

MINUTES OF THE 11/14/18 MEETING OF THE
SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
SCCOG OFFICE, NORWICH, CT

PRESENT: Council Representatives: Glenn Pianka, Bozrah; Art Shilosky, Colchester; Mark Nickerson, East Lyme; Charles Grant, Franklin; Tom Sparkman, Lisbon; Ron McDaniel, Montville; Michael Passero, New London; Mike Urgo, North Stonington; Bob Congdon, Preston; Kevin Lyden, Salem; Dan Steward, Waterford. Council Alternates: John Burt, Town of Groton; John Salomone, Norwich; Jim Rivers, Windham. Tribal Liaison: Robert Hayward, Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation; Chuck Bunnell, Mohegan Tribe. Staff: James Butler, Amanda Kennedy, Kate Rattan. Other: Mike Carroll, Al Fritzsche, Cherise Perkins, SEAT; Jaroslaw Pizunski, Amalgamated Transit Union; Nancy Cowser, seCTer; Wendy Bury, SE CT Cultural Coalition; Deb Monahan, TVCCA; Ayanti Grant, Congressman Courtney's office.

1. Call to Order: The Chairman called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.
2. Roll Call: A quorum was present.
3. Pledge of Allegiance: The Chairman led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Chairman thanked those members who attended, on very short notice, a recent economic development event in New London.

4. Act on Minutes 10/17/18:

MOTION: To approve the minutes of 10/17/18 (Sparkman, Lyden). So voted unanimously.

5. Treasurer's Report:

MOTION: To approve the November Treasurer's Report (Congdon, Osten). So voted unanimously.

6. Public Comment:

None.

7. Communications:

The Executive Director highlighted communications in the agenda packet, one a letter from FEMA approving SCCOG's Multi Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan, and the other an email from Attorney Casey providing an update on the Amicus Curiae brief filed concerning the ELIDSS.

8. Committee and Liaison Reports

A. Executive Committee

1. SCCOG Legislative Agenda

The Executive Director reminded that the Executive Committee had agreed previously to function as the this year's Legislative Committee and had determined that legislation addressing the topic of the impact that property tax exemption of non-profits have on municipalities would constitute the primary focus of this year's SCCOG legislative agenda. At their last meeting, the Executive Committee reviewed and discussed the draft of a paper by the SCCOG Task Force to Analyze the Municipal Tax Impact of Non-Profit Agencies. The Task Force then met on November 13, and finalized their recommendations for legislation that would address the issue. The Task Force recommendations, and a background report which calculated the tax revenue lost in five SCCOG municipalities, has been distributed at the table to all SCCOG members attending today. A meeting with the legislative delegation has been scheduled for November 19th. The Executive Director then read the five recommendations.

Ms. Osten asked if these were the only issues the SCCOG wishes to include on their Legislative Agenda. The Executive Director stated that the SCCOG had also received a request from former City of Groton Mayor Marian Galbraith to include support for state funding of the Thames River Heritage Park Foundation water taxi on the SCCOG Legislative Agenda. Ms. Osten then recommended two other items be added to the SCCOG Legislative Agenda: support for the Mohegan Tribe – Mashantucket Pequot third casino and sports gambling, and opposition to any legislation that would attempt to eliminate the Connecticut Municipal Electric Energy Cooperative (CMEEC). She then provided her reasons for these suggested additions to a SCCOG Legislative Agenda.

Mr. Congdon stated that the SCCOG could focus on the five items dealing with property tax exemptions, and then as bills are introduced on other issues during the session, respond to them at that time.

Ms. Osten responded that MGM, which is proposing their own third casino, has about 70 lobbyists working on this matter in Hartford, and said the SCCOG needs to get out in front on this issue.

Mr. Lyden stated he agrees with Ms. Osten regarding SCCOG support for the two Tribes, but said he believed that the property tax exemption issue should be the focus of this year's SCCOG Legislative Agenda.

The Chairman noted that there should be two separate SCCOG actions today: the first an action on the SCCOG Task Force Report, and the second action on the SCCOG Legislative Agenda.

MOTION: To accept and adopt the Recommendations of the SCCOG Task Force to Analyze the Municipal Tax Impact of the Non-Profit Agencies and to make these items part of the SCCOG's 2019 Legislative Agenda (Lyden, Burt). So voted unanimously.

