

MINUTES OF 2/19/20 MEETING OF THE
SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
SCCOG OFFICE, NORWICH, CT

PRESENT: Council Representatives: Carl Zorn, Bozrah; Mary Bylone, Colchester; Mark Nickerson, East Lyme; Charles Grant, Franklin; Todd Babbitt, Griswold; Timothy Sharkey, Jewett City; Kevin Cwikla, Lebanon; Fred Allyn, III, Ledyard; Ron McDaniel, Montville; Michael Passero, New London; Mike Urgo, North Stonington; Sandra Allyn-Gauthier, Preston; Kevin Lyden, Salem; Cheryl Allen Blanchard, Sprague; Jeff Callahan, Borough of Stonington; Danielle Chesebrough, Town of Stonington; Rob Brule, Waterford. Council Alternates: John Burt, Town of Groton; Jim Rivers, Windham. Military Liaison: Captain Todd Moore, Adam Wright, U.S. Naval SUBASE; LCDR Daniel Stepler, USCGA. Staff: James Butler, Amanda Kennedy, Kate Rattan. Other: Mike Carroll, Al Fritzsche, Cherise Perkins, SEAT; Jaroslaw Pizunski, Amalgamated Transit Union; Deb Monahan, TVCCA; Catherine Young, CAA; Jen Granger, UCFS; Nancy Cowser, seCTer; Ellen Graham, Senator Blumenthal's office; Bob Ross, CT Office of Military Affairs; Jennifer Carrier, Michelle Hilary, Kurt Salmoiraghi, Erik Shortell, FHWA; Carey Redd, Felix Reyes, New London; David Kooris, Andrew Lavigne, CT Port Authority; Bob May, Fuss & O'Neill; one unknown man; one reporter.

1. Call to Order: Chairman Nickerson called the meeting to order at 8:33 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 then welcomed Colchester First Selectman Mary Bylone to her first COG meeting.

The Executive Director recognized four guests in attendance from FHWA. Jennifer Carrier of FHWA introduced FHWA staff, and said they were visiting in advance of SCCOG's quadrennial MPO review which would begin this spring.

4. Act on Minutes 1/15/20:

MOTION: To approve the minutes of 1/15/20 (McDaniel, Lyden). So voted unanimously.

5. Treasurer's Report:

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

6. Public Comment:

None.

7. Communications:

The Executive Director noted the correspondence in the packet sent by Congressman Courtney's staff concerning the Eastern Long Island Sound dredge spoils issue.

8. Guest Speaker: David Kooris, CT Port Authority

Mr. Kooris introduced himself and Andrew Lavigne, both representing the CT Port Authority. He summarized previous plans for the reinvestment in State Pier in New London. He then briefed the SCCOG about the state's and CT Port Authority's agreement with Gateway as operator, and with Eversource and Orsted, for the assembly of wind turbines at State Pier.

Mr. Allyn asked if after the ten year agreement expires if the lift structures will remain in place, and Mr. Kooris responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Lyden asked if New London, as host city, was getting a fair deal. Mr. Kooris answered that he thought so.

Mr. Callahan inquired about the location of the wind farms that the equipment assembled in New London will be deployed to. Mr. Kooris assured there were several that could readily be served by the turbines assembled in New London.

9. Committee and Liaison Reports

A. Executive Committee

1. Regional Service Grant Update

The Executive Director reported that two weeks ago the OPM Undersecretary informed the state's COGs 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 EWIB CEO Council, SECHA, RHSCC

The Executive Director said he briefed the Executive Committee that there are currently vacancies for SCCOG member seats on the Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board CEO Council, the Southeastern CT Housing Alliance (SECHA), and on the SCCOG Regional Human Services Coordinating Council (RHSCC). As requested by the Executive Committee, he emailed the members of the COG to seek volunteers for these positions. The two SCCOG members now serving on the EWIB CEO Council are Tom Sparkman who is the chair, and Ron McDaniel. He said he had received two volunteers for this position, the first received was from Peter Nystrom from Norwich, and the second from Charles Grant of Franklin. He said he received no volunteers for the other two positions. After discussion, and two members volunteering, the following motion was acted upon.

MOTION: To appoint Peter Nystrom to the EWIB CEO Council, Fred Allyn III to SECHA, and Mary Bylone to the RHSCC (McDaniel, Grant). So voted unanimously.

3. Use of FY 2016 PL Carryover Funds

The Executive Director stated that he had discussed with the Executive Committee 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. He said that staff recommends these funds be applied to retain the services of a Transportation Engineer to work on several projects 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.

MOTION: To approve the use of SCCOG's FY 2016 PL Carryover to initially contract with an individual or firm to provide transportation engineering services who could work on a number of SCCOG projects including LOTCIP, projects recommended in the SCCOG Regional Bike-Ped Plan, and the CMP (Lyden, Brule). So voted unanimously.

4. Other

The Executive Director reported that he had discussed with the Executive Committee the fact 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 had asked the Executive Director to email all of the SCCOG CEOs and requesting them to poll their Registrars of Voters and their Moderators as to the value of this position, and the responses that had been forwarded to him had all been positive. He said he has attempted to contact the Secretary of State's Office concerning their position on the requirement for this regional position and to see if they are contemplating future funding to COGs, but has not heard back from anyone.

After discussion, the consensus was to advertise for this Regional Election Monitor position vacancy, but to not fill the position until a response is received from the Secretary of State's Office.

