Housatonic River Commission

"to coordinate on a regional basis the local management and protection of the Housatonic River Valley in northwestern Connecticut"

Minutes of the November 10, 2025 Special Meeting
(subject to approval at the next meeting)
HRC Office, West Cornwall, and via Google Meet

Christian Allyn – North Canaan – A	William R. Tingley, Vice-chair – Sharon – P
Jack Anstine – North Canaan – A	Phil Hart – Cornwall – A
Dick Heinz – Canaan (Falls Village) – A	TBD – Cornwall – A
Mark Gozonsky – Canaan (Falls Village)–P	Jesse Klingebiel, Chair – Kent – P
Stacie Weiner – Salisbury – A	Michael Benjamin – Kent – P
Gordon Whitbeck – Salisbury – A	Marc Andreotto, Treasurer – New Milford –P
Jim Saunders – Sharon – P	Robert Gambino – New Milford – A

(Acronyms listed on the last page)

Also present: Madeline Scherff* (virtual to start the meeting), HRC Project Manager; Bruce Bennett, ASTE; and Robin Sweeney, Salisbury.

Mr. Klingebiel called the meeting to order at 7:11 p.m.

Mr. Klingebiel moved that the HVA funding and ASTE grant proposal be moved to the top of the agenda. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Work Plan Project Status Reports

HVA funding proposals

HRC has funded the RIO program for the past two years, and HVA has requested support for the summer 2026 field season.

Mr. Tingley moved that HRC fund HVA's 2026 RIO program in the requested amount of $15K. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

HVA plans to hire a full-time environmental education coordinator in the spring of 2026. This position would spend 25% of the time working within the Wild & Scenic communities in Northwest Connecticut.

Mr. Benjamin moved that HRC partially fund HVA's Environmental Educator Position in the requested amount of $22.5K. A condition of the grant will be a comprehensive description of the responsibilities associated with the position. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

HVA is interested in conducting a feasibility study in North Canaan and is asking for HRC funding.

Mr. Benjamin moved that HRC fund an HVA feasibility study in the requested amount of $25K, to establish recreational connectivity between Quinn Street in North Canaan and the old railbed and causeway on the west bank of the Blackberry River. The motion was amended to include the Honey Hill property and to be expanded downstream to the Old Canaan Dam. Bi-monthly reporting is required. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Community Grants Program

Agricultural Science and Technology Land Laboratory request

Mr. Bennett stated that regarding the project evaluation, there will be monthly progress reports, and students will track all activities in a "diary" that will be available to HRC. The funded project is expected to be completed by spring 2026. Building materials are eligible for HRC funding, although labor is not. He added that CT DEEP has reached out to towns regarding the analysis of water in

wetlands, river corridors, and streams, so that they can continue to monitor water quality. There is a good opportunity here for interaction with the community. HRC will be recognized in some manner.

Mr. Tingley moved that HRC approve the grant submitted by Bruce Bennett for $23K to create the Agricultural Science and Technology Land Laboratory on leased Eversource land next to Housatonic Valley Regional High School. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Treasurer and NHCOG Financial Reports

Mr. Andreotto reported that the W&S account balance is $23,252.90, and the NHCOG-HRC subaccount balance is $7,743.72.

Mr. Andreotto moved that the following invoices be paid for the Invoice Period 10/1/2025-11/5/2025, changing the reimbursement for the PO Box from Madeline Scherff to Susan Francisco.

10/31	Organizational Development (FY25)	375	Susan's October Hrs	Susan Francisco	$187.50
11/5	Organizational Development (FY26)	N/A	Post Office Box 25-26	Susan Francisco	$162.00
11/5	Communications Advancement	N/A	10 Photos for Website by CTPhoto	Madeline Scherff	$500.00
				NPS BUDGET	**$849.50**

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

The October 14, 2025 Meeting minutes were approved as written.

Updated Rules of Procedure

Mr. Gozonsky moved to approve the updated Rules of Procedure. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

2026 Meetings Calendar

Mr. Klingebiel moved to approve the 2026 Meeting Schedule. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Jan 13 Feb 10 Mar 10 Apr 14 May 12 Jun 9

Jul 14 Aug 11 Sep 8 Oct 13 Nov 10 Dec 8

Vote to fill the vacancy for Secretary

Mr. Tingley nominated Jim Saunders to fill the vacancy left on November 3 by Bart Jones as Secretary, through June 2026. The nomination was seconded, and Mr. Saunders was elected Secretary unanimously.

Mr. Tingley introduced Robin Sweeney, who is experienced on and around the river (canoeing and fishing), is environmentally aware, and has shown interest in becoming a commissioner.

Invasive Plant Management

Rebate Program Proposal – Ms. Scherff proposed that, because there is a line item for invasive plants, training and professional development could be managed using that funding. She has also suggested a rebate program. There are homeowners along the river and in the watershed who have already replanted with native species. Others might take advantage of funding provided through an

HRC Community Grant. Conservation easements could also be explored. The commissioners agreed that the proposal showed merit and should be further addressed at the next Resource Subcommittee meeting.

River Access - Mr. Tingley discussed am upcoming meeting with Eversource land use representatives at the HELCO property, located upstream of the Covered Bridge on the west side of the river. There are many challenges to be met, but there is enthusiasm for developing this additional river access location.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Recording Secretary,

Susan Francisco

BLEC – Berkshire Litchfield Environmental Council
CCC – Citizens Coordinating Council
CCT – Cornwall Conservation Trust
DEEP – Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
DOT – Department of Transportation
EnCon – Connecticut Environmental Conservation Police
EPA – Environmental Protection Agency
FERC - Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
FRCC – Farmington River Coordinating Committee
GE – General Electric
H.E.A.L. – Housatonic Environmental Action League
HMPA – Housatonic Meadows Preservation Action
HHWG – Housatonic Herbicide Working Group
HMSP – Housatonic Meadows State Park
HRC – Housatonic River Commission
HUD – Housing and Urban Development
HVA – Housatonic Valley Association
JKW – Japanese Knotweed
NCD – Northwest Conservation District
NHCOG – Northwest Hills Council of Governments
NPS – National Park Service
RIO - River Information and Outreach
RFP - Request For Proposal
STEAP - Small Town Economic Assistance Program
ZEO –Zoning Enforcement Officer

Next regular meeting – December 9, 2025 housatonicrivercommision.org