

**INTER-MUNICIPAL COOPERATION COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING - TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2009 - 10:00 A.M.**

Location:

Provincetown Town Hall, 16 Jerome Smith Road, Provincetown, MA

Present:

Sheila Vanderhoef, Eastham Town Administrator; David Schropfer, Eastham Selectman; Sharon Lynn, Provincetown Town Administrator; Michele Couture, Provincetown Selectman; Pam Nolan, Truro Town Administrator; Paul Sieloff, Wellfleet Town Administrator; Ira Wood, Wellfleet Selectman; Phil Smith, Truro Finance Committee; Tom Thurston, Provincetown Finance Committee, Tom Johnston, Long Range Planning, Eastham; Rich Rosenthal, Wellfleet Chief of Police; Pat Foley, Wellfleet Finance Committee; Vernon Porter, Secretary to Provincetown Board of Selectmen, Mark Zelinski, Barnstable County Administrator, Sheila Lyons, Chairman, County Commissioners; Marilyn Miller, Cape Codder & Banner.

Recorder: Vernon G. Porter

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 a.m.

David Schropfer welcomed the committee members and guests.

Members Comments

**Ira Wood, Wellfleet Selectman**– The Wellfleet Forum will be having a meeting on regionalization on February 23, 2009 at the COA at 7 PM. Several speakers will be featured. Public is invited.

**David Schropfer, Eastham Selectman** – Cape Cod Times thinks that it is wonderful that we are meeting together but that we're searching for low hanging fruit and not really looking at the bigger picture.

**Sheila Vanderhoef, Eastham Town Administrator** – Attended meeting on Saturday, in Harwick, presented by the League of Women Voters. Meeting was attended by between 95 to 125 people, and lasted approximately 2 hours. Meeting was well received in terms of the concepts that were laid out. Selectmen were present from Dennis, Bourne, Harwich, Orleans, Eastham, and representative from the League of Women Voters for the lower/outer Cape Towns. The rest of the meeting was to really first talk in general terms of our regionalization, which Paul Niedzwiecki did in terms of the big umbrella of what may be possible. Ms. Vanderhoef tried to focus on the works of this group and on the Eastham / Orleans shared police process that is currently under way. And Robin Wilkins focused on the schools and how the schools and education might benefit from some regional initiatives. The two important things that came out of the meeting were:

1) Robin had suggested, and Paul mentioned, that they thought it might be a good idea that there actually be some staff person at the Commission whose job it is to kind of facilitate, orchestrate, and assist communities that want to try regional or shared opportunities and ideas.

2) The second comment was from Mary Lou Pettit who is a Housing Advocate and lives in Eastham, that the County should consider a regional housing authority. The housing authorities on the Cape all vary in size and some are more able to do the administrative overhead than others. Some, such as Eastham, actually buy their administrative services from the Orleans Housing Authority. So, there might be some advantage in try to put this together. The housing issues on the Cape do not stop at the borders.

**Mark Zelinski, Barnstable County Administrator**

Twenty years ago, the County in its present form in the Charter, passed by the voters in 1988, (with a similar act formulating the Cape Cod Commission 1989) one of the key things that that did was to set us apart from any of the other regional entities in the state. There are only a few of them left, as they were mostly abolished in 1997. One of the things that was done was that we set aside a dedicated revenue stream for the County that allowed us to do a lot of things we do in our \$25M (million) County budget. In that revenue stream, we get a piece of the action that is solely ours from the Registry of Deeds; there is an additional \$2.28 per \$1,000 on every transaction that is part of the excise tax that comes solely into the County. When things were really good a few years back that was bringing in about \$9M. Right now it is more like \$6M range.

This revenue stream has given us the ability to do a lot of things that we do. Some of the newer things that we have put together, that some of you may or may not be aware of, is that a couple of years ago we formed the Cape Cod Water Protection Collaborative -- went through kind of an elaborate process to try to get through how better to deal with that issue. Came up with that idea. We hired a consultant who did a great job steering the Collaborative, working to get the Legislation through with Senator O'Leary to potentially get some money down to the Cape. They struggled with the name, but the focus was really on Wastewater. Because that was so encompassing, and we're standing on a water supply, it is really much broader. But the focus is on Wastewater, and especially shared watersheds. DEP is moving towards dealing with a lot of issues dealing with watershed basis, so that was the theory behind that.

The other big thing is the Cape and Vineyard Electric Cooperative (because the towns are interested in doing renewable energy projects). This is going to be a big item in going forward over the next five years, especially wind turbines. People are having problems with FAA. Falmouth was all ready to go, and the FAA revoked their permit as the Coast Guard had problems with the height of the turbine. Now the height restriction is now down to 200 or 220 feet. There are a lot of issues we are going to have to grabble with out there.

