

# DEMHS REGION 4 REGIONAL RECOVERY STEERING COMMITTEE

Community Planning & Capacity Building/Infrastructure Working Group  
Economic/Natural & Cultural Resources Working Group  
Health & Social Services/Housing Working Group

June 24, 2021

## DRAFT Steering Committee Meeting Summary

**Members Present:** Mayor Fred Allyn, Town of Ledyard/SCCOG Chairman (Co-Chair); Deborah Monahan, TVCCA (Co-Chair); Tracey Hanson, Town of Voluntown (Co-Chair); Jim Butler, Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments; John Filchak, Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments; Mark Oefinger, seCTer; Reverend Catherine Zall, New London Homeless Hospitality Center; Chuck Bunnell, Mohegan Tribal Nation; Wendy Bury, Southeastern CT Cultural Coalition; Reverend Benjamin Watts, Shiloh Baptist Church of New London; Alejandro Melendez-Cooper, Hispanic Alliance of Southeastern Connecticut; Elsa Nuñez, Eastern CT State University.

**Others Present:** SCCOG: Carly Holzschuh, Amanda Kennedy; DEMHS: Mike Caplet, Carla Iezzi, Darlene Richards; Hoween Flexer, NECCOG; Generations Family Health Center: Judith Gaudet, Arvind Shaw; Jennifer Granger, United Children and Family Services; Jennifer O'Brien, Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut; Kathleen Krider, Access Agency; Kathleen Stauffer, ARC of Eastern CT; Les King, Norwich Property Owners Association; Patrick McCormack, Uncas Health; Diane Manning, United Services.

### 1. Call to Order

Mayor Allyn called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

### 2. Roll Call

Twelve members were in attendance.

### 3. Review of May 3, 2021 Meeting Summary

Mr. Oefinger requested revision of language summarizing funding issues.

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## 4. Update on Long-Term Recovery Effort

Mr. Caplet reported on the State's recommendations for transitioning the recovery efforts from responding to immediate unmet needs to long-term recovery. State staff have issued recommendations for COVID recovery activities to work more through pre-existing regional efforts organized by COGs and to scale back activities at the DEMHS regional level to a level as needed for reporting or as part of the scope of work that may be funded by EDA in some regions of the state. Mr. Butler reminded the Committee that the COGs are not receiving funding to carry out this work, except for the COGs that may receive EDA funding, and that a letter was sent to the State several weeks ago requesting funding support for these activities. Mr. Filchak stated NECCOG's intention to carry out recovery activities at the COG level.

## 5. Unmet Needs

Ms. Kennedy reported on a document prepared by the State Recovery staff summarizing the short-term unmet needs and what long-term needs have been identified. She will send this material out to the committee.

## 6. Recommendation for Municipal ARPA Fund Allocations

Mr. Filchak summarized the outreach that was done to members of the Region 4 Recovery Health & Social Services/Housing Working Group, which was invited to a June 17<sup>th</sup> meeting to provide comment on the proposed letter from the Steering Committee recommending that 30% of municipal ARPA funds address housing, mental health, and early childhood education. A second invitation was made to that group to attend this meeting to provide comment, as well as inviting comment in writing. Reaction was positive but several individuals were concerned that there was need for ARPA funds to address issues in addition to the three identified as priorities in the proposed recommendation. Ms. Zall and Ms. Monahan reiterated that the recommendation was meant to be non-exclusive. Ms. Manning emphasized that the proposed recommendations were intended to prompt actions in individual communities that address issues that are experienced differently in individual communities. Mr. Butler added that many municipalities are already planning to fund activities addressing the three proposed focus areas. Mr. Butler proposed potential modifications to the letter that emphasize that the recommendation does not exclude funding other areas of need.

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Motion: To issue a letter from the Steering Committee recommending that 30% of municipal ARPA funds address mental health, early childhood education, with additional language as suggested by Mr. Butler: “We recommend these as a starting point for your community’s discussions on use of ARPA funds, and do so while recognizing there are many other areas that will require discussion and examination during your local ARPA deliberations.” (Oefinger, Hanson). So voted unanimously.

## 7. Other

No other business.

## 8. Next Meeting

The tentative date of next regular meeting will be Thursday, July 22 at 9 AM.

## 9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 AM.