

MINUTES OF 9/15/21 MEETING OF THE
SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

VIA ZOOM

PRESENT:

Glenn Pianka, Bozrah; Mark Nickerson, East Lyme; Charles Grant, Franklin; Todd Babbitt, Griswold; Keith Hedrick, City of Groton; Timothy Sharkey, Borough of Jewett City; Kevin Cwikla, Lebanon; Fred Allyn, III, Ledyard; Thomas 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; John Salomone, Norwich. Staff: James Butler, Amanda Kennedy, Kate Rattan, Wendy Leclair, Jenna Albers. Military Liaison: Captain Todd Moore, Captain Ken Curtin, Steven Sadlowski, U.S. Naval SUBASE; LCDR Samuel Andriessen, USCGA. Other: Captain Arthur Liamin, CTARNG; Mike Carroll, Cherise Simpson, SEAT; Deborah Monahan, TVCCA; Jen Granger, UCFS; Mariam Elahi, Community Foundation of Eastern CT; Kathryn Faraci, Grayson Wright, Jennifer Pacacha, CTDOT; Erik Shortell, FHWA; Mark Oefinger, seCTer; Wendy Bury, CT Cultural Coalition; Patrick McCormack, Uncas Health District; Ayanti Grant, Congressman Courtney's Office; Brianna DeVivo, Senator Murphy's office; Teresa Jackman, Eversource; Lynn DiGiovanni; one reporter.

1. Call to Order: The Chairman called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.
2. Roll Call: A quorum was present.
3. Act on Minutes of 7/1/21:

MOTION: To approve the minutes of 7/21/21 (Cwikla, Burt) with two corrections (p. 5 and 6, four motions: change Sparkman to Nickerson; p. 5, 11. B., change SCCOG to SCWA in reference to General Manager Josh Cansler). So voted unanimously.

4. Treasurer's Report:

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

5. Communications: The Executive Director stated he had previously distributed a letter received from the Libertarian Party of CT requesting that the SCCOG retract its request to the Governor concerning a statewide mask mandate.

6. Public Comment:

Ms. Jackman noted the end of the moratorium impacting payment of utility bills, and said that Eversource will be sending out notices to affected customers.

7. Committee and Liaison Reports:

A. Executive Committee

1) Update on SCCOG Voluntary Assessment Using ARPA Funds to Support Regional Recovery Coordinator

The Executive Director provided an update on the SCCOG's request to its member municipalities for a voluntary assessment using 0.25% of their County Allocation of ARPA funding to support a Recovery Coordinator position at the SCCOG. He stated that he and Deputy Director Kennedy had met with towns to explain the request and would be willing to do so with any town which requested such a meeting. He noted that while they had advertised for a Regional Recovery Coordinator, they were holding off on conducting interviews until such time as a critical mass of towns commit funding to support the position. He then explained what the Recovery Coordinator might do for the member municipalities, and asked the SCCOG's CEOs that as they became aware of whether or not their town would contribute to this, to please let him know.

Mr. Sparkman noted that towns are facing deadlines, and it would help if this person were on board soon. The Executive Director stated that he and Deputy Director Kennedy were prepared to assist SCCOG towns on ARPA issues before a Coordinator can be hired. Ms. Grant stated that Julia McGrath in the Congressman's office could also be contacted for assistance on ARPA issues.

2) Recommended Priorities for Section 5310 Applications

The Executive Director referred to a memorandum from Transportation Manager Kate Rattan recommending priorities for this funding. The Executive Committee has recommended that the SCCOG approve of the staff's recommended priorities.

MOTION: That the SCCOG approves of the recommended prioritization of Traditional and Non-Traditional applications for Section 5310 funds as recommended by the Executive Committee (Sparkman, Grant). So voted unanimously.

3) Draft Revised SCCOG Personnel Policies

The Executive Director informed the SCCOG that these policies had not been subject of a comprehensive review/update since he began work at the SCCOG 22 years ago. He referred to a memo that he had sent to the Executive Committee which explained the purpose of the update, and which had an attachment explaining the significant proposed

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amendments to the policy, some of which were updates to be consistent to new law and others that were to reflect current SCCOG policy. He stated that the Executive Committee has recommended in favor of adoption.

MOTION: That the SCCOG approve of the updated Personnel Policies as recommended by the Executive Committee (Grant, Hedrick). So voted unanimously.

4) Salary/Salary Range Study

The Chairman said that the Executive Committee tabled action on this item, and that it will be brought back to the SCCOG once the Executive Committee has a recommendation.

5) Other

The Executive Director reported on the retention of Tighe & Bond for on-call transportation engineering services.

The Executive Director stated that Transportation Program Manager Rattan has learned that the feasibility study of the upgrade of the pedestrian facility on the southbound Gold Star Memorial Bridge has been delayed by CTDOT.

The Chairman then thanked CTDOT Field Coordinator Grayson Wright for his service to the SCCOG, and then introduced and welcomed new Field Coordinator Jennifer Pacacha.

B. Legislative Committee

C. Tribal Liaison Representatives

No report.

D. Military Command Representatives

Captain Moore noted that his Change of Command will be upcoming and he stated that Captain Ken Curtin would take over as Commanding Officer of the SUBASE. The Chairman thanked Captain Moore for his work with the SCCOG during his tenure as Base CO.

LCDR Andriessen stated that Congressman Courtney was touring the USCGA that afternoon.

E. Congressional Office Report

Ms. Grant and Ms. DeVivo reported on the work of their respective offices.

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F. seCTer

Mr. Oefinger reported that seCTer is close to naming its new Executive Director. He also reported that seCTer is hoping to increase its revolving loan fund dollars; he noted that seCTer stands ready to assist towns in ARPA funding applications; and seCTer is reviewing consultant proposals for the CEDS update.

G. Eastern CT Tourism District

No report.

H. SEAT

Mr. Carroll reported on a modest ridership increase since August; ARPA funding received; new microtransit project in New London; SEAT participating in Operation Stand Down for Vets on September 24th.

I. SCCOG Regional Water Committee

No report.

J. Regional Emergency Planning Team

Mr. Sparkman reported on the adoption of the FY 2021 budget by the REPT at a meeting on September 8th. The Executive Director stated that the new FY MOAs should be available and distribution to towns later this fall.

K. Regional Human Services Coordinating Council

No report, but Ms. Monahan reported on the TVCCA energy assistance program and use of ARPA funding and programs.

L. SE CT Cultural Coalition

Ms. Bury provided a reminder of the letters the Cultural Coalition had sent to all towns requesting 1% of ARPA funding for arts and culture.

8. Executive Director's Report:

The Executive Director introduced new SCCOG Planner II Jenna Albers.

He then asked the SCCOG to approve of the annual Delegation of Authority which needs to be provided to CTDOT and which he had emailed all SCCOG members.

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MOTION: To approve of the SCCOG Delegation of Authority (Sparkman, Grant). So voted unanimously.

9. Old Business:

A. COVID-19 Response Discussion

Mr. McCormack reported on the state of the region regarding COVID including the provision of vaccination booster shots, vaccinations for children, administration of flu vaccine at COVID vaccination clinics, COVID vaccine and pregnancy, replacement of vaccination cards, and testing sites in the region.

10. New Business:

None.

11. Next Meeting:

The Chairman stated that the next regularly scheduled meeting would be held on October 20th.

12. Adjournment:

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 9:30 a.m. (Hedrick, Grant). So voted unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Danielle Chesebrough, Secretary

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