

MINUTES OF THE 5/7/18
SCCOG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
SCCOG Office, Norwich, CT

Present: Michael Passero, Tom Sparkman, Art Shilosky, Mark Nickerson, Ron McDaniel, Jim Rivers

Staff: James Butler

Other: John Salomone, Norwich City Manager; Deb Monahan, TVCCA; Kathleen Stauffer, ARC; Jen Granger, UCFS

Chairman Passero opened the meeting at 8:30 a.m.

1. Meet with SCCOG RHSCC Co-Chairs re: Taxation of Non-Profits

The Executive Director explained that this issue had been discussed at the recent meeting of SCCOG's Regional Human Services Coordinating Council (RHSCC) due to pending legislation and in regards to the City of Norwich's Assessor recent decisions to deny tax exemptions to certain non-profits. He suggested that the RHSCC Co-Chairs meet with the Executive Committee to discuss this subject, and he invited City Manager Salomone to attend, with the ground rules for the discussion being that the discussion would remain general and not be about specific cases in Norwich due to the fact that there have been appeals taken and possible litigation being contemplated.

Ms. Monahan said that they would like to have a conversation with the region's towns about making the taxation process being predictable and fair to all. Mr. Passero stressed that many non-profits place heavy demands on municipal services which they receive for free, and that something has to be done to have these agencies pay their fair share. Discussion took place on whether or not non-profits should be taxed, and possible compromises to full taxation which could be a solution.

Mr. Salomone said he wanted to make several points. He said there was no conspiracy in Norwich or directive to the Assessor to take this approach this year. He said that the statute governing the taxation of non-profits is open to interpretation, allowing the assessors to use professional judgement. There were different reasons that agencies were taxed for the first time this year, such as missing deadlines for the filing of exemption forms, new information about the conduct of their business, etc. He stated that he had warned his City Council that state legislation requires a separation of powers between a municipality's assessor and city manager or legislative body. He pointed out that there are remedies for those agencies who wish to appeal their assessment which are the Board of Assessment Appeals and then the court system.

After additional discussion, the Executive Director suggested that a task force in the region be formed to study the impact the taxation/exemption of human service agencies has on SCCOG cities and towns, and to propose solutions which might be the subject of legislation in next year's legislative session. The Executive Committee agreed to this approach.

2. Proposed Amendment to Statement in SCCOG's UPWP

The Executive Director explained that this statement is required to be in the UPWP, and the amendments requested/proposed by CTDOT would include reference to performance measures.

MOTION: To recommend to the full SCCOG the approval of the amended Statement of Cooperative MPO/State/Transit Operators' Planning Roles and Responsibilities, to be included in the SCCOG's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) (McDaniel, Shilosky). So voted unanimously.

3. Request by East Lyme First Selectman Nickerson to Address SCCOG re: Miracle League Field

Mr. Nickerson outlined East Lyme's plans to build a Miracle League barrier free field in East Lyme, and he asked to be placed on a future SCCOG board agenda to discuss fund raising efforts. The Executive Committee agreed that this item will be placed on the June meeting agenda.

4. Request by Chamber of Commerce President Sheridan to Add a Report on the Thames River Innovation Program to the Monthly COG Agenda

The Executive Committee considered this request, to allow the Thames River Innovation Program (TRIP) staff to report monthly to the SCCOG on their Concierge Program, and decided that the TRIP staff could report on items as needed under Public Comment as opposed to making this a standing agenda item.

5. FY 2018 STIP/TIP Amendments

MOTION: To recommend to the full SCCOG the approval of the FY 2018 STIP/TIP Amendments (Sparkman, McDaniel). So voted unanimously.

The Executive Director asked the Executive Committee to add Resolution No. 18-5 to the agenda.

6. Resolution No. 18-5 Relating to a FY 2017 EMPG HAZMAT Grant

The Executive Director explained that he had received the request for the SCCOG to approve of this resolution, authorizing the grant application, after the agendas had been mailed out. The amount of funds being requested is \$56,500, which is \$10,000 more than last year. The funds are used by the region's Hazardous Materials Team for equipment and training.

MOTION: To recommend to the full SCCOG the approval of Resolution No. 18-5 Relating to a FY 2017 EMPG HAZMAT Grant (McDaniel, Sparkman). So voted unanimously.

7. Other

The Executive Director reported on his attempts to schedule a meeting with the region's assessors, as the first step in implementing recommendations from the municipal Shared Services Study.

The Executive Director reported on progress in the Human Services Shared Services study now underway, and his recent conversations/meetings with the consultant to discuss this progress.

The Executive Director reported on recent security upgrades at the SCCOG office, including new locks/keys, and the installation of security cameras.

Mr. Passero reported on his attendance at a meeting of COG Chairpersons to which COG Executive Directors were expressly excluded; he said he was not sure of the purpose of the meeting. The Executive Director stated that the state's COG Directors found this meeting invitation to Chairs and Vice-Chairs only to be irregular and puzzling.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:08 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
James S. Butler, Executive Director