M.O.R.E.

Municipal Efficiencies Sub-Committee

Minutes

4/7/15

Attendance

**Present**: Rep. Arconti, Rep. Bumgardner, Rep. Conroy, Rep. Ryan, Rep. Simmons, Rep. Stafstrom, Rep. Steinberg, Rep. Zoni, Matthew Brockman, Marc Dillon, John Filchak, Betsy Gara, Mary Glassman, Lisa Heavner, Barbara Henry, Robert Labanara, Dale Martin, Sheila McKay, Fillmore McPherson, Leo Paul, Lisa Pelligini, Julia Pemberton, Bonnie Reemsnyder, Melissa Schlag, Donald Stein, Ronald Thomas, Ben Wenograd, Lyle Wray, Jeremy Zeedyk, Ray Rossomundo, William Donlin

**Absent**: Sen. Cassano, Sen Formica, Rep. Genga, Rep. Godfrey, Rep. Pavalock, Clay Cope, Mark Lyon, Michael Maniscalco, Ed Mone, Christine Ruman, Gayle Weinstein, Steven Werbner, Stephen Woods, Steve Vavrek

Rep. Kevin Ryan started the meeting at 10:04 and introduces new members and they vote to accept the minutes. Discusses the sign-ups for working groups.

Lisa Karim, Library Director, presented written testimony which can be found; <http://www.housedems.ct.gov/MORE/MunEff/pubs/Testimony_Lisa_Karim_Simsbury_Library_Director.pdf>

Rep. Steinberg asked Karim if smaller libraries worked together through having a centralized administration to save money.

Ms. Karim answered libraries have done combined programs, but are mandated under town charters.

Donald Stein comments that his libraries are regionalized.

Lisa Heavner wants to make sure that we keep municipal efficiencies and suggests that this issue is what is saving money and shouldn’t be cut.

Filmore McPherson says that budget cuts are getting rid of regionalization that is already in place and that’s a step backward.

Rep. Ryan introduces Comptroller Kevin Lembo.

Kevin Lembo discussed the Partnership Plan as an opportunity for municipalities to save money specifically in health care to stabilize benefits. New London and Hartford are the biggest groups that have tried this and have saved 1 million dollars. This program will not save money for every town, which is why it needs to be an option, not a mandate. Savings have ranged from 1-20% through benefits designs and other mechanisms for care. Kevin Lembo stresses that rates do not go up, but are stable. The Health Enhancement program is a draw for cities and towns with incentives to get their employees the care they need to be well, through getting rid of cost barriers. The Plan has seen a drop in emergency room visits by giving employees a primary care provider. HEP has saved $100 million in state employee claims through preventative action. HEP gets rid of co pays, which encourages employees to get the preventive care. SB 913 is an attempt to make it attractive for municipalities to buy into the the state employee plan. It may make things more efficient, but they have to see who will participate. He is looking for advice and comments to make this program better and suggestions to save money for all towns and cities around the state.

Rep Ryan noted that Mayor Dan Drew, of Middletown, had provided a letter with his comments regarding the Connecticut Healthcare Partnership, which can be found; <http://www.housedems.ct.gov/MORE/MunEff/pubs/Dan_Drew.pd>

Mary Glassman asks the comptroller about the pension system and how the state is going to handle it without the local leaders involved.

Kevin Lembo says there may be changes to the statute in the future to bargain with the local level involved, but right now it is in the statue otherwise.

Betsy Gara asks if this programs savings will be sustainable or not and if the benefits of a high deductible will fit with the design.

Kevin Lembo says that a high deductible will not work with this plan, the whole state cannot function over one model, and the rest of the state needs a different plan.

Leo Paul is concerned that if a community has a good health history and the costs are lower if they don’t adopt the plan, there aren’t any incentives for them to join.

Kevin Lembo responds that the rates may change town by town. If a town is self-insured and on the state plans, they will not. It creates a balanced and safe way for the towns to have health care for a community that has some good health years and some bad health years.

Robert Labanara wants clarification on the parts of SB 913 that CCM is concerned about municipalities reporting of claims data.

Kevin Lembo states that this language allows them to get the information they need to move forward. He encourages him to submit language and have that conversation with the leaders on that bill

Jeremy Zeedyk asks how this will keep costs down.

Lembo responds that Depending on how many people you represent, it will change how much you save. If it’s private, there is not much the state can change. However there is system reform that can help change. On a public side, there are many areas the state and municipalities can save on.

Ben Wenograd is concerned about health insurance premiums in the state. Every town believes that their way of dealing with health, is the best way to handle health care and insurance. He wants to know the long term rate benefits of opting into this plan to prove it is better than individual plans.

Kevin Lembo responds that the costs are $750 individual costs and $1900 for families, they are then locked into a rate that is identical to the state’s rates. He understands that there is no quantifiable way to show exactly how much money a town will save and how much the rates will change in the upcoming years, however if more people join, it will be more stabilized.

Melissa Schlag asks if the state run any statistics to see how these numbers changed depending on how many take part in this program.

Lembo says that he can only find the numbers for towns or cities that send him the necessary information.

Ray Rossomando asks about the approximate number of municipalities that have sent in rates and how they can encourage towns and cities to send in their information.

Lembo responds that 25% or less have pursued a quote, but he needs help reaching out to municipalities to tell them about the lower rates and encouraging them to get a quote, or accept the plan.

Mary Glassman asks if she can have a copy of the plan and representation to see why towns do not want to join.

Kevin Lembo says he will make sure she gets it. He also adds that there needs to be a way in the future to create a connection of shared decision making when it comes to the healthcare plans.

Mary Glassman asks why there are other plans not offered by the state that are perceived as better, even if they are not and asks if Comptroller Lembo had any thoughts on this.

Lembo responds that we are an expensive state and they are looking into it.

Leo Paul asks how many communities are self-insured.

Lembo says there are many that should not be self-insured, but are. It’s a bigger jump from self-insured to this plan which is why it may not be attractive to some municipalities.

Donald Stein asks why that’s the design, one that’s not comparable with high deductibles.

Lembo says they are looking into a way that it can help every town, but it will not help them now.

Matthew Brokman says he wishes it was in place earlier, it would have helped save lives. He expresses that it was hard to get the information they needed to take advantage of the plan, but it was worth it.

Kevin Lembo lastly expresses his support for libraries.

Rep. Ryan makes sure that everyone who wants to sign up for a working group has had the opportunity. He also made the sub-committee aware that they had been provided with a copy of Lisa Karim’s written testimony. He also discusses making the next two meetings on Monday due to conflicting meetings.

Rep Ryan adjourns the meeting at 11:13