

MINUTES OF THE 4 JANUARY 2022
SCCOG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
VIA ZOOM

Present: Fred Allyn, III, Keith Hedrick, Danielle Chesebrough, Rob Brule, Cheryl Blanchard, John Salomone

Staff: James Butler, Amanda Kennedy, Kate Rattan

Chairman Allyn opened the meeting at 8:31 a.m.

1. FY 2021 Audit

The Executive Director explained that typically the audit is ready for review at the Annual Meeting in December, but the Auditor had to wait for information from CTDOT before completing it this year. He said it has now been filed with the requisite agencies. He summarized high points from the audit, and noted that the Auditors found no deficiencies in internal control over compliance which are considered a material weakness and the Audit made no recommendations to the SCCOG for improvements to its financial controls and reporting.

MOTION: To recommend to the SCCOG the acceptance of the FY 2021 Audit (Salomone, Chesebrough). So voted unanimously.

2. Build Back Better Regional Challenge Grant

The Executive Director reported on seCTer's recent receipt of a Phase 1 \$500,000 Build Back Better Regional Challenge grant from EDA, which will be used toward the creation of an offshore wind industry cluster. He said that in October SCCOG provided a letter of support for seCTer's grant application, and has now been invited to be a member of a coalition that will work with seCTer towards a Phase 2 grant application. As a coalition lead, SCCOG has been asked to prepare a grant application which will be submitted to EDA by March 15th. The SCCOG project has been entitled by seCTer as the Thames River Offshore Epicenter, intended to identify and make ready sites where wind supply chain manufacturers and others could relocate or expand to. A grant match is required under this grant program, but the Executive Director said he has informed seCTer that at this time the SCCOG has not budgeted funds for such a match, and he said he believes that seCTer will be having conversations with the State about their providing the match. He said no action is required of the SCCOG at this time, but at some point the SCCOG's application will be brought to the SCCOG for formal approval of the grant application submittal and receipt should it be awarded.

3. Update on Hiring of Regional Zoning Official

The Executive Director reported on applications received to date, and said he hopes to be able to fill the position by the end of January. He said the immediate need is in Ledyard and Bozrah, and that Preston has an agreement with the SCCOG to allow their SCCOG-provided Building Official to provide Zoning Enforcement services through June 30th.

4. Update on Funding for Hiring Regional Recovery Coordinator

The Executive Director briefed the Executive Committee on the number of municipalities (6) that have sent in their voluntary assessment payment; he said that others have approved or plan to approve this, but have not yet sent in the first payment. He said he hoped to have a conversation later this month with a potential candidate to fill this position, but would not hire someone full-time until such time as more SCCOG towns provided their voluntary assessment for this purpose.

5. Route 32 and Route 161 Corridor Study Updates

The Executive Director informed the Executive Committee that Fuss & O'Neill has been selected to prepare the Route 32 in New London corridor study and that Beta Group, Inc. has been selected to prepare the Route 161 study in East Lyme. Scoping meetings with the consultants and CTDOT have been scheduled for next week.

6. BRIC Grant Application for Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

The Executive Director said that staff was still waiting to hear back from DEEP regarding the status of the SCCOG's application for FEMA funds to prepare the MJHMP update. He said that recently, he and Deputy Director Kennedy had a virtual meeting with David Murphy, who when he worked at Milone & MacBroom, had been the lead staff on the last two SCCOG MJHM Plans. Mr. Murphy now has his own consultant business, and was reaching out to SCCOG because he was working with the CT Institute for Climate Resilience and Adaptation (CIRCA) which is looking to expand its Resilient Connecticut efforts in the western part of the state. CIRCA intends to work directly with SCCOG, RiverCOG, and CRCOG towns to develop resilience and climate adaptation projects for the so-called "Project Pipeline" that the Governor's office has been contemplating. One option discussed was combining the Resilient Connecticut planning process with the hazard mitigation plan update as this would be efficient, make the plan and the Resilient Connecticut process that much stronger, and would help eliminate confusion and redundancies if the two efforts were conducted separately. The Executive Director noted Mr. Murphy's record working with the SCCOG and recommended that the Executive Committee consider waiving the SCCOG's consultant selection process to allow Mr. Murphy to be retained as sole source consultant without having to advertise the job, in light of the high quality of his previous work for the SCCOG, due to the fact that his engagement provides a unique opportunity to coordinate the conduct of the Connecticut Resilience work in the region with the update of the MJHM Plan, which in turn would be cost effective.

MOTION: To waive the SCCOG's consultant selection process to allow staff to negotiate a contract with Mr. David Murphy to prepare an update to the SCCOG's Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan and to include CIRCA's Connecticut Resilience work in this plan for the reasons provided by the Executive Director (Salomone, Hedrick). So voted unanimously.

7. Request to Address SCCOG by UR Community Cares

The Executive Committee scheduled UR Community Cares to address the SCCOG at the January meeting regarding their business of connecting people with mobility issues with volunteer assistance.

8. Other

The Executive Director asked the Executive Committee to consider the Ledyard LOTCIP application for a multi-use pathway on Colonel Ledyard Highway. He said the SCCOG approved of this project conceptually about two years ago, and the Town's consultant has now completed the application for this project which has a cost estimate of \$3,058,800. If the Executive Committee agrees, the application can be forwarded to the full SCCOG for their endorsement, upon which the application can be submitted to CTDOT for their Commitment to Fund letter.

MOTION: To recommend to the full SCCOG the endorsement of the Ledyard LOTCIP project for a multi-use path on Colonel Ledyard Highway, with a cost estimate of \$3,058,800 (Brule, Salomone). So voted unanimously.

The Executive Committee decided that in light of the recent increase of COVID-19 cases, that the SCCOG should reinstitute its COVID calls with the health districts, holding one a month in addition to discussion of this topic at the monthly regular meetings. The next COVID call will be on Wednesday, January 26th at 8:30 a.m.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

James S. Butler, Executive Director