

MINUTES OF 9/16/20 MEETING OF THE
SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
HELD VIA ZOOM

PRESENT: Council Representatives: Mark Nickerson, East Lyme; Charles Grant, Franklin; Todd Babbitt, Griswold; Keith Hedrick, City of Groton; Timothy Sharkey, Jewett City; Kevin Cwikla, Lebanon; Fed Allyn, III, Ledyard; Tom Sparkman, Lisbon; Ron McDaniel, Montville; Michael Passero, New London; Mike Urgo, North Stonington; Sandra Gauthier, Preston; Kevin Lyden, Salem; Jeff Callahan, Borough of Stonington; Danielle Chesebrough, Town of Stonington. Council Alternates: John Burt, Town of Groton; Jim Rivers, Windham. Tribal Liaison: None Present. Military Liaison: Adam Wright, U.S. Naval SUBASE; CDR David Milne, USCGA. Staff: James Butler, Amanda Kennedy, Kate Rattan, Wendy Leclair. Other: Mike Carroll, Al Fritsche, Cherise Perkins, SEAT; Grayson Wright, CTDOT; Erik Shortell, FHWA; Brianna DeVivo, Senator Murphy's office; Nancy Cowser, seCTer; Wendy Bury, SE CT Cultural Coalition; Jim Bellano, ERTD; Randy Collins, CCM; Catherine Young, CAA; Theresa Jackman, Eversource; Carey Redd, City of New London; Patrick McCormack, Uncas Health District; Greg Berube; Dominick Celtruda; Ryan Gardner; Mike Fisher; Michael Satti.

1. Call to Order: Chairman Nickerson opened the meeting at 8:34 a.m.
2. Roll Call: A quorum was present.
3. Act on Minutes of 8/19/20:

MOTION: To approve the minutes of 8/19/20 (Sparkman, Grant). So voted unanimously.

4. Treasurer's Report:

MOTION: To approve the August Treasurer's Report (Sparkman, Grant). So voted unanimously.

5. Communications: The Executive Director noted the letter from CTDOT Commissioner Giulietti, responding to the SCCOG's letter regarding State Pier in New London, in the Communications section of the agenda packet.

6. Public Comment:

A) Draft 2021 – 2024 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Transportation Program Manager Rattan briefed the SCCOG using a Power Point Presentation on the draft STIP/TIP. No comments were made by the public. The Executive Director announced there would be another public hearing on the proposed STIP/TIP this evening via Zoom, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

B) General Comment

Ms. Jackman reported that as of September 9, Eversource had begun a “soft collection” campaign for utility customers who have fallen behind in their payments.

7. Committee and Liaison Reports:

A. Executive Committee

1. SCCOG Staff Assistance with Affordable Housing Plans

The Executive Director reported that the SCCOG staff would be assisting under contract 6 of the 7 municipalities (North Stonington, Bozrah, Salem, Sprague, Lebanon, and Franklin) that had received funding from the CT DOH to prepare Affordable Housing Plans. These plans are required of all municipalities in the state per 2017 legislation. The plans must be completed and adopted by July 2022, and updated every five years. He said there is no action required, but wished to inform the SCCOG of staff’s work to assist the 6 towns and to remind all municipalities of this mandate.

2. LOTCIP Cost Increase: Jefferson Avenue Project, New London

The Executive Director reported that the Executive Committee, acting as the Transportation Committee, approved an increase in cost for the LOTCIP funded Jefferson Avenue Project in New London to \$2,913,233, based on the Semi-Final Design cost estimate. He explained that the Semi-Final (60%) Design construction estimate for this project was about \$400,000 more than the Preliminary Design cost estimate in the Commitment to Fund letter. He said that at the Executive Committee meeting Mr. Sparkman had asked about the availability of LOTCIP funds to cover this increase and other project increases, and he said he assured the Executive Committee that the SCCOG had sufficient LOTCIP funding available.

3. FY 2018 STIP/TIP Amendment (to be taken up under Item 10. A. New Business)

4. Funding for COG COVID Work

The Executive Director reported that the COGs have now been informed that it is not the OPM Secretary who is holding up providing contracts to the COGs, but the question has arisen if the COGs are eligible for CAREAS Act funding, which the State is using to fund municipal overtime spent on COVID response activities. He said the State has now entered into contracts with two consulting firms which will work on the state-wide recovery effort, and that yesterday afternoon, in a telephone conversation with DEMHS Region 4 Coordinator Mike Caplet, Mr. Caplet raised concerns that the consultants are

ready to begin meeting with Regional Recovery Steering Committees, but since these voluntary committees are being staffed by COGs, there may be a hold up in this initiative. The Executive Director said he informed Mr. Caplet that he could not commit a large SCCOG staff effort to this until the funding situation is resolved. He promised to continue to inform the SCCOG about this issue.