B. Legislative Committee/Legislative Update

Mr. Grant reported that the Legislative Committee had met with the region's legislative delegation on January 17th, and reported on that meeting to the full COG at the January 19th meeting. Mr. Grant said one member of the Legislative Committee had expressed a desire to see more follow-up done by the COG in terms of continuing to track and advocate for the Legislative Agenda. He asked the Executive Director if he could draft a sample letter that SCCOG members could send to their individual legislators; the Executive Director responded he would do so. Mr. Grant said he would work with other members of his Committee to track and report back to the full SCCOG on the progress of bills related to the SCCOG Legislative Agenda. He also mentioned the possibility of requesting a meeting with legislators in Hartford, but no plans were finalized for such a meeting.

C. Tribal Liaison Representatives

No report.

D. Military Command Representative

Captain Moore reported that the SUBASE recently conducted an Active Shooter drill. He said that after the last SCCOG meeting, where the issue of IT security had been raised, he discussed with his IT team the possibility of Navy staff providing voluntary assistance to municipalities after hours to review and assist with ideas to improve municipal IT security. Since this would be voluntary assistance, he said that any interested municipality should contact the SUBASE coordinator of volunteer services, who is Chris Zendan, Public Affairs Officer. Staff was asked to send to all SCCOG members Mr. Zendan's contact information.

Chairman Nickerson thanked Captain Moore for this gracious offer. He said that he would ask the SCCOG Executive Committee at their next meeting to consider the possibilities for municipal sharing of IT services, and would attempt to integrate Captain Moore's offer for an IT security review into this discussion.

E. Congressional Office Report

Ms. Graham reported that Senator Blumenthal would be meeting in Norwich with Mayor Nystrom later today to announce a resolution he is introducing to protect Minor League Baseball; she mentioned the President's recently announced Defense Budget, and the fact that it would eliminate funding for submarine construction. Mr. Ross reminded this is only a preliminary budget, and that Congress now reviews and makes adjustments to the White House proposed budget.

F. seCTer

Ms. Cowser stated that seCTer was close to finalizing a negotiation with UCONN which would place an SBDC at seCTer; reported on seCTer's loan programs; reported on a PTAC regional matchmaker event in RI April 8-9.

G. Eastern CT Tourism District

No report.

H. SEAT

Mr. Carroll stated ridership continues to increase; stated that SEAT had participated in National Transit Equity Day; and stated that the Micro-Transit program had begun in Stonington.

I. Regional Water Committee

The Executive Director reported that the WUCC would be meeting at the SCCOG office on February 27 and May 12. .

J. Regional Emergency Planning Team

The Executive Director reported that all FY 2019 MOAs and resolutions had been received from SCCOG member municipalities; the only two outstanding are from two NECCOG towns.

K. Regional Human Services Coordinating Council

Ms. Monahan reported that the RHSCC would next meet in April.

L. SE CT Cultural Coalition

The Executive Director said that the SCCOG Executive Committee had scheduled Ms. Bury to address the SCCOG at the March meeting on the subject of municipal cultural districts.

10. Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director reminded that he had emailed all SCCOG CEOs a model resolution supporting the SCCOG RPIP grant applications, as OPM requires a resolution from each COG member municipality which might benefit from a grant award. He still needed a resolution from six remaining SCCOG towns; these are due to OPM on February 28.

The Executive Director reported on the status of the FY 2020 budget; he referred to the report and budget table in the agenda packet.

The Executive Director reminded that the SCCOG had deferred making appointments to a new SCCOG Wastewater Management Committee until after the November elections, and asked the Chairman if he wished for these appointments to be discussed by the Executive Committee. The Chairman said he would prefer to ask for volunteers right now. SCCOG members who volunteered are: Cheryl Blanchard, John Burt, Danielle Chesebrough, Michael Passero, and Mike Urgo. The Executive Director stated he would also ask Norwich City Manager John Salomone to participate due to the City's extensive wastewater management system. (Note: After the meeting, Timothy Sharkey also volunteered to serve on this Committee).

The Executive Director stated that he had emailed and placed in front of all CEO places at the table a MOA that would formally allow and establish the protocols for the sharing of Public Works equipment between SCCOG member municipalities. He stated that this is an outgrowth of SCCOG's Shared Services Study, and that the SCCOG ad hoc Public Works Committee chaired by Todd Babbitt was considering this MOA, and might soon be recommending its approval to SCCOG CEOs.

The Executive Director stated he had recently learned of a CT law passed last year requiring all employers with more than 3 employees to provide the employees with sexual harassment prevention training. He suggested that the SCCOG might assist in the coordination of such training regionally. After discussion, it was agreed that currently there are enough options for the training available to SCCOG member towns, including CHRO online training and CIRMA provided training.

11. Old Business

None.

12. New Business

The Chairman stated that Dominion wished to hold a community meeting with the SCCOG this spring, possibly at Millstone. He said the date being discussed, is the SCCOG's May 27th meeting date. He said the SCCOG could first meet with Dominion, hold their own meeting with a scaled-back agenda, then SEAT could meet if they want. He said he would keep the SCCOG informed about the scheduling of this meeting.

13. Next Meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for March 18, 2020.

14. Adjournment:

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 9:34 a.m. (Grant, Uργο). So voted unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Keith Hedrick, Secretary