

MINUTES OF 12/15/21 MEETING OF THE
SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
FLANDERS FISH MARKET & RESTAURANT, EAST LYME, CT
AND VIA ZOOM

PRESENT IN PERSON:

Glenn Pianka, Bozrah; Kevin Seery, East Lyme; Charles Grant, Franklin; Dana Bennett, Griswold; Keith Hedrick, City of Groton; Timothy Sharkey, Borough of Jewett City; Ron McDaniel, Montville; Michael Passero, New London; Robert Carlson, North Stonington; Ed Chmielewski, Salem; Cheryl Blanchard, Sprague; Danielle Chesebrough, Town of Stonington; Rob Brule, Waterford; Thomas DeVivo, Windham. Staff: James Butler, Amanda Kennedy, Kate Rattan, Wendy Leclair, Liz Crutcher, Carly Holzschuh, Sam Alexander. Tribal Liaison: Chairman Rodney Butler, Robert Hayward, MPTN. Military Liaison: LCDR Samuel Andriessen, USCGA. Other: Ayanti Grant, Congressman Courtney's Office; Brianna DeVivo, Senator Murphy's office; Catherine Young, CAA; State Senator Paul Formica.

PRESENT VIA ZOOM: Kevin Cwikla, Lebanon; Fred Allyn, III, Ledyard; Thomas Sparkman, Lisbon; Sandra Allyn-Gauthier, Preston; Jeff Callahan, Borough of Stonington. Council Alternates: John Burt, Town of Groton; John Salomone, Norwich. Staff: Jenna Albers. Military Liaison: Captain Ken Curtin, SUBASE. Other: Mike Carroll, Cherise Simpson, Thailise Clark; Mariam Elahi, Community Foundation of Eastern CT; Jennifer Pacacha, CTDOT; Mark Oefinger, Paul Whitescarver, seCTer; Wendy Bury, SE CT Cultural Coalition; Patrick McCormack, Uncas Health District; Steve Mansfield, Ledge Light Health District; Jim Bellano, Eastern CT Tourism District; one reporter.

1. Call to Order: The Chairman called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Roll Call: A quorum was present.

The Chairman introduced the new SCCOG members who were present. He then stated that why he was not able to attend in person, and due to the meeting's logistics asked that the Executive Director take the Council through the agenda.

3. Act on Minutes of 11/17/21:

MOTION: To approve the minutes of 11/17/21 (Grant, Hedrick). So voted unanimously.

4. Treasurer's Report:

MOTION: To approve the December Treasurer's Report (Chmielewski, McDaniel) So voted unanimously.

5. Communications: The Executive Director called attention to the letter in the agenda packet from the SCCOG to DECD Deputy Commissioner Alexandra Daum asking for her assistance in seeking funding for the three COGs, including the SCCOG, deemed ineligible for an EDA grant to perform COVID recovery duties requested by the State.

6. Public Comment:

None.

7. Committee and Liaison Reports:

A. Executive Committee

1) Funding for Hiring of Regional Recovery Coordinator - Update

The Executive Director reported that only six of SCCOG's 22 member municipalities have sent in their first year voluntary assessment to date. He said until a larger number of towns have done so, they are holding off on filling the Regional Recovery Coordinator position.

2) SCCOG CEO Support Program - Update

The Executive Director summarized the program approved by the SCCOG at their October meeting, and stated that the Mentor program has been initiated and that he expected the SCCOG 101 program to be scheduled sometime in January.

3) FY 2020-2021 Audit

The Executive Director reported this was not yet complete as the Auditor had been waiting for information from CTDOT to complete the audit.

MOTION: To table action on the FY 2020-2021 Audit (Grant, Passero). So voted unanimously.

4) Proposed FY 2023 Operating Budget

The Executive Director summarized both the anticipated revenues and proposed expenditures for next fiscal year. He reported on the status of this year's OPM Regional Service Grant (RSG), the CTDOT grant, and from Technical Assistance contracts with member municipalities. He said that SCCOG members' municipal dues, which for the past ten years has resulted in \$157,688 in funding, will decrease by \$3,853 to \$153,835 this year, due to use of 2020 Census figures for the first time and the small decrease in the region's population. The SCCOG last increased its dues rate per capita in FY 2012-13 (which was the first time in six years) and no increase is proposed this year due to the fact that our funding from other sources is sufficient to cover the small decrease due to loss of population. The budget also contemplates that the second-year voluntary

assessment of SCCOG towns using ARPA funding to support a Regional Recovery Coordinator will generate an additional \$100,000.

He said the FY 2023 budget is again balanced without proposing to use funds from the SCCOG Reserve Fund for the ninth year in a row. For FY 2023, the budget shows \$97,821 in unallocated funds which can be returned to Reserve if not needed. Table 4 shows the status of and use of/return to the Reserve Fund over the past twenty-one years. There is now \$713,621 in the Reserve Fund according to the just completed draft of the Annual Audit.

