

MINUTES OF THE 6/19/19 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; Todd Babbitt, Griswold; Timothy Sharkey, Jewett City; Tom Sparkman, Lisbon; Ron McDaniel, Montville; Michael Passero, New London; Mike Uργο, North Stonington; Peter Nystrom, Norwich; Bob Congdon, Preston; Cathy Osten, Sprague; Jeff Callahan, Borough of Stonington; Rob Simmons, Town of Stonington; Dan Steward, Waterford. Council Alternates: John Burt, Town of Groton; John Salomone, Norwich; Jim Rivers, Windham. Military Liaison: Captain Todd Moore, Adam Wright, U.S. Naval SUBASE. Staff: James Butler, Amanda Kennedy, Kate Rattan, Sam Alexander; Sustainable CT Interns: Joey Marsalisi, Sarah Mount. Other: Mike Carroll, Al Fritzsche, Cherise Perkins, SEAT; Jaroslaw Pizunski, Amalgamated Transit Union; Nancy Cowser; seCTer; Staff from Congressman Courtney's Office; Emily Graham, Senator Blumenthal's office; Kurt Salmoiraghi Eric Shortell, FHWA; Grayson Wright, CTDOT; Pat McLaughlin, City of Norwich DPW; Tom Bombra, City of New London Office of Development and Planning; New Teresa Jackson, Eversource; Scott Bighniatti, Milone & MacBroom; one reporter.

1. Call to Order: The Chairman called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.
2. Roll Call: A quorum was present.
3. Pledge of Allegiance: The Chairman led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Executive Director introduced SCCOG's two Sustainable CT summer interns Joey Marsalisi, a student at Eastern CT State University and Sarah Mount, a student at Wesleyan.

4. Act on Minutes 5/15/19:

MOTION: To approve the minutes of 5/15/19 (Osten, McDaniel). So voted unanimously.

5. Treasurer's Report:

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

6. Public Comment:

None.

7. Communications:

The Executive Director stated he had distributed at each place at the table an email sent to all of the state's COG Executive Directors from Sanjeev Ramchandra in which he recommended financing the state's transportation improvements by raising the sales tax rate from 0.65% to 7.0%.

8. Guest Speakers:

Scott Bighinatti, Milone & MacBroom re: SCCOG Regional Wastewater Management Plan

Mr. Bighanatti presented a Power Point presentation on the draft Regional Wastewater Management Plan. At the end of his presentation he responded to questions. The Executive Director stated this plan was emailed to all SCCOG members yesterday, and would be on the July meeting agenda for SCCOG action.

Ms. Osten recommended the formation of a separate COG committee be formed on this subject, which could work to see recommendations implemented and discuss funding sources for projects.

9. Committee and Liaison Reports

A. Executive Committee

1. TAP Grant Applications

The Executive Director outlined the process staff used to evaluate the five projects; the schedule that CTDOT had established for submission of the COG's priority; the fact that while \$1.185M is expected to be available to the SCCOG region for the period 2021-2025, CTDOT might only advance one project from each region due to their staffing constraints; the Executive Committee's desire to visit individually the five sites; the COG's tabling of action on this at their last meeting until such time as the Executive Committee had completed their site visits; and the extension of the deadline by CTDOT to September 30. In addition, he reminded in light of this extended deadline, staff had sent an email out to all SCCOG CEOs soliciting additional projects that are located in rural areas (non-urbanized) that could potentially qualify for TAP funds reserved specifically for projects in these areas, if any funds remain after rural COGs apply.

Mr. Simmons asked why the SCCOG had to act on this at today's meeting. The Executive Director stated that while he was not aware of any new information that could be brought forward to assist the SCCOG in deciding its priorities, the SCCOG could wait to act on this at their July or September meeting, and still meet the CTDOT deadline of September 30th. The Chairman then asked for a motion before further discussion.

