

Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations

Friday, November 10, 2022

A video recording is available at: <http://ct-n.com/ctnplayer.asp?odID=21073>

Members present: Kyle Abercrombie, Maureen Brummett, John Elsesser, John Filchak (Vice Chair), Matt Hart, Martin Heft, Laura Hoydick, James O'Leary, Francis Pickering, Troy Raccuia, Lon Seidman, Brendan Sharkey (Chair), Mike Walsh

Members not present: Carl Amento, Luke Bronin, Sen. Stephen Cassano, Sam Gold, Brian Greenleaf, Karl Kilduff, Jeffrey Kitching, Harrison Nantz, Keith Norton, Neil O'Leary, Ron Thomas

Other participants: Rebecca Augur, Rebecca Dahl, Sheila McKay, Brian O'Connor, Rick Porth, Margaret Wirtenberg

Member vacancies: Nominated by COST: Municipal official: Town of <10,000 population

OPM staff: Bruce Wittchen

1. Call to order and overview of telemeeting procedures

Commission chair Sharkey called the meeting to order at 9:05, noting the lack of a quorum of members at that time, and said agenda items requiring a vote would be postponed until a quorum is present later in the meeting.

2. Approval of the minutes of the [August 5, 2022](#), [September 9, 2022](#), and [October 7, 2022](#) meetings

A quorum was not present at first, but the group later returned to this item after reaching a quorum and a motion was made and seconded to approve the draft minutes of all three meetings. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Membership update, if any

Commission chair Sharkey noted the presence of new Commission member Hoydick' and said he looks forward to her involvement with the group and she said she does too. There we no other updates.

4. 2023 Meeting Schedule

Bruce Wittchen explained that he had compiled schedules for the 2023 meetings of the ACIR and two meetings will be the 2nd Friday of the month, to avoid Fridays of long holiday weekends. That has been the usual practice but what is different this year is that he recommends moving two subcommittee meetings forward by a week, to the 3rd Tuesday, to avoid conflicts and not be too close to ACIR meetings. He will circulate the schedule in the coming month and there was a discussion of the ACIR not having to approve schedules but schedules having to be posted online as required.

5. ACIR regular reports

- ACIR Session Mandates Report (due November 15)
- 2023 Mandate Compendium Supplement (due January 15)

A quorum was not present at first, but the group later returned to this item after reaching a quorum. Bruce Wittchen provided an overview of the report and of the history of drafts that have been

circulated. A motion was made and seconded to approve the session mandates report. Commission chair Sharkey mentioned the possibility of the ACIR rethinking its approach to the review and reporting of mandates. The motion passed unanimously.

6. CT Local Government of the Future initiative ([notes of 10/25 subcommittee meeting](#))

- ACIR Book Club review of reports (see [final reading list](#))
- Property Tax Restructuring

Commission chair Sharkey described the property tax restructuring initiative the ACIR has taken on as encouraged by members and by [Dept. of Revenue Services](#) Commissioner Boughton. He highlighted that ACIR members have opposed re-studying issues that have been well-studied already and decided to reacquaint themselves work they or others have done on various topics. That led to creation of the Book Club that met to review reports on a specific topic each week. He mentioned some of the topics and said the group identified key recommendations for each. The next step is to compile those and bring them back to the ACIR for consideration in December. Commission chair Sharkey added that recommendations regarding federal funding, a topic discussed at previous meetings, will also be included.

Commission chair Sharkey highlighted that the people involved in this effort are not aiming for a consensus report, one with all people agreeing with all things. Commission vice chair Filchak said now is the time to bring these recommendations together and noted that they should provide some history too because some of this will be new to some people. Commission chair Sharkey pointed out that recommendations like these are part of the ACIR's mission and added that Commissioner Boughton and Governor Lamont are encouraging them to proceed. Commission member Heft asked if service sharing will be included in the recommendations and Commission chair Sharkey said it will be, along with a smarter approach for coordinating for federal funding and roles for [regional councils of governments](#) COGs and [regional educational service centers](#) (RESCs).

Note: A quorum was recognized at this time and the group took up agenda items #2 and 5, as summarized previously, before returning to this topic.

Commission chair Sharkey outline an approach for compiling Book Club and other recommendations by the time of the ACIR's December meeting, adding that it might only be necessary to provide an outline of the recommendations at that time. Commission member Heft agreed with doing that and recommended the approach used for the 2020 Task Force report included in the Book Club reading list, for which the ACIR emphasized a few priority recommendations while listing a number of others. Those could be recommendations requiring more time and effort.

Commission chair Sharkey said recommendations can be prioritized in terms of their importance and need for phasing certain recommendations. Commission vice chair Filchak noted that some of the task force report's priorities are among the ACIR's priorities now. Margaret Wirtenberg recommended the report to be prepared describing the process used by the ACIR this fall.

Commission member O'Leary said it is important for the ACIR to point out the need for state funds to substitute for what municipalities have been funding. Commission chair Sharkey noted the significance of that for special education and said such a change will be a seismic change and will require a long legislative session like the upcoming 2023 session.

There was a brief discussion of the unreleased CCM report described at previous meetings. Rick Porth reminded everyone that CCM's board has not yet authorized the release of that report and CCM staff are respecting that. He noted that the ACIR has taken on the same subject and he believes the ACIR's references to previous work adds credibility to the ACIR's effort, as can the

involvement of Commission chair Sharkey, Commissioner Boughton, and Governor Lamont. He recommended that the ACIR offer options for state consideration and the group should consider how to frame the recommendations and stage the process.

Brian O'Connor provided further background regarding the unreleased CMM report, noting that its approach was to find dollar for dollar substitutions for current local funding, but some members opposed suggestions for alternative sources. He said it might be better to focus on certain changes, such as in the car tax.

Commission member Elsesser pointed out that the previous studies reviewed by the ACIR were in a different context, prior to the cap on the [State and Local Tax \(SALT\) exemption](#). Federal rules have changed but state policy has not in response. Commission chair Sharkey agreed with that point and Commission member Elsesser said he also opposes further car tax changes because he believes elimination of that will increase taxes on houses.

Commission member Seidman said, regarding the focus on swapping state funding sources for local sources, that some changes will reduce costs and not require as much revenue now. He noted the cost of out-of-district special education placements and said different approaches can reduce local costs without additional state funds. Commission member Pickering said he is not aware of a study of the impact of the SALT cap and added that the recommendations being developed by the ACIR should identify savings and other impacts.

7. Other Old Business

- Update: ACIR representation on [Task Force To Study Title 7 Of The General Statutes](#)

Commission chair Sharkey and Commission member Heft discussed the requirements for this task force and Commission chair Sharkey said he will look into it further, noting Commission vice chair Filchak's interest.

8. New business or any other municipal, regional, or state matters for ACIR consideration

Commission chair Sharkey and Commission member Heft provided a brief overview of an approach for the ACIR to increase staff support by seeking approval of an independent budget as a state commission. Commission member Elsesser mentioned that the [Capitol Region Council of Governments'](#) (CRCOG's) draft legislative request asks for ACIR staffing.

9. Additional public comments if any

There were no additional comments.

10. Next meeting

Commission chair Sharkey said some coordination will be necessary before the subcommittee meets on 11/22 and encouraged ACIR members to attend. He added that an additional ACIR meeting might be required in December.

Upcoming meetings will be:

- Tuesday, November 22, 2022, 10:30 am Subcommittee
- Friday, December 2, 2022, 10:30 am Full ACIR

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:00

Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM

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