The Executive Director stated that he had recommended and the Executive Committee agreed to recommend to the SCCOG board that all staff receive a 2.5% salary increase, with one exception where a promotion on July 1st to Planner III for Justin LaFountain, who recently earned his AICP certification, will result in his proposed salary being reflective of that promotion. He said that proposed staff salaries are shown in Table 3 and reflect his retirement to half-time service and Amanda Kennedy's promotion to Executive Director, the hiring of a Regional Zoning Enforcement Official, as well as a Regional Recovery Coordinator contingent upon receipt of adequate voluntary assessment ARPA funds from SCCOG member towns

MOTION: To approve of the FY 2023 Operating Budget totaling \$1,796,868 in expenditures, \$97,821 unallocated/Return to Reserve, for a grand total of \$1,894,689, and which includes among its revenue sources municipal dues derived from a \$0.55 per capita contribution which is the same per capita rate as the previous fiscal year (McDaniel, Hedrick). So voted unanimously-

5) Proposed FY 2023 Work Program

The Executive Director explained that the proposed work program was reflective of the anticipated funding sources.

MOTION: To adopt the FY 2023 Work Program (Grant, Hedrick). So voted unanimously.

6) Proposed 2022 Schedule of SCCOG Meetings

MOTION: To adopt the 2022 Schedule of Meetings (McDaniel, Hedrick). So voted unanimously.

7) Bank Authorizing Resolution No. 21-8

MOTION: To adopt Resolution No. 21-8, Bank Authorizing Resolution (McDaniel, Grant). So voted unanimously.

8) FY 2021 Annual Report

The Executive Director explained that the full SCCOG had previously been presented the Annual Report now required by OPM, and that staff has taken this information and presented it in a shorter summary document that the SCCOG can adopt at the Annual Meeting.

MOTION: To adopt the FY 2021 Annual Report (McDaniel, Hedrick). So voted unanimously.

9) Resolution No. 21-9, Relating to A Regional Services Grant

MOTION: To adopt Resolution No. 21-9, Relating to a Regional Services Grant (McDaniel, Grant). So voted unanimously.

10) Other

The Executive Director reported on a possible collaboration with the Avalonia Land Trust to prepare a region-wide conservation plan.

B. Legislative Committee

Mr. Grant stated that he would call a meeting of the Legislative Committee in January, and noted that all SCCOG members are welcome to participate in the drafting of the annual legislative agenda.

C. Tribal Liaison Representatives

MPTN Chairman Butler thanked SCCOG members who had attended the Tribal Nation's holiday celebration the previous evening. He then addressed the SCCOG Executive Director and presented him with a blanket depicting the Mashantucket Pequot's history to celebrate the announcement of his upcoming retirement.

D. Military Command Representatives

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

Captain Curtin reported on activities at the SUBASE.

E. Congressional Office Report

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

F. seCTer

Mr. Whitscarver reported on seCTer activities, including seCTer being awarded Phase 1 of the BBBRC grant.

G. Eastern CT Tourism District

Mr. Bellano reported on ECTD activities.

H. SEAT

Mr. Carroll reported on ridership, the New London micro-transit project, and other activities at SEAT.

I. SCCOG Regional Water Committee

No report.

J. Regional Emergency Planning Team

Mr. Sparkman reminded that the FY 2021 MOAs have previously been distributed to all DEMHS Region 4 towns and are due back to the SCCOG today.

K. Regional Human Services Coordinating Council

No report.

L. SE CT Cultural Coalition

Ms. Bury reported on recent activities of the Cultural Coalition.

8. Executive Director's Report:

The Executive Director individually introduced and thanked all SCCOG staff for their good work this past year.

He then reminded the SCCOG of the request from Waterbury Mayor Neil O'Leary and CCM that all towns register for the State's opioid settlement agreement.

9. Old Business:

A. COVID-19 Response Discussion

Mr. Mansfield and Mr. McCormack reported on testing, vaccine booster shots, and the incidence of COVID-19 cases in the region.

10. New Business:

A. Nominating Committee Report

Nominating Committee Chairman Sparkman reported that the Nominating Committee, comprised of himself, Mr. McDaniel, and Mr. Passero recommends the following slate to the SCCOG: Fred Allyn III as Chair, Danielle Chesebrough as Vice Chair, Rob Brule as Treasurer, Cheryl Blanchard as Secretary, and Keith Hedrick and John Salomone as Representatives-at-Large.

MOTION: To elect the slate of officers and Executive Committee as recommended by the Nominating Committee (Passero, McDaniel). So voted unanimously.

11. Next Meeting:

The Chairman stated that the next regularly scheduled meeting would be held on January 19th, 2022.

12. Adjournment:

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 9:41 a.m. (McDaniel, Hedrick). So voted unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cheryl Blanchard, Secretary