

MINUTES OF 10/20/21 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 Uργο, North Stonington; Sandra Allyn-Gauthier, Preston; Kevin Lyden, Salem; Cheryl Blanchard, Sprague; Jeff Callahan, Borough of Stonington; Danielle Chesebrough, Town of Stonington. Council Alternates: John Burt, Town of Groton; John Salomone, Norwich; Jim Rivers, Windham. Staff: James Butler, Amanda Kennedy, Wendy Leclair, Jenna Albers. Tribal Liaison: Chuck Bunnell, Mohegan Tribe. Military Liaison: Captain Ken Curtin, Steven Sadlowski, U.S. Naval SUBASE; LCDR Samuel Andriessen, USCGA. Other: Captain Arthur Liamin, CTARNG; Mike Carroll, Cherise Simpson, Thailise Clark, SEAT; Deborah Monahan, TVCCA; Mariam Elahi, Community Foundation of Eastern CT; Jennifer Pacacha, CTDOT; Mark Oefinger, Paul Whitescarver, seCTer; Wendy Bury, CT Cultural Coalition; Patrick McCormack, Uncas Health District; Steve Mansfield, Ledge Light Health District; Ayanti Grant, Congressman Courtney's Office; Brianna DeVivo, Senator Murphy's office; Ellen Graham, Senator Blumenthal's office; Catherine Young, CAA; Teresa Jackman, Eversource; Randy Collins, CCM; Deborah Denfeld; 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 9/15/21:

MOTION: To approve the minutes of 9/15/21 (Cwikla, Salomone). So voted unanimously.

4. Treasurer's Report:

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

5. Communications: None.

6. Public Comment:

Ms. Jackman reminded that Eversource will be sending out disconnect notices to non-paying customers who are not hardship cases, and will meet with customers to discuss their particular situation.

7. Committee and Liaison Reports:

A. Executive Committee

1) Salary/Salary Range Study

A. Recommended Salary Ranges

The Chairman called upon Mr. Urgo who stated that the SCCOG retained Foster and Associates at the beginning of the summer to perform this study. He said the study looked at market conditions and recommends updates for salary ranges for the SCCOG's staff positions. These were last updated in 2016. He said the Executive Committee recommends in favor of the recommended salary ranges.

MOTION: To adopt the salary ranges for inclusion in the SCCOG's Personnel Policies as recommended in the Salary/Salary Range Study for the SCCOG prepared by Foster Associates in September 2021 (Urgo, Lyden). So voted unanimously.

B. Recommended Salary Adjustments

Mr. Urgo explained that the study recommended salary adjustments four staff members, which the Executive Committee agrees with. The Executive Committee also recommends that the other five staff receive flat salary increases as well, and that the salary increases all be retroactive to this past July 1st. The Chairman stated that the SCCOG had hoped the study could be completed in early summer, but due to Mr. Foster's workload and the Executive Committee's desire to review this over two meetings, this the earliest this could be brought to the full COG.

MOTION: To approve of salary adjustments totaling \$16,845 for four positions as recommended in the Salary/Salary Range Study for the SCCOG prepared by Foster Associates in September 2021 and an adjustment totaling \$5,000 for the remaining five full-time staff positions; these salary adjustments are to be retroactive to July 1, 2021 (Urgo, Sparkman). So voted unanimously.

2) Personnel Appointments

The Chairman called upon the Executive Director who stated that he had informed the Executive Committee at their meeting earlier this month of his intention to retire from full-time service to the SCCOG on July 1st, and that he requested that he then be appointed to part-time status as Senior Advisor. He also stated he strongly recommended to the Executive Committee that Deputy Director Amanda Kennedy be appointed to succeed him as Executive Director, and the Executive Committee agreed with both of these staff appointments.

MOTION: That the SCCOG appoints James Butler as part-time Senior Advisor upon his retirement as Executive Director, and that Amanda Kennedy be appointed Executive Director to succeed Mr. Butler on July 1st (Lyden, Cwikla). So voted unanimously.

The Executive Director and the Deputy Director both thanked the SCCOG.