B. Legislative Committee/Legislative Update – No report.

C. Tribal Liaison Representatives – No report.

D. Military Command Representatives

Mr. Wright reported on two Census Complete Count events recently held at the SUBASE.

CDR Milne reported on number of COVID positive cases at the USCGA (9); random testing procedures for cadets; and said that the Commandant of the Coast Guard would be visiting the Academy, including a meeting with the Governor today.

E. Congressional Office Report

Ms. DeVivo reported on Senator Murphy’s activities, including the status of the draft stimulus bill.

F. seCTer

Ms. Cowser updated the SCCOG about seCTer’s current activities.

G. Eastern CT Tourism District

Mr. Bellano reported on the recent activity of the Tourism District, including the curing of the State’s default notice to the District.

H. SEAT

Mr. Carroll said that SEAT continues daytime service, and will resume nighttime service on September 21. He reported on the initiation of the Plainfield to Lisbon service being undertaken by the NECCOG Transit District. He said that SEAT will resume fare collections beginning on October 5th, and reported on COVID health precautions that the Transit District is taking.

I. SCCOG Regional Water Committee – No report.

J. Regional Emergency Planning Team

Mr. Sparkman reported that the REPT met on September 10th and adopted the FY 2020 budget. He reminded that the deadline for sending in required MOAs and Resolutions has passed, and urged towns not yet submitting these to SCCOG to do so.

K. Regional Human Services Coordinating Council – No report.

L. SE CT Cultural Coalition

Ms. Bury reported on her agency's Strategic Plan; said she would brief the SCCOG on cultural districts later this fall; has prepared information as to how her agency helps municipalities; and reported on losses due to COVID incurred by the non-profit and for profit cultural and arts businesses in the State totaling in the millions of dollars.

8. Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director reported on two items.

He said the SCCOG has received six responses to our RFP/RFQ for consultant services to prepare a JLUS funded parking management plan in the City of Groton in the vicinity of Electric Boat. A consultant selection committee consisting of representatives of the SCCOG, the CT Office of Military Affairs, the SUBASE, and City of Groton has selected a short list of consultants to interview.

He reported that the SCCOG has received three responses to our RFP/RFQ for transportation engineering services. The Deputy Director, Transportation Program Manager and he are in the process of selecting the preferred consultant.

9. Old Business

A. COVID-19 Response Discussion

The Chairman recognized Uncas Health Director Patrick McCormack, who provided an update on COVID related activities statewide and in the region which his office is involved in. He discussed the State Department of Education's position on school closures; the Governor's announcement of fines for mask and events that exceed limits of number of persons, and his concerns as to how this will work including appeals, levying of the fines, and safety of inspecting staff.

Mr. Lyden thanked Mr. McCormack and Steve Mansfield of LLHD for their hard work and for keeping the SCCOG members so well informed during the pandemic.

Mr. Urgo expressed concern over the length of time it takes to get test results back.

Mr. Grant said that he is projecting that Franklin may be 20% behind in revenue collection and asked for other towns' experience. Mr. Allyn suggested this might be because Franklin adopted the option of deferred payment of property taxes, and that a

truer picture of revenue might be available on October 1 after the deferred taxes are paid to the municipality.

Mr. Rivers reported that last week n Windham there were 37 positive COVID cases reported, up from one case every other day until recently. He said he believes this is an indicator of the start of the second wave of the virus spiking.

10. New Business

A) FY 2018 STIP/TIP Amendment

- CT 215/Groton, Replace Culvert a Anderson Marsh and Beebe Cove – 4 Phases: PD, FD, ROW, CON- \$2,780,000

MOTION: To approve of the FY 2018 STIP/TIP Amendment (Sparkman, Grant). So voted unanimously

11. Next Meeting

The Chairman suggested that a COVID-19 response call be held in two weeks on October 7th, and the members present agreed this call should be scheduled.

The Chairman then announced the next regularly scheduled meeting would be held on October 21st.

12. Adjournment

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Keith Hedrick, Secretary