The Cape Light Compact Wind Turbine Consortium is a mechanism that lets the towns take advantage of renewable energy, and maximize the benefit of it. Because if you put up two turbines, and you can't use all of the power, you can't net meter all of the power. One thing you can do is share it with fellow members and the cooperative. They can net meter that power, and they can really maximize the benefit for it, and really make the number in terms of paying for the turbine work to the co-op and the member advantage. We're spending a lot of time on this.

Another big program we put together that required special legislation is the Regional Septic Betterment Program for all of the towns. A few years back the State started a Septic Betterment Program where they were giving the towns \$100K in grants, and the town treasurers had to administer the loans to homeowners to do septic improvements for failed septic systems, and it was a burden on the towns as they did not have the mechanism or the infrastructure in place to do that. At that time, our Health Director Stephan Hall, came up with idea that we'll do it for you. We'll administer the loans, the projects; we'll do all the gut work. That started to take off. I think we had ten towns, and then we took over for all fifteen towns. The idea became after it moved off those grant programs, that the towns could borrow \$200K at a time through the water pollution abatement trust. But again, it was incredibly burdensome project for just \$200K at a wack. We took over the administration of the program, and we're doing that now. We had a \$10M authorization from the Assembly of Delegates that we went through about two years, and we just started on our second \$10M authorization. We've been issuing loans to homeowners over the past couple of years, and we think this really a terrific program. Now we're working on building more coordination of that program with the Water Protection Collaborative, because there are some important elements and overlap on those two issues, and we don't want them competing with each other.

Two more recent things" One has less impact out here. The Sheriff is not going to be able to handle the Pen Farm. So we have an RFP to reuse the County Farm. One of the concepts has been to use it as a regional agricultural center. Another thing is that I have to take a look at some legislation that is being proposed for the State takeover of the Sheriff's Department. This is a very hot topic at the State House. On a budgetary perspective, the County Commissioners have no oversight over the Sheriff's whatsoever. In Barnstable County we still provide the Sheriff with a piece of funding called the "maintenance of effort". It was mandated in 1993 when they restructured how the Sheriff's budgets were done. That was precipitated because most of the funding was coming from the State. Some County Commissioners were trying to defer some of that money into county operations, and the State frowned on that. So we kind of redid the whole thing. We were required to provide maintenance of effort contributions to our Sheriff. A calculated amount was set to go up 2.5% each year. This year in the 2009 budget that is about \$2.4Mdollars. We collect from the town and the County Tax Assessment about \$2.6 million dollars. So just about 80 or 90 percent of that goes right to the Sheriff.

To go back to your original question, the Sheriff would be an elected official reporting to the Executive Office of Public Safety. Since 1997, the State has not pinched any of the Sheriff's functions that are out there. For example: Our Sheriff has the communications, the 911 dispatch service, bureau of criminal investigation, radio repair office. None of those services in other Sheriff's Departments such as they exist have been impinged upon by the state takeover. What will happen in the future, I don't know. That shouldn't impact your decision, I don't think too much.

We've had three County Commissioners meetings, one of which happened Friday that was a special meeting. We were talking about the existing strategic plan, and how the Commissioners want to go back and look at that, and one of the key pieces of that, and I think that the new board is going to examine the identification of new regional services.

#### **Sheila Lyons, Chairman – County Commissioners**

There is a strategic plan that was created by the former administration – former county board, and in bullet form they are very good goals. They were the Commissioners goals and views as opposed to the Department's. In talking about Regionalization to

many people in the County, they all felt that you can work and work and work to try to get things regionalized, but the towns don't want to go there. But I've always felt that to a certain degree, and it has always been my goal/premise of wanting to be County Commissioner is that the dialogue has to begin of what are regionalized services. What are the regionalized services that you want? There are different layers. There is a delivery of services that we can provide such as the dredge, the Cape Light Compact, the meaty types of things. But then there is the infrastructure area - how can we assist you on this? You look at the Wastewater Collaborative benchmarks that are built into that bill. You are going to have certain planning components, mapping components. You are going to have to have certain things that are going to cost the towns money to be in compliance with that bill. Those are things that we can provide you, if that's necessary. It can't be just for one town, but we can provide that service. How are we going to work out those details?

I am trying to look at the broader spectrum. Each town is going to be facing issues in the next twenty years that you are not going to be able to handle individually, and this is where the County can step in. I feel that its time that we have that dialogue. Do I have all the answers? No, I don't. But, intuitively, I do have the gut feeling that this is where we need to go, and everyone senses it. I'm looking to work with the towns, not to take away your autonomy or your power, but how can we collaborate with you and offer you these things so that those things that you have to worry about you can run your town the way you need to?