3) SCCOG Projects Submittal to Statewide Recovery Task Force

The Executive Director reported on the State's request for project ideas that could be funded with ARPA funds. He referred to a table in the agenda packet containing information for 12 projects that have all been previously recommended by SCCOG plans and studies. He said that the Executive Committee endorsed this submittal, due to the State on October 15th.

4) Update on SCCOG Municipal Dedication of ARPA Funds

The Executive Director noted that SCCOG towns are all on different schedules in terms of seeking the local approval their financial procedures require to approve the dedication of ARPA funds to the SCCOG. He said that he and the Deputy Director have met with Towns who have wanted a detailed explanation of the SCCOG's request for a voluntary assessment, and are willing to meet with anyone else on this issue. He said that 4 SCCOG member municipalities have already sent in their first-year voluntary assessment, representing 0.25% of their County allocation of ARPA funding.

5) Other

The Executive Director said that the Executive Committee asked staff to schedule a SCCOG roundtable discussion on short-term rentals as suggested by Bozrah First Selectman Glenn Pianka; staff hopes to hold that session in the next few weeks.

B. Legislative Committee

No report. The Chairman suggested that the Committee begin to formulate its draft legislative agenda for the upcoming session.

C. Tribal Liaison Representatives

No report.

D. Military Command Representatives

Captain Ken Curtin, new Commanding Officer of the SUBASE, introduced himself. He reported on the relocation of the Nautilus to the SUBASE for preservation and repairs over the next 6-8 months; reported on COVID-19 status at the SUBASE.

LCDR Andriessen reported on activities at the USCGA including COVID-19 testing.

E. Congressional Office Report

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

F. seCTer

The Chairman then recognized Mr. Paul Whitescarver, new Executive Director of seCTer. Mr. Whitescarver stated that seCTer recently applied for Phase 1 Build Back Better Regional Challenge and he thanked the SCCOG Executive Director for a letter of support on behalf of the SCCOG.

G. Eastern CT Tourism District

No report.

H. SEAT

Mr. Carroll reported that ridership decreased in September; said that he learned that the Governor's vaccine mandate for State employees applies to SEAT employees; and has delayed implementation of the New London micro-transit project due to the inability to hire 8 of the 10 additional drivers needed for this service.

I. SCCOG Regional Water Committee

No report.

J. Regional Emergency Planning Team

Mr. Sparkman stated that the new FY MOAs have been distributed to all DEMHS Region 4 towns and are due back to the SCCOG by mid-December.

K. Regional Human Services Coordinating Council

Ms. Monahan reported on the recent meeting of the RHSCC, and on the TVCCA energy assistance program and eligibility criteria for this program.

L. SE CT Cultural Coalition

Ms. Bury reminded that non-profits must submit the Quadrennial Reports to local tax assessors by November 1st; said that the Coalition has begun to work with the City of Norwich on ARPA funds for arts and culture.

8. Executive Director's Report:

The Executive Director reported that there was still no word from the State as to how they plan to fund three COGs, including the SCCOG, who have been deemed ineligible to receive an EDA grant that the other six COGs are scheduled to receive to perform COVID recovery work.

9. Old Business:

A. COVID-19 Response Discussion

Mr. Mansfield reported that the required approvals for vaccine booster shots should soon be in place and that LLHD stands ready to open mass vaccination clinics when this approval is given.

10. New Business:

A. FY 2021 STIP/TIP Amendments

- STPA, 0172-0513, Various D. 2, Replace Traffic Control Signals at Various Locations, PD, 2022, \$473,000, New Project
- STPA, 0172-0513, Various D. 2, Replace Traffic Control Signals at Various Locations, FD, 2023, \$406,000, New Project
- STPA, 0172-0513, Various D. 2, Replace Traffic Control Signals at Various Locations, ROW, 2023, \$110,000, New Project

MOTION: To approve the FY 2021 STIP/TIP Amendments (Sparkman, Lyden), So voted unanimously.

11. Next Meeting:

The Chairman stated that the next regularly scheduled meeting would be held on November 17th.

12. Adjournment:

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 9:36 a.m. (Urgo, Lyden). So voted unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
Danielle Chesebrough, Secretary