

# Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations

Hearing Room 1E, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, Connecticut

Tuesday, February 19, 2013 - 10:00 A.M.

**Members Present:** Dave LeVasseur (Chairman), Carl Amento, Frederick Baruzzi, Ryan Bingham, Sen. Stephen Cassano, Robert Kaliszewski, Rep. Frank Nicaastro, James O'Leary, Mark Paquette, Leo Paul, Scott Shanley, Ron Thomas and Jim Watson

**Members Absent:** John Finkle, Ronald Harris, Barbara Henry, Scott Jackson, Linda Krause, Joyce Stille and Michael Stupinski

**Staff:** Bruce Wittchen

**Others:** Frank Chiamonte, Garrett Eucalitto, Rick Lynn and Kiernan Majerus-Collins

## Opening Remarks:

Commission member LeVasseur called the meeting to order at 10:05 and asked everyone to introduce themselves due to the presence of new ACIR members and guests.

### 1. Consideration of [Minutes of the September 5, 2012 Meeting](#):

A motion was made and seconded to approve the September 5, 2012 minutes. There was no further discussion and the minutes were approved unanimously, with Commission member LeVasseur abstaining because he had not attended the meeting.

### 2. Consideration of ACIR reports:

- a. [2012 Budget Adoption Experiences of Connecticut Municipalities](#): Bruce Wittchen said most results were similar to recent years, but pointed out that the number of municipalities adopting their budget after the beginning of the fiscal year has been creeping up. He noted that the number had fallen dramatically for the 2009-2010 budget year and said that had been a surprise because there had been an expectation that fiscal difficulties would prolong, not shorten the budget approval process. A motion was made and seconded to approve the report. There was no further discussion and the report was approved unanimously.
- b. [2012 Annual Report](#): Bruce Wittchen explained that the ACIR's Annual Report provides an overview of the ACIR's activities and other reports. He noted that most people probably read this and other reports electronically, so he provides as many website links as possible to help people find the information they are looking for. A motion was made and seconded to approve the report. There was no further discussion and the report was approved unanimously.
- c. [2013 Supplement – Compendium of Statutory and Regulatory Mandates](#): Bruce Wittchen explained that the ACIR issues a full compendium every fourth year, with annual compendium supplements in the intervening three years. This is the third supplement since the last full compendium, so there will be another full compendium in

2014. Bruce explained the distinction between the compendium and the mandates report issued by the ACIR after the legislative session. He also pointed out steps he took to limit the size of the supplements, given that the full compendium was already 570 pages long in 2010. A motion was made and seconded to approve the report. There was no further discussion and the report was approved unanimously.

### **3. Old Business:**

Commission member Paul expressed his concern about funding [regional planning organization](#) (RPO) grants from the [Regional Planning Incentive Program](#) (RPI program), since that program's account is to be reduced as part of the state's budget deficit mitigation. At the same time there is a desire for more regional efforts and possible RPO consolidation, funding for the RPOs is in jeopardy.

Commission member LeVasseur noted that the deficit mitigation package had been approved in December ([PA 12-01, December Special Session](#)) and Commission member Cassano commented on the inconsistency of the state trying to encourage regionalism while cutting its funding for it. Rick Lynn said the RPI program has been very helpful for regional efforts in northwestern CT and there was a discussion of successful regional initiatives.

Rick Lynn asked if RPOs will have to compete for their basic funding, now that RPO funding is to come from the RPI account. Commission member LeVasseur said the deficit mitigation act and proposed budget do not say, but his suspicion is that RPO grants will be prioritized in the same manner as consolidation bonus pool funding has been.

### **4. New Business:**

Commission member Shanley said the [Governor's proposed budget](#) rearranges the relationship between the state and municipalities. Reducing state funding for other municipal activities while increasing funding for capital projects can work for Manchester, but it reduces municipal discretion. Commission member Cassano said it forces municipalities to choose. Commission member Shanley said this is not necessarily bad, but it does change the relationship.

Commission member Nicastro said every legislator has concerns about aspects of the proposed budget. There were 77 new taxes two years ago and there is a lot of concern about some of the cuts and mergers proposed this year, but Governor Malloy inherited this situation from his predecessors. Commission member Nicastro added that he and Commission member Cassano, being former mayors, understand the difficulties and the potential impact on municipalities.

Commission member Thomas said he is glad that Commission member Nicastro and other legislators recognize this problem. He noted municipal concerns regarding the impact of potential cuts to the state's Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) program and there was further discussion of the budget.

### **5. Discussion of 2013 Meeting Dates**

Bruce Wittchen said he will follow up with the ACIR members to schedule further meetings in 2013. He explained that the ACIR has a statutory deadline for completing two of its regular reports. The session mandates report must be completed by Sept. 1 and the compendium or compendium supplement, such as that approved earlier this meeting, is due a week after the beginning of the legislative session. That report should have been approved a month earlier, but

that meeting had to be postponed and Bruce noted that it was the third January ACIR meeting to be postponed due to weather or quorum concerns in the few years he has worked with the ACIR.

Bruce Wittchen recommended the ACIR meet in mid-August to approve the session mandates report and in mid-November to approve the compendium, budget adoption and annual reports. ACIR members agreed and Bruce said he will get back to everyone with possible dates.

6. The next meeting will be at a time and place to be determined.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35

*Minutes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM*