

MINUTES OF THE 4 FEBRUARY 2020
SCCOG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
SCCOG Office, Norwich, CT

Present: Mark Nickerson, Jim Rivers, Fred Allyn, III, Mike Urgo, Tom Sparkman, Keith Hedrick
Staff: James Butler, Kate Rattan

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

1. Regional Service Grant (RSG) Update

The Executive Director reported that in a teleconference last week between the COG Directors and the Undersecretary of OPM, the COGs were informed that OPM intended to continue to provide an additional \$125,000 base to the four previously merged COGs, over and above the \$125,000 base plus per capita funding that all COGs receive under this grant program. Despite the fact that these mergers occurred six years ago, OPM believes that until the statute regarding RSG is amended, they are required to continue to provide this merger bonus. The Executive Director stated that SCCOG currently receives \$322,954 in RSG funds, and anticipates receiving this amount next year unless the statute is changed.

2. SCCOG Vacancies on SECHA and RHSCC

The Executive Director informed the Executive Committee that there are currently vacancies for SCCOG member seats on the Southeastern CT Housing alliance and on the SCCOG Regional Human Services Coordinating Council. Mr. Hedrick suggested these vacancies be made known to the full COG. The Executive Committee requested that staff notify the full COG of these vacancies and seek volunteers to fill these positions.

3. Discussion of CTDOT FY 2016 PL Carryover Funds

The Executive Committee discussed with staff the use of the \$234,141 in FY 2016 PL Carryover funding available to the COG. The Executive Director pointed out that these funds do require a 20% COG match, as CTDOT has informed they will not be matching at 10% as they do annual PL funds. Staff discussed projects that a Transportation Engineer funded with these funds might work on for the SCCOG, including LOTCIP, bike-ped projects, CMP projects, and projects suggested by SCCOG members. The Executive Director said that staff was recommending a solicitation for transportation engineering services, as opposed to hiring a full-time engineer, until we better know what our workload will be and how much this position could assist SCCOG in its transportation planning responsibilities. Under discussion, Mr. Urgo asked if staff had considered hiring a part-time in-house staff engineer. The Executive Director stated he had, but had questions about the provision of benefits and the fact that a part-timer must work a set number of hours a week in the SCCOG office, whereas a contracted individual works out of their own office and only when tasks are assigned.

MOTION: To recommend to the full SCCOG the application of the SCCOG's FY 2016 PL Carryover to initially contract with an individual or firm to provide transportation engineering

services regarding a number of SCCOG projects including LOTCIP, projects recommended in the SCCOG Regional Bike-Ped Plan, and the CMP (Urgo, Sparkman). So voted unanimously.

4. Update on SCCOG HVAC Unit

The Executive Director reported that a couple of weeks ago, the HVAC unit at the north end of the office had been detected during routine maintenance as having a faulty heat exchanger, leading to carbon monoxide leaking into the office. The unit was shut down for a week while the replacement part was on order. He said the total repair will cost \$2,500 - \$3,000, and comes on the heels of the HVAC unit at the south end of the building needing repair in December at a cost close to \$2,000. He said he was keeping the Executive Committee informed because these two unexpected repairs will most likely result in the Office Maintenance line item of the budget to be over-expended at the end of the year.

5. Other

The Executive Director stated that the EWIB CEO Council had a vacancy among the three seats allotted to SCCOG, created by Mr. Funderburk not being able to continue due to health issues. The two SCCOG members now serving are Tom Sparkman who chairs the CEO Council, and Ron McDaniel. The Executive Committee asked that this vacancy also be noticed to the full SCCOG, with the announcement of the two discussed earlier in the meeting.

The Executive Director stated that he had been sent a working draft of An Act Concerning the Sustainability of Connecticut's Transportation Infrastructure (toll bill) by CTDOT, and asked if the Executive Committee wished to take a position on it. The members of the Executive Committee declined to take a position on the proposed bill.

The Executive Director reminded the Executive Committee that SCCOG's Regional Election Monitor (REM), JoAnn Merolla-Martin, had stepped down from that position at the end of November to care for her husband who had health issues. He said that while it is a statutorily required responsibility for COGs to have REMs, three other COGs do not currently have this position filled, and the previously provided Secretary of State grants for this position (two \$11,100 grants) ran out in 2018, and the SCCOG funded the position with about \$7,000 of its own funding until Ms. Merolla-Martin's resignation in November. The Executive Committee asked the Executive Director to email all of the SCCOG CEOs and ask them to poll their Registrars of Voters and their Moderators as to the value of this position.

The Executive Committee scheduled Wendy Bury of the SE CT Cultural Coalition to address the SCCOG on Municipal Cultural Districts at the March COG meeting.

The Executive Committee agreed to staff's recommendation that a solicitation for the next round of LOTCIP funding be conducted. Staff explained that at this time, SCCOG has available to it approximately \$8M to fund LOTCIP eligible projects.

The Executive Director provided an update on the Eastern Long Island Sound Dredge Spoils appeal, and EB's recent appeal to the Department of Commerce to use the ELDS. SCCOG is

party to an Amicus Curiae brief which has been filed with the court on this issue.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

James S. Butler, Executive Director