Your Planning Board. There are some towns that have planning people and hire people, but there are some people that are going to need planning components. We have planning people out of the Cape Cod Commission that can come down and help you with your planning strategy and that sort of thing.

These are the ideas and the ways that I am trying to think about, and I want to hear your thoughts on this. I also think that as far as the strategic plan, it is something that we need to look at all the departments and what they can offer towns. We just went thought a review last Wednesday, and we are going to be reviewing budgets each Wednesday in the next several weeks in all our Departments. It's an open meeting, and you're all welcome. We're asking each department what goals you have, what are your strengths, and what do you think that you can provide towns that they're not already getting that could help them in some way? Also, how could they collaborate with each other to better serve those?

We've had this discussion among ourselves. Another argument that this is, as far as regionalism, you're not going to save the town's money right away, and you're going to ask them to spend money. We'll be spending money, but they will be spending money inevitably. So, what I am trying to say is that when it comes time to spend that money, how it can make it more for less? Sheila was at a panel on Saturday that I attended. I think she said it very well as far as what you are really trying to do is to become more efficient, more professional, and more relevant in the lives of your citizens. That is my personal goal and I need all of your help to get there. All people say that the towns are all great, and they want this, but then they back off and they are fearful. Well, I'm more afraid of what we know is going to happen, than what we don't know is going to happen. So that is what I am proposing, and that is why I am here. I just want to relate that message. If you have any thoughts and feelings you have to please give them to us.

### **Mark Zelinski**

There is a report I did for the County Commissioners back in 2004 on regional services. Maggie Downy, Assistant County Administrator, and I went to all Town Administrator's and tried to identify some services that we thought we could regionalize out there. We came up with a couple of ones that we were doing immediately, ones that were the next year and some that were other years. Ones that we started off fairly small and immediately and we're doing a joint training process, which is still under way. The other one that we are doing, and noticed that many towns give relatively small grants to human service agencies. It turns out that for most towns it's probably the same five service agencies. But they each have a separate contract. So we decided that we could manage those grants for you, and take over that service and make things more efficient for the towns and the human service agents. It turns out that, at that point in time, now two, one just signed up - decided to do that; part of the issue was the way some of these human service grants are given out is that its done by an advisory council that the town has, and it's very sensitive to giving up that control, or power, or effort.

Two of the services that we identified were the inspectional services and conservation agent. We put programs together. We don't have the infrastructure to manage those kinds of people, but the Town of Barnstable does. So we entered into an agreement with them. They would hire the person, and we would assign that person to the town. We did this with the Town of Provincetown for two days a week. We were subsidizing the rate at that time at about a third. Unfortunately, only Provincetown and Barnstable took advantage of this program. Same with the inspectional services. No other takers. So we're not doing that anymore.

One of the options on the Commissioners Report was the Assessing service. We noticed that many of the towns used the same assessing service, and we felt that we could manage that. However, it couldn't have been two days later that I got a call from the State Assessor's Association, and they wanted to sit down with me and find out what we had in mind. That just illustrated what type of sensitivity there is out there.

**Ira Wood, Wellfleet Selectman**

Suggest that the County do a “modeling”, an actual program which is laid out on the table and bring out the major issues. Take the lead – very boldly and bring up the problems.

**Sharon Lynn, Town Manager, Provincetown**

As a true honest group representing four towns, we need to target some of the things we’ve been talking about. Target one or two projects that we know we can wrap our arms around that we already have agreement on, or we can work towards that in a short period of that, and can have the County assist us in doing that, because that will buy in and have the stakeholders and the vocal groups and everyone know and use your idea of cooperation, because I agree with that. You can’t start with the Police Department. The Police Department has too many components, too many Chiefs, Indians, too many big things to address. But start and target something that you know and we know that is viable; whether it’s planning or wastewater, etc.

**Sheila Lyons** - As far as the sheriff, the dispatch might be something that you can grapple with, and of course, you would lose a dispatcher here in town. If you were ready to buy into that, and your Police department is, then through attrition or however it’s going to be, then it makes that a doable project even for the Sheriff.

**Sharon Lynn** – Yes, and that’s something that we can work on. I’m a proponent, and I mentioned this to the Selectmen last night, because we are a walking community, and we need to have a police department open but it doesn’t have to be a dispatcher it can be somebody else. We need to also see the numbers because we are in budget times, and how those figures would work. I think that if we target something and we take off with that, the newspaper can write whatever it wants to write, because they write negative things anyway, but this group needs to take advantage of the fact that you are here and you (County) are interested in working with us.

