

M.O.R.E.
Municipal Efficiencies Sub-Committee
Meeting Minutes
4/13/15

Present: Rep. Ryan, Sen. Formica, Rep. Conroy, Rep. Stafstrom, Rep. Zoni, Matthew Broman, William Donlin, John Filchak, Betsy Gara, Mary Glassman, Lisa Heavner, Rob Labanara, Mark Lyon, Michael Maniscalco, Rudy Marconi, Dale Martin, Sheila McKay, Leo Paul, Lisa Pellegrini, Bonnie Reemsnyder, Ray Russomundo, Melissa Schlag, Ron Thomas, Steve Werbner, Lyle Wray, Jeremy Zeedyk, Peter Foote, Kevin Cwiklm, John Lurate

Absent: Rep. Arconti, Rep. Bumgardner, Rep. Genga, Rep. Godfrey, Rep. Nicastro, Rep. Pavalock, Rep. Simmons, Sen. Casano, Clay Cope, Marc Dillon, William Fritz, Barbara Henry, Fillmore McPherson, Ed Mone, Julia Pemberton, Christine Ruman, Don Stein, Steve Vavrek, Gayle Weinstein, Ben Wenograd, Stephen Woods

Presenters: Howard Rifkin, Bruce Wittchen

Rep. Kevin Ryan convened the meeting and asked for approval of last week's minutes.

John Filchak asked if the minutes could be amended so that his name could be included as being present.

Rep. Ryan accepted Filchak's request and made a motion to pass the minutes and the minutes were accepted. Rep. Ryan then addressed the current condition of the committee's work groups. Announced working group leaders including: Rep. Conroy for the Mandates work group, Rep. Zoni and Matthew Brokman for the Retirement Work Group, Leo Paul for the Policing Work Group and , Mary Glassman, Lyle Wray , and Lisa Heavner for the Technology Work Group. He then summarized the presentations for the meeting and introduced Howard Rifkin to give a presentation on the UCONN Institute of Public Service.

Howard Rifkin gave a presentation on the UCONN Institute of Public Service.

Institute of Public Service was created in 1944. It was set up as part of the land grant mission of UConn to provide assistance to state and local government through 1) Training and continuing professional education 2) public policy analysis 3) research consultation, and technical assistance 4) publications 5) citizenship education.

IPS Made many publications, had training for local officials, held forums on issues like "regional opportunities" / cost sharing. IPS was delegated the responsibility from the legislature to organize the state to examine opportunities to respond to the division of state responsibilities caused from Sheff v. O'Neill (1989). IPS tried to find municipal cooperative ways to end state segregation.

Rifkin also served on the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations which still exists in theory, but isn't very active. The ACIR had a goal of creating economies of scale within Connecticut municipalities.

He also discussed similar working occurring in the Advisory Committee on Intergovernmental Relation's annual report on unfunded mandates, and the Institute for Municipal Studies by Andrew Clark at CCSU and

Rep. Ryan asked if the publications for the institute are available to the public.

Howard Rifkin responded by saying the reports are available at UCONN as well as what he had and would leave with the subcommittee.

Leo Paul asked Rifkin to elaborate on the ACIR's work in the 90's.

Howard Rifkin answered by saying they made an agenda to look at various issues. One of the topics the reports covered is the efficiency between various levels of government and programs such as the Board of Education and the Government, along with incentives for participating in programs.

Rep. Ryan added by saying that Bruce Wittchen will give a presentation later in this meeting regarding the publications and enhancements.

Leo Paul asked Rifkin if he believes the ACIR had made an impact with Legislators in the past.

Howard Rifkin stated that he believes that ACIR was not very successful, which has led to ACIR work diminishing over the years.

Ronald Thomas asked how many people were on staff at the institute.

Howard Rifkin answered by saying there were about 10 faculty members at ACIR's peak, but there was a program called IPS International, which had people coming from around the world to UCONN for various forms of training.

Steven Werbner shared his experiences with the Institute of Public Services in the past and some of the consequences of not having the program.

John Filchak agreed with the previous statements and added that he uses the reports from ACIR and that they are helpful.

