

# Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations

Friday, December 1, 2023

Agenda: <https://egov.ct.gov/PMC/Agenda/Download/17144>

A recording is available at: <http://ct-n.com/ctnplayer.asp?odID=22376>

**Members present in person:** John Filchak (Vice Chair), Matt Hart, Martin Heft

**Members present remotely:** Carl Amento, Maureen Brummett, Sam Gold, James O’Leary, Troy Raccuia, Katie Stargardter

**Members not present:** Luke Bronin, Steve Cassano, Brian Greenleaf, Laura Hoydick, Karl Kilduff, Jeff Kitching, Keith Norton, Neil O’Leary, Francis Pickering, Lon Seidman, Brendan Sharkey (Chair), Ron Thomas, Ethan Van Ness

**Other participants:** non-member participants were not logged

**OPM staff:** Christine Goupil, Bruce Wittchen

**Member vacancies:**  
Nominated by COST: Municipal official: Town of <10,000 population  
Nominated by COST: Municipal official: Town of 10,000 – 20,000 population  
Nominated by CCM: Municipal official: Town of 20,000 – 60,000 population

## 1. Call to order and overview of telemeeting procedures

Commission vice chair Filchak called the meeting to order at 10:35, noting the lack of a quorum and members introduced themselves.

## 2. Approve draft minutes of [11/03/2023](#) and [11/14/2023](#) meetings

Draft minutes could not be approved due to the lack of a quorum.

## 3. [2024 Meeting schedules](#) (see notes on linked document re. potential conflicts)

Meeting schedules could not be approved due to the lack of a quorum.

## 4. Membership updates

It was noted that Ethan Van Ness has replaced Harrison Nantz as the designee of DEEP.

## 5. [SA 23-13](#), *An Act Studying The Consolidation Of Metropolitan Planning Organizations*

Commission member Gold provided an overview of the points made in the [memo from the ACIR’s Metropolitan Planning Organization \(MPO\) director members to the full ACIR](#). Commission vice chair Filchak thanked him and Commission member Hart added that the current alignment of MPOs with COGs enables the efficiency and comprehensive planning sought by the bill.

Betsy Gara provided an overview of the Council of Small Towns’ (COST’s) [comments re the MPO Study](#) and she also mentioned the [reports on regional entities](#) considered in 2013 by the [Commission on Municipal Opportunities and Regional Efficiencies](#) (MORE Commission). She highlighted the potential impacts on small towns and that small town representation on the ACIR is

reduced due to delays in appointments. She also said she agrees with the MPO directors' memo and added that the current holistic approach might be lost with larger MPOs.

Commission vice chair Filchak recommended that attachments to the report of the ACIR's MPO study also include information from the MORE Commission and the former [Transportation Strategy Board](#). He suggested that 3-4 members volunteer to draft the report for the full ACIR to consider at its January meeting and noted the significance of Betsy Gara's comments on behalf of small towns.

Commission member Gold recommended holding a special meeting to discuss or vote on the MPO study report and volunteered to help write it. He also mentioned US DOT interest in the intersection of transportation and housing and said CT is ahead of other states regarding that. Commission member Hart also volunteered to write and asked if the ACIR can get an extension. Commission vice chair Filchak said the ACIR can communicate with legislative leaders and the Governor's office about that and added that he can schedule a Zoom meeting to craft a draft for consideration at the ACIR's January meeting.

Commission member O'Leary asked if COST can appoint a representative of a small town to assist in the writing and Commission vice chair Filchak said ACIR subcommittees are open to non-member involvement. Commission member Heft thanked everyone for their contributions to this and said he will also volunteer to help prepare the report. He also noted that the ACIR's charge is to conduct a study, not to prepare a consolidation plan. He mentioned the role of [CGS Sec. 16a-4c](#) in the designation of planning regions and recommended the report reference that. Commission vice chair Filchak thanked everyone and said he will schedule the meeting to work on the report.

## 6. Work for 2024

- Full Mandate Compendium due Feb.21, 2024, draft to be circulated by 1/5/2024

Bruce Wittchen said a rough draft is nearly complete and will be distributed to members in the coming weeks.

- Topics for consideration in 2024
  - Update elements of [2020 report of Task Force to Promote Municipal Shared Services](#)

Commission vice chair Filchak provided an overview of the report and noted the amount of work that went into the task force recommendations. He suggested updating it in 2024. Commission member Heft said that is a great idea and added that he refers to the report when considering legislative proposals. It would be helpful to update it. Commission member Hart agreed and said it would be a beneficial exercise, noting its relevance to regional shared services. He mentioned the availability of [Regional Performance Incentive Program](#) funds and the hiring challenges faced by many municipalities. He highlighted the need to involve representatives of labor and said a labor-management coalition will be needed.

Commission member Gold said one of the topics being discussed at the US DOT has been the lack of essential skills. He described that and other needs of municipalities and also mentioned the need for state support to assist municipalities and COGs with the local match required for federal grants, noting that some of those grants can fund job training. Commission vice chair Filchak said that and housing had not been at the top of the list of priorities when the task force report was completed in early 2020. Those should be added in 2024.

- ACIR structure, legal & legislative changes in [ACIR reform legislation discussion draft](#)

Commission vice chair Filchak said the draft must be discussed and refined further, but the recommendations to enable COST and others to appoint their members directly and for members to be able to designate alternates would be helpful. He suggested the discussion draft be amended to drop all proposed changes except the language authorizing CCM and COST to appointment municipal representatives and the language enabling members to designate alternates.

Betsy Gara agreed with the suggestion regarding COST appointments. Commission member Raccuia agreed with the recommendation regarding members designating alternates and added that he is not opposed to other recommendations. Commission member Hart noted that updating the 2020 report and preparing legislation for 2025 will take time and suggested inviting speakers to future ACIR meetings. There was further discussion of activities in 2024.

## **7. Upcoming meetings:**

Commission vice chair Filchak noted that the group was unable to approve the schedule for 2024 meetings:

- To be determined: Additional MPO study meetings as needed
- Tuesday, December 19, 2023, 10:30 am LGF Subcommittee (3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday)
- Friday, January 5, 10:30 am ACIR

## **8. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 12:17.

*Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM*