

MINUTES OF 2/17/21 MEETING OF THE
SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
HELD VIA ZOOM

PRESENT: Mary Bylone, Colchester; Todd Babbitt, Griswold; Keith Hedrick, City of Groton; Timothy Sharkey, Jewett City; Fred Allyn, III, Ledyard; Tom Sparkman, Lisbon; Ron McDaniel, Montville; Michael Passero, New London; Mike Urgo, North Stonington; Sandra Allyn-Gauthier, Preston; Kevin Lyden, Salem; Cheryl Blanchard, Sprague; Jeff Callahan, Borough of Stonington; Danielle Chesebrough, Town of Stonington; Rob Brule, Waterford. Council Alternates: John Burt, Town of Groton. Tribal Liaison: Chuck Bunnell, Mohegan Tribe. Military Liaison: Captain Todd Moore, Adam Wright, Dawn Works-Dennis, U.S. Naval SUBASE; CMDR David Milne, USCGA. Staff: James Butler, Amanda Kennedy, Kate Rattan. Other: Deborah Monahan, TVCCA; Mike Carroll, Cherise Perkins, Al Fritzsche, SEAT; Grayson Wright, CTDOT; Erik Shortell, FHWA; Senator Richard Blumenthal, Ellen Graham, Senator Blumenthal's office; Ayanti Grant, Congressman Courtney's office; Bob Ross, CT Office of Military Affairs; Jim Bellano, Eastern CT Tourism District; Nancy Cowser, Sheri Cote, seCTer; Wendy Bury, SE CT Cultural Coalition; Catherine Young, CAA; Steve Mansfield, Ledge Light Health District; Patrick McCormack, Uncas Health District; Greg Berube; Aaron Alibrio; one reporter.

1. Call to Order: The Chairman called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m.
2. Roll Call: A quorum was present.
3. Act on Minutes of 1/20/21:

MOTION: To approve the minutes of 1/20/21 (Sparkman, Hedrick). So voted unanimously.

4. Treasurer's Report:

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

5. Communications: None.

6. Public Comment:

Ms. Jackman reported on Eversource webinars for residents regarding payment information, programs, etc. during this time of need.

7. Guest Speakers:

A) Senator Richard Blumenthal

The Chair welcomed Senator Blumenthal to the meeting. The Senator reported on the next federal COVID relief stimulus bill, which will include aid for local governments. He summarized major components of the bill. He said that Congress is on track to adopt this legislation through the budget reconciliation process which only requires a 51% majority, enabling a quick passage.

The Chairman said he hoped this federal bill will include funding for COGs, noting how the SCCOG and two of the state's other state's COGs have been determined to be ineligible for an EDA grant being provided to the state's other 6 COGs. He also inquired about how federal assistance will be distributed.

Ms. Bylone noted how difficult and daunting the application process can be to municipalities and health districts with small staff and little time.

Ms. Monahan stressed the need to make sure there will be enough funding for LIHEAP.

Mr. Lyden stated that as municipalities and health districts are now in the process of preparing their budgets, it would be useful for them to know soon how much aid they will be receiving.

Mr. Urgo urged that while the federal aid package is being developed and acted upon, that the new administration's climate initiative not be given a back seat and then forgotten.

B) CT DEEP Commissioner Katie Dykes re: Coalition for Sustainable Materials Management Plan

Commissioner Dykes provided a presentation explaining the increasingly high cost of waste disposal in the state. The state currently sends 64% of its waste to the state's waste-to energy plants, recycles 22% of the waste stream, and exports 14% out of state. She said that almost all of the state's landfills were closed 20 – 30 years ago. She outlined the composition of what gets thrown away and where it goes. She said that DEEP is offering to work with towns to divert waste materials that could be disposed of in a more efficient and environmental friendly manner. She then discussed the Connecticut Coalition for Sustainable Materials Management which suggests numerous options for waste disposal.

Mr. Urgo stated that the Pay as You Throw program is very effective, but towns will need help from the State to convince residents to adopt such programs.

