

Comments on CVRPC/CVEDC Merger Committee April 10, 2013 Report:

Issue: Speed of Merger

It appears that there will be no direct contact between the CVRPC and the town, as well as very little time for the CVRPC representative to present the issue to the town. No binding vote should be taken on this issue unless each town representative has a directive motion from his/her board or, at minimum, time enough both for the representative to present the issue to his/her board and for the board in question to research and determine a proper response. If a town chooses not to take advantage of the time, so be it, but the town should have the option. It is important to note that the town is a dues-paying member of CVEDC and has not heard one word on the merger from that organization.

Issue: Executive Committee Make-up

The Executive Committee appears to have eight members, only one of which has to be a municipal representative. This may not be an issue, since municipal reps make up 23 of 35 CVPC board slots and could control the make-up of the ED, but it remains true (to me) that the EC should, within the bylaws, be mandated to have no less than 51% municipal representation (so a minimum of 5 members of the 8-person committee).

Issue: Budget Information

It appears that there is too little budget information presented to judge the cost savings aspect of the merger. Without better numbers, including all organizational assets, it's difficult to guess if there is any cost savings potential and, if there aren't any proven savings, why exactly are we doing this?

Issue: Next Steps

It may be I simply don't understand the process, but I don't see a second opportunity to vote on the concept. Once the municipalities agree to move forward, it appears the next (and only) additional hurdle is the bylaw amendment process. At that point, essentially you've already agreed to merge and you're only working on the details. I would prefer to have the details in place (at the very least, the so-called "Agreement of Merger") before towns commit one way or the other.

Summary

Simply put, exactly why are we doing this? What part of CVRPC is broken? If there are no or minimal cost savings, there doesn't appear to be a significant rationale, at least as laid out in the report, to upset the status quo. The report is well written, but devoid of the kind of specifics that might support a combination of the two organizational missions. Further, exactly how do we revert to the current model if this all goes sour? I see no attempt to take baby steps – this is all or nothing, an approach that municipalities can't really take. We'll still be here, and still have the statutory mandates and need for planning services, if the new organization fails. What we won't have is the solid, reliable assistance we currently get from CVRPC.