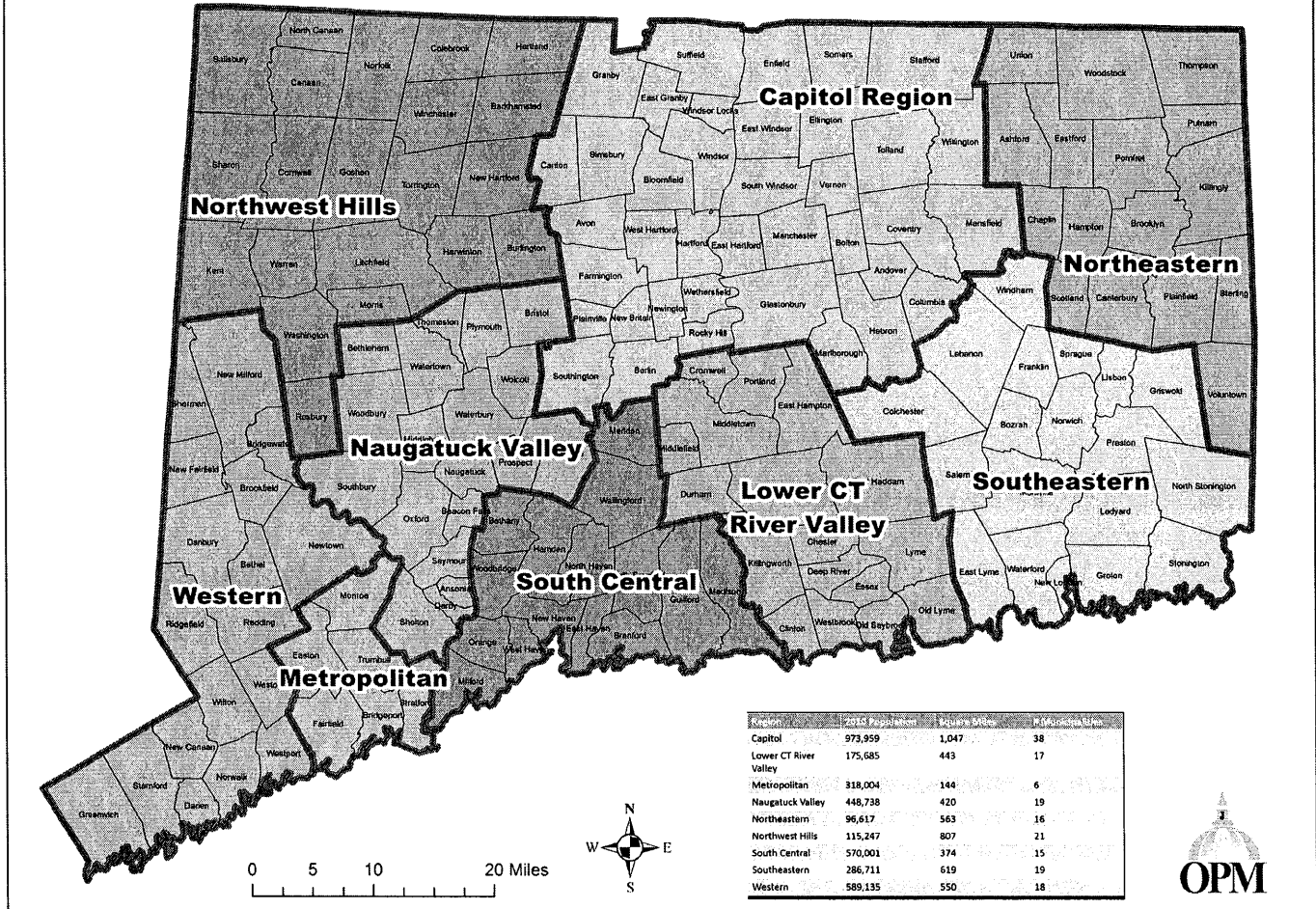
- County Equivalency - As a part of the CRS discussion, the COG was apprised of efforts to have Councils of Governments given county equivalency, which would treat our region as a county for the purposes of different programs and grants. Within the context of the CRS, the shared work of everyone would go toward reducing flood insurance rates. An article covering the topic is included for your reference.
- MIRA – A lengthy discussion was held discussing the short-term and long-term future for MIRA and how municipal solid waste might be handled.
- Regional Plan of Conservation and Development – the COG is getting ready to begin an update to the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development. There will be more to come on this item as meeting dates and topics are developed.

5. Miscellaneous:

6. Attachments and Information Sharing:

- a) Connecticut Examiner Article: *“Regional Planners Seek Federal Recognition...”* (2/27/2020)

Regional Councils of Governments in Connecticut



Regional Planners Seek Federal Recognition as Connecticut's County Government Equivalent

Published on February 27, 2020 — in Old Saybrook — by Christopher McDermott

Connecticut's regional councils of government are seeking to be federally recognized as the state's equivalent of county government in an effort to make better use of federal data, be more competitive for certain federal grants, and streamline application processes.

Sam Gold, chair of the Connecticut Association of Councils of Government, said that county lines in Connecticut are a "historical relic" of the 18th and 19th centuries. County governments in Connecticut were abolished by the

state legislature in 1960.

Many of the roles filled by county governments in other states are covered instead by nine councils of government (COGs), which are regional planning agencies that answer to a board made up of member towns' chief executive officers.

"There's a number of different federal calculations and tabulation for data that are not very useful in Connecticut," said Gold, who is also executive director of the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG). "For example, the U.S. Department of Commerce creates county business patterns — a snapshot of local economies based on a county level."

RiverCOG's member town borders roughly align with Middlesex County, in addition to Old Lyme and Lyme in New London County, but other COGs are not so closely aligned with any particular county.

Gold said that the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments has towns in four counties, doesn't cover the majority of any county, and doesn't have any county's single biggest city.

"The [federal government's] county data was useless for understanding the local economy in that region," Gold said.

Gold said that Connecticut's Office of Policy and Management is working with federal officials in hopes of phasing in that federal recognition of the COGs in 2021, which would likely not require a change in Connecticut state statute.

"It doesn't change how anything is delivered in Connecticut, but it could allow the towns to work together through their COGs in Connecticut more than they do today and potentially save towns time and money," Gold said.

"In many places various federal plans for applications are done at a county level on behalf of all the municipalities in the county. Here, because, there's no county government to do things on behalf of cities and towns, everything has to be done on the town level."

As an example, Gold pointed to the federal Community Rating System, which gives flood insurance breaks to municipalities that submit applications detailing steps they've taken to reduce their risk of flood damage.

Not all towns submit the proper paperwork because it may not be worthwhile for them to do it as a town, but if the COG could submit paperwork on behalf of all the towns, more would stand to benefit, he said.


On a separate but related issue, Gold said that the U.S. Census Bureau is also considering a special tabulation on the 2020 census that would allow for the demographic data to be split up along COG borders rather than county borders.


“That way we would have demographic and census data for our COGs, which would be more useful for a number of different services and projects than would the historical county government lines,” Gold said, “because there are no services provided on a county level.”

As for the federal recognition as county governments, Gold said that the plan would be to test out the program over the next 10 years, with the idea that the 2030 census would be conducted along the COG borders rather than those of the counties.

“Everyone has approached this with a slow deliberate pace to make sure we’re not going to find out that we messed something up for some program somewhere,” Gold said.

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