MOTION: That the SCCOG inform CTDOT that their TAP Grant application priorities are 1) Norwich, New London Turnpike Complete Streets Improvements, \$786,240 requested; \$982,800 total project cost; and 2) New London, Williams Street Complete Street Improvements, \$874,105 requested; \$982,800 total project cost (Urgo, Osten).

Mr. Simmons advocated for the Town of Stonington project. He stated that no one from the Executive Committee had contacted him about visiting the site of his town's project, and he said he would have liked to have accompanied members on their site visit.

Mr. Burt said he has an understanding of why his project had not been recommended by the Executive Committee despite receiving the most points in the staff technical rating, and asked that the Town of Groton project be added as a third priority on the list the SCCOG will forward to CTDOT.

Ms. Osten asked about the ability of the SCCOG to submit more than one or two projects. The Executive Director responded that while CTDO has asked COGs to only recommend projects which cost is within the funds it anticipates receiving, he said that the form the SCCOG is supposed to submit to CTDOT has room for up to three projects.

MOTION: To amend the original motion to state: That the SCCOG inform CTDOT that their TAP Grant application priorities are 1) Norwich, New London Turnpike Complete Streets Improvements, \$786,240 requested; \$982,800 total project cost; 2) New London, Williams Street Complete Street Improvements, \$874,105 requested; \$982,800 total project cost; and 3) Town of Groton, Connect G&S Trolley Trail to the Thomas Road Shared Use Path, \$515,200 requested; \$644,000 total project cost (Osten, Simmons).

Mr. Pianka advocated for the Bozrah project, and said he felt some of the criteria used in the staff technical rating sheet were unfair, such as being penalized for not having submitted letters of support.

Mr. Urgo stated he agreed with and felt that the objective criteria used in the rating rubric was fair.

Mr. Salomone stated he wished to hear from members of the Executive Committee as to their reasons for their recommendation; he also said he would be in objection to delaying the vote on this matter.

The Chairman responded by saying he felt the reasons in the Executive Committee Report to the COG accurately explain the Executive Committee's position.

Mr. Rivers said he is a member of the Executive Committee, and that the Committee had a tough time with this. He explained the factors he felt went into their decision, including what he termed the ability to pay, and the recognition that Norwich and New London had a history of using taxpayer dollars to pay for sidewalk projects.

Mr. Passero said the recommendation to the COG was not made lightly, and that it required a long discussion that spanned two meetings.

Mr. Babbitt inquired about the opportunity for the additional rural applications to be submitted and the deadlines for those applications, to which the Executive Director responded the deadline to submit to the SCCOG is August 2nd, and for the SCCOG to respond to CTDOT is September 30.

Mr. Simmons asked which members of the Executive Committee visited the site of his Town's project; he also said he wished he had been contacted so that he could have led the site visit.

The Chairman stated he visited the road and was also very familiar with the location of the project, and noted he did not need to be accompanied.

Mr. Simmons commented on Mr. Rivers citing ability to pay as a criteria that was considered. He said he feels the SCCOG should delay voting on this.

Mr. Passero stated that the Executive Committee's consideration was more one of the two recommended municipalities were applying taxpayer funding to such projects, which would be enhanced by these grant funds.

Mr. Shilosky asked the Executive Director to read the amended motion. The Chairman then called for a vote. The amended motion was approved with 15 in favor, and 3 (Callahan, Nickerson, Simmons) opposed.

2. Proposal for Regional Foreign Trade Zone Designation

Mr. Passero had explained his City's suggestion that all SCCOG member towns that are part of New London County be included in a new designated Foreign Trade Zone under the Alternative Site Framework provision. He introduced Tom Bombria from the City Office of Development and Planning which has been working with the City's Foreign Trade Zone Commission on this issue.

MOTION: That SCCOG expresses its support for and recommends its cities and towns that are located in New London County consider joining New London in a Foreign Trade Zone service area under the Alternative Site Framework that would allow designation to be brought to any company that needs it in the region, eliminating the need to pre-designate a site. (Osten, Grant). So voted unanimously.