**Sheila Lyons** – I’m very interested, and I really do believe that this is the time and moment for the County and the Towns. This is the point where we can come together and work with each other and help each other survive. If we don’t do it now we’re not going to exist, and the Cape would be lost as we know it because it would become something else. I’m just giving you my position through the next few years.

**Paul Sieloff, Wellfleet Town Administrator**

Halfway through your speech you said you offered some professional services then you said you were not doing it anymore. I would like to be able to call the County to see what resources are there. In the past, you used to have resources. Do you still have resources? **Answer – Mark Zelinski** - In this year’s budget, 2009, we do not have a whole lot of money available for this kind of regional service effort. Let me go back. When I said we don’t do that anymore it was because I think it was ’07 when Provincetown decided not to renew its contract for the Conservation Agent. I didn’t have a market for it anymore. Then, in our last year’s budget, our budget started to get tight, and we reduced the funding that we had for the regional service piece and the only thing we have in there right now is the cable money. Our budget is very tight, and for the 2010 Budget I’ve asked the Department Managers for a 10% decrease, and it will be up to the Commissioners to figure out where they want to spend their money. **Paul** - Maybe I’m not explaining myself properly. This should be a profit to the County. The concept is, you have an opening, you contact the County, you hire a building inspector, we give you virtually all the money we have in our budget as a contract to the county. Then, somewhere along the line another town needs a building inspector, or whatever the position is, and at that point you decide can that person take on two entities? Then you start seeing savings, because then you rebate back to us, and you take on the other towns. **Mark** - That was whole theory behind doing the inspections / conservations agent. I just didn’t have any customers. That was the problem. It has to be a joint effort. A commitment from the town. Where we do have the infrastructure is Planning – (Cape Cod Commission) - there is no problem. We see the model eventually being kind of a fee for service, but because we have this critical mass that you built, however many towns it may be, and I don’t know the answer. It’s going to save everybody money.

**Michele Couture, Provincetown Selectman**

As mentioned before one of the things that really worked well was the sewer betterment program in getting all the fifteen towns on board and having the County doing the administration. We would never have the sewer in Provincetown if it was not for George Heufelder and the County and contracting their services out. All we were paying for is the Health Agent three times a week. We did that for three years because we just could not get a health agent here. I think the way we need to go is to use that as a model, because it gets rid of paying benefits and that’s obviously the biggest hit on anyone’s budget is the insurance budget. The services we got from George and the County we simply could not have paid for those services. What I have in mind is inspectional services. The Health Agent was such a good model for us, and I would do that again in a second. Not only did we get a Health Agent for three days but we got all these additional perks by having them and we didn’t have to pay benefits. If we could translate that into different departments I think that would be a really great thing to have going forward to all four towns.

**Mark Zelinski** - We would be willing to build that kind of infrastructure at the county if that makes sense to use it. We’re willing to consider any model.

**Ira Wood**- I think we need to invite the four representatives from FinCom from each town who take on the disaster piece. Sheila Lyons agreed.

Paul Sieloff:

1) I would suggest that all four of the boards, that the four town administrators be told that its the town policy that whenever any of these four towns either want to construct a building, want to buy a vehicle, or have a department head opening, they must circulate the other three towns and the county that these openings exist. If there's any feedback they would like to offer on an alternative way of responding to the opening. Open discussion ensued.

2) I am sending a letter, to the Cape Cod Commission, and I forwarded it to Sheila last week, that this is the Cape Cod Commission request to take suggestions from the towns on regionalization issues. I am suggesting that the things they study include outer cape emergency services – particularly 911 services, and police services. In that letter, which I am putting out individually, I am saying that through the meetings that I've attended, and different towns that I've talked to, that there are five outer cape towns – clearly Eastham, Orleans have been in the paper in discussion. Wellfleet has been in the paper interested in talking to its neighbors about police services, and clearly Provincetown and Truro have much lower interest in these types of options, as we have all said that at the meeting, and I put that in the letter. So, I asked them to take all this into consideration and to consider doing a study on the five outer towns on how they might be able to work together cooperatively taking into account all the different interests around the table.

3) Towns Communicate with each other.

Sheila Vanderhoef: We will put in grant application for Housing Authority to Cape Cod Commission.

**Upcoming meetings**

One more meeting before report to Board of Selectmen of all four towns. We need to summarize information for the report at next meeting. NOTE: after the meeting it was agreed that the next meeting would be held in Eastham on February 4<sup>th</sup> at a new time of 11:00 AM.

**Approval of minutes of 12/17/08:** Michele Couture moved to approve the minutes as written. Sheila Vanderhoef seconded it. Approved unanimous.

Adjournment: David Schropfer moved to adjourn at 11:20 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Vernon G. Porter  
Secretary to Board of Selectmen  
Provincetown, MA