The Chairman then recognized Wendy Bury, Executive Director of the SE CT Cultural Coalition. Ms. Bury stated while she understood the SCCOG Task Force position on non-profits renting rather than owning property, she reminded that arts and cultural organizations, which are also primarily non-profit and which own property, would be impacted by the recommended actions as well.

Deb Monahan, Executive Director of TVCCA, and a member of the SCCOG Task Force that created the subject report, stated that the recommendation concerning legislation that would tax non-profit property would only apply to newly acquired property, in order to encourage non-profits to seek rental and to avoid owning property when possible.

The Chairman asked for individual motions to add additional items to the five legislative agenda items recommended by the Task Force.

MOTION: To add to the SCCOG's 2019 Legislative Agenda that SCCOG continues to support the third casino in the state as proposed by a partnership between the Mohegan Tribe and Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation; supports legalized sports wagering and other advancements in the gaming industry that keeps Connecticut competitive with neighboring states; and opposes any action that negatively impacts the State's compact with its two federally recognized Native American Tribes (McDaniel, Lyden). So voted unanimously.

MOTION: To add to the SCCOG's 2019 Legislative Agenda that the State should continue to fund the water taxi service operated by the Thames River Heritage Park Foundation (McDaniel, Sparkman). So voted with one abstention (Urgo).

MOTION: To add to the SCCOG's 2019 Legislative Agenda that SCCOG opposes any legislation that would hinder the Connecticut Municipal Electric Energy Cooperative (CMEEC) in performing its mission in providing electric services to several municipal utilities and participating wholesale customers located in Connecticut (Congdon, Salomone). So voted unanimously.

2. Other

The Executive Director stated he had also discussed with the Executive Committee the status of work by consultants on several projects; noted the

audit was due this week; and said that the Executive Committee had stood up the Nominating Committee, which will again be chaired by Mr. Sparkman, who will be joined on that committee by Mr. Congdon and Mr. Lyden.

B. Legislative Committee/Legislative Update

No additional discussion of legislative issues.

C. Tribal Liaison Representatives

Mr. Bunnell said he appreciated the SCCOG support. He said that next week the Tribe will be donating turkeys to the Town of Montville for those in need, and would be making a donation to the UCFS food bank.

Mr. Hayward thanked the SCCOG and Senator Osten for their support; reported on recent Tribal elections; said he wished to echo Mr. Bunnell's statement concerning the importance of helping those in need; and distributed invitations to the Tribe's annual holiday reception to be held on December 12th.

D. Military Command Representative

No report.

E. Congressional Office Report

Ms. Grant provided several updates on activities by the Congressman and his staff.

F. seCTer

Ms. Cowser reported that their annual meeting will be held at Ocean Beach on November 28th; a PTAC suppliers event to be held; the loan program is quite busy; staff reorganization is underway which will allow more support for the region's economic development efforts; and expressed her interest in supporting SCCOG's Legislative Agenda.

G. Eastern CT Tourism District – no report.

H. SEAT

Mr. Carroll stated the SEAT board meeting will follow the SCCOG meeting.

I. Regional Water Committee

Mr. Congdon reported that the Eastern CT WUCC would be meeting at the SCCOG office this afternoon. The Executive Director stated that the waste water management study is now underway.

J. Regional Emergency Planning Team

No report.

K. Regional Human Services Coordinating Council

Ms. Monahan reported that the RHSCC will meet on Friday.

L. SE CT Cultural Coalition

Ms. Bury stated that she looks forward to supporting the SCCOG's Legislative Agenda after studying its impacts.

9. Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director stated his written report was contained in the agenda packet and that he had nothing to add at this time.

10. Old Business

None.

11. New Business

Ms. Osten stated that Sprague has recently learned that their Board of Education overspent their 2017 budget by \$835,000. She said she intends to propose legislation that would require boards of education to work with municipal boards of finance. Discussion ensued.

12. Next Meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for December 19, and in response to the Executive Director's question, those present expressed interest in having this annual meeting once again held at Flanders Fish Market and Restaurant in East Lyme.

13. Adjournment:

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 9:45a.m. (Sparkman, Shilosky). So voted unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mark Nickerson, Secretary