3. FY 2019 STIP/TIP Amendments

The Executive Committee has recommended in favor of these amendments. Chairman Sparkman noted these will be taken up under New Business.

4. Long Island Sound Dredge Spoils Disposal Amicus Curiae Brief Update

The Executive Director reported he had received an email from Attorney Casey stating that the Amicus Curiae brief that SCCOG was party to, has been filed. The schedule going forward is: June 28 - NY plaintiffs file their reply briefs to the EPA and DEEP briefs; July 26 - EPA and DEEP file their replies to the NY replies; and July 29 - NY plaintiffs submit all the briefs and moving papers to the judge (by rule in this district, the judge wants all the briefs filed at one time when they are all complete). Attorney Casey said that he then expects the judge will schedule oral argument before issuing a decision; he has advised that as amici, we do not have an opportunity to participate in oral argument.

5. Other

The Executive Director reported that the Executive Committee is revisiting the potential for formation of a Regional Ethics Commission.

B. Legislative Committee/Legislative Update

Senator Osten reported that the State adopted its budget on time.

C. Tribal Liaison Representatives

No report.

D. Military Command Representative

Captain Moore reported on a number of issues including the JLUS Implementation project, and efforts by the SUBASE to improve resiliency and capacity at the SUBASE.

E. Congressional Office Report

A staff member from Congressman Cortney's office and Ellen Graham from Senator Blumenthal's office both made reports on the work of their congressional offices.

F. seCTer

Ms. Cowser reported on the May 29th major supplier event which was held for EB; she also said seCTer would host a developer's roundtable at Mohegan Sun on October 31.

G. Eastern CT Tourism District

No report.

H. SEAT

Mr. Carroll reported that SEAT ridership is up 1%; there will be no SEAT service on Independence Day; SEAT is working with New London Police Department on routes for Sailfest; working on a micro-transit project in Stonington and anticipates working on a similar project in New London; and SEAT had two drivers who participated this year in the statewide Transit Roadeo. He said he SEAT Board meeting would immediately follow the COG meeting.

I. Regional Water Committee

Mr. Congdon stated the Committee had no report, but said he felt that there should be a separate Regional Wastewater Management Plan Committee as opposed to combining this topic with that of the Regional Water Committee.

J. Regional Emergency Planning Team

The Executive Director reported that there is one outstanding MOA from a NECCOG municipality which needs to be provided before FY 2018 HSG funds can be distributed.

K. Regional Human Services Coordinating Council

Ms. Kennedy reported that the RHSCC will meet on July 19.

L. SE CT Cultural Coalition

No report.

10. Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director reported on SCCOG RSG funding in the state budget; CTDOT's agreement to allow COGs to continue to match federal PL funds at 10%, as opposed to 12%, as they had previously directed; the JLUS public meeting has been rescheduled from June 13 to July 15 at the City of Groton Municipal Building; and said that he, New London Mayor Passero and Norwich Tax Assessor Donna Ralston had addressed the state's Assessors at their annual

Assessor's School on SCCOG's Task Force that analyzed the property tax exempt impact on SCCOG municipalities.

11. Old Business

None.

12. New Business

A. FY 2018-2019 STIP/TIP Amendments

- NHPP-BRX, 0170-3382, Various, Statewide, Load Ratings for Bridges – NHS Roads (1/1/16-12/31/20) AC Conversion, OTH, 2020, \$6,000,000, Increase Est. from FED \$1.6M.
- STPA-BRX, 0170-3383, Various, Statewide, Load Ratings for Bridges – Non-NHS Roads (1/1/16-12/31/20) AC Conversion, OTH, 2020, \$4,520,000, Increase Est. from FED \$800K.

MOTION: To approve of the FY 2018-2019 STIP/TIP amendments (Steward, McDaniel). So voted unanimously.

13. Next Meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for July 17, 2019.

14. Adjournment:

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 10:02 a.m. (Steward, McDaniel). So voted unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Fred Allyn III, Secretary