Rep. Ryan asked if the institute for municipal studies at CCSU fills the void from ACIR

Howard Rifkin stated that he's not familiar with CCSU's work. He then added that there has been talk at UCONN about creating a school for public policy and international affairs.

Lyle Wray commented on his experience in ACIR and shared his opinion on the public policy center and his experience with various centers.

Howard Rifkin expressed his concerns regarding the reports and analyses because legislators do not utilize them.

Rep. Ryan asked from where the funding for the institution came.

Howard Rifkin answered by saying there was a small fee for conferences and contracts. However, the income didn't cover the funding the program. Their income covered about 50% of the budget costs, with the rest was subsidized by UCONN.

Rep Ryan thanked Howard Rifkin for his presentation and welcomed Bruce Wittchen to the podium to give a presentation on the Municipal Mandate Reports.

Bruce Wittchen gave a presentation on the ACIR Municipal Mandates Reports.

Rep. Ryan asked if ACIR uses the OFA analysis as a reference in order to evaluate the costs of a mandate.

Bruce Wittchen stated that he reads all the bills that have passed before reading OFA analysis. Their goal is to create an independent report and includes costs that OFA may not have as a mandate.

Rep. Ryan asked how ACIR cost analysis compares to OFA reports.

Bruce Wittchen answered by saying that the two reports closely resemble one another, but ACIR reports are more in depth.

Mary Glassman asked Bruce Wittchen if the mandates in the ACIR reports need to be edited, since they don't advocate municipal collaboration.

Bruce Wittchen said that ACIR reports are not focused on regionalizing per se.

Mary Glassman asked who in OPM should be in charge of the edits.

Bruce Wittchen said that he's not certain who should be responsible for that.

Leo Paul stated that there are institutes within the state government that can take on the research that the Institute for Public Service was doing. However, the organizations do not possess the manpower and require more funding.

John Filchak asked if there are impediments in sharing between municipalities and efficiencies in municipalities.

Bruce Wittchen stated that there has never been a consistent focus in the ACIR reports.

John Filchak added that he has been appointed to ACIR and would like to see more meetings in the future.

Betsy Gara asked if the Legislation can have a greater role in addressing the impact of mandates with a large fiscal note.

In response Bruce Wittchen stated that he only provides the reports and hasn't seen a public hearing.

Ronald Thomas added that he has also been appointed to ACIR and asked who receives the ACIR reports.

Bruce Wittchen listed the recipients, who are OLR, the state leadership, and other recipients on a short list.

Ronald Thomas responded by saying that the recipient list is something the commission can work on and asked about staffing.

Bruce Wittchen said that he is only at ACIR part-time with a couple of full-time staff members.

Ronald Thomas said that he would like to see a report on regional collaboration initiatives to give to both M.O.R.E. Committees.

Mary Glassman asked if the process for reviewing the collaboration reports could be referred to the mandates committee.

Rep. Ryan discussed possible work groups in the future to review ACIR.

Leo Paul stated that ACIR hopes to form a subcommittee.

Rep Ryan commented on Leo Paul's statement and asked if Selectman Paul could report back to the M.O.R.E. Commission once he knows what ACIR is going to do.

Leo Paul asked Bruce Wittchen if ACIR should make a subcommittee or if it should be up to the M.O.R.E. Commission.

Bruce Wittchen responded by saying that he will talk to other members in OPM about creating a subcommittee.

Lyle Wray believes ACIR is part of an issue bigger than mandates because it has untapped potential.

Robert Labanara said that the program review and investigation committee could conduct the analysis on what ACIR should look like in the future.

Ronald Thomas recommended creating a program broader than ACIR.

Rep Ryan agreed and mentioned the significance of ACIR.

Bruce Wittchen said that he would inform ACIR that these conversations are happening and that he shall try to schedule a meeting.

Rep Ryan thanked Wittchen for his presentation and transition to talk about topics for the next meeting. Rep Ryan then recommended that work groups should meet together to discuss topics within their groups.

John Filchak added that he would like to see a work group on relationships between municipalities and the state following Massachusetts Dept. of Revenue Services example.

Rep. Ryan adjourned the meeting at 11:12AM