C) Captain Todd Moore, Adam Wright, SUBASE re: Intergovernmental Support Agreements

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Captain Moore introduced the topic, stating these types of agreements are now allowed by the Department of Defense, and they can increase the resiliency of a military installation while reducing costs. He next introduced Adam Wright, the SUBASE Community Planning and Liaison Officer, and noted that this will be Mr. Wright's last COG meeting, as he will be leaving his position at the SUBASE to take a position at the Department of Defense Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (formerly the Office of Economic Adjustment). The Chairman thanked Mr. Wright for all the assistance he provided to the SCOG the past three years. Mr. Wright provided a presentation on these agreements, which are now being used by bases and communities around the country. They allow for sole source agreements, and he said that local municipalities can charge for the service provided plus administration, which has typically been 5% in municipalities around the country.

Mr. Ross emphasized how important these Intergovernmental Agreements are, calling them "a big deal".

8. COVID-19 Response Discussion:

Mr. McCormack thanked the SCCOG for supporting funding for health districts. He said that Uncas Health District's focus right now is on vaccinations.

Mr. Mansfield reminded that health districts are not direct health care providers, so they do not get reimbursed for vaccinating people; the funds to do so come out of their core funds. He then commented on recent reports about racial disparities in getting out the vaccine, and noted that LLHD is working with the City of New London and human service agencies to reach historically underserved populations.

9. Committee and Liaison Reports:

A) Executive Committee

1) DEMHS Region 4 Regional Recovery Steering Committee – Update

The Executive Director reported the update was contained in the Executive Committee meeting minutes.

2) JLUS Parking Management Plan - Update

The Executive Director reported the update was contained in the Executive Committee meeting minutes.

3) Future Transportation Planning Funding

The Executive Director said he had discussed with the Executive Committee the fact that the SCCOG's transportation funding outlook is robust for the next two years, with the SCCOG scheduled to receive \$60,000 - \$100,000 more per year in

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PL funding for each of the next two fiscal years than we typically expend, and an additional \$200,700 in FY 2018 carryover for that same period. He said he will prepare for submission to CTDOT our FY 2022 – 2023 Unified Planning Work Program explaining how these funds will be applied later this spring; then at the appropriate time, will bring the SCCOG any resultant amendments to the SCCOG budget in terms of additional staff and/or hiring consultants. He said he is also attempting, with CTDOT's and FHWA's approval, to expend unused FY 2016 carryover on our transportation consultant Tighe & Bond, for which we currently have a \$50,000 limit, before the end of this fiscal year. This too will require a current UPWP amendment, which he plans to bring to the Executive Committee at their March meeting.

4) Other – None.

B) Legislative Committee/Legislative Agenda Discussion

The Executive Director stated that this report was sent to the entire SE CT Legislative Delegation after last month's SCCOG meeting with legislators.

C) Tribal Liaison Representatives

Mr. Bunnell reported that he expected the Tribe to announce tomorrow the establishment of a large-scale vaccination clinic at Mohegan Sun.

D) Military Command Representatives – no report.

E) Congressional Office Report

Ms. Grant from Congressman Courtney's office explained the expected timing of payments to municipalities under the new COVID relief stimulus act.

F) seCTer

Ms. Cowser reported on two upcoming webinars that seCTer is providing.

G) Eastern CT Tourism District

Mr. Bellano asked that towns continue to support State funding for tourism.

H) SEAT

Mr. Carroll reported that that SEAT would be introducing a mobile app next month; he said that ridership was slightly down in January.

I) SCCOG Regional Water Committee – No report.

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J) Regional Emergency Planning Team

Mr. Sparkman reported that he and the Executive Director signed all the FY 2020 MOAs and turned them over to DEMHS Region 4 Coordinator Mike Caplet. He said four towns still owe the FY 2020 MOAs and Resolutions, noting that none of the towns are from the SCCOG region. Regional Human Services Coordinating Council

K) Regional Human Services Coordinating Council

Ms. Monahan urged any towns having people in need to refer them to TVCCA and other members of the RHSCC who might provide assistance.

L) SE CT Cultural Coalition

Ms. Bury reported on anticipated legislation that would fund cultural organizations.

10. Executive Director's Report:

The Executive Director said he had no additional report.

11. Old Business: – None.

12. New Business: – None.

13. Next Meeting:

The Chairman stated that a COVID-19 response call will be held in two weeks on March 3rd, and that the next regularly scheduled meeting would be held on March 17th.

14. Adjournment:

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 9:53a.m. (Lyden, Sparkman). So voted unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Danielle Chesebrough, Secretary

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