

MINUTES OF 2/16/22 MEETING OF THE
SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
VIA ZOOM

PRESENT:

Glenn Pianka, Bozrah; Charles Grant, Franklin; Keith Hedrick, City of Groton; Timothy Sharkey, Borough of Jewett City; Kevin Cwikla, Lebanon; Thomas Sparkman, Lisbon; Ron McDaniel, Montville; Robert Carlson, North Stonington; Sandra Allyn-Gauthier, Preston; Ed Chmielewski, 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. Tribal Liaison: None. Military Liaison: RADM William Kelly, USCGA; CMDR Reginald Preston, Steve Sadlowski, SUBASE. Other: Mike Carroll, Cherise Simpson, Thailisa Clark, Al Fritzche, SEAT; Deborah Monahan, TVCCA; Erik Shortell, FHWA; Jennifer Pacacha, CTDOT; Mark Oefinger, Paul Whitescarver, seCTer; Wendy Bury, SE CT Cultural Coalition; Patrick McCormack, Uncas Health District; Ellen Graham, Senator Blumenthal's office; Ayanti Grant, Congressman Courtney's office; Carey Redd, New London Parking; Teresa Jackman, Eversource; Dominick Celtruda; one reporter.

1. Call to Order: In the absence of the Chairman, Vice Chairman Chesebrough called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.
2. Roll Call: A quorum was present.
3. Act on Minutes of 1/19/22:

MOTION: To approve the minutes of 1/19/22 (Cwikla, Sparkman). So voted unanimously.

4. Treasurer's Report:

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

5. Communications: The Executive Director noted there were two letters of support for grant applications by the Genesee & Wyoming RR in the Communications of the agenda packet.
6. Public Comment:

Ms. Jackman reported that Eversource was working with TVCCA to provide public assistance to those having energy cost issues.

7. Committee and Liaison Reports:

A. Executive Committee

1) Update on Hiring of Regional Zoning Official

The Executive Director reported that he had offered the two town ZEO positions on a contract basis to two experienced individuals who both accepted during a telephone call. After agreements were emailed, one telephoned to withdraw and the other stopped replying to repeated telephone calls and email messages. He said that the position has been readvertised and in the interim, two SCCOG staff Planners will fill the ZEO role in Bozrah and Ledyard.

2) Update on Funding for Regional Recovery Coordinator

The Executive Director said that nine municipalities have now sent in their voluntary assessment payment. Because not enough funding has been committed to date to support hiring a full-time staff person, the SCCOG has entered into an agreement with retired Norwich Human Services Director Lee-Ann Gomes to fill this role part-time. The Executive Committee has agreed that due to her limited hours, Ms. Gomes would prioritize assisting towns which have contributed to the funding of the position.

3) Route 32 and Route 161 Corridor Study Updates

The Executive Director said that scoping meetings were held by SCCOG staff and CTDOT with Fuss & O'Neill, which has been selected to prepare the Route 32 in New London corridor study and with Beta Group, Inc. which has been selected to prepare the Route 161 study in East Lyme. The next step will be to form advisory committees for both corridor studies. He said he was waiting to receive Project Authorization Letters from CTDOT before executing the contracts with the two consultants.

4) BRIC Grant Application for Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

The Executive Director said that staff was informed by CT DEEP in an email recently that the SCCOG will be awarded a \$149,963 FEMA funded BRIC grant to update the region's Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan. It is expected that formal notification of this grant award will be received by the end of February.

5) FY 2021 STIP/TIP Amendments

The Executive Director reported that the Executive Committee reviewed two sets of amendments, one for safety improvements and pavement rehab on I-95 from Groton to the RI state line, and the other a series of traffic signal controllers and cabinet replacements. He said that after staff informed the Executive Committee about the PEL study of I-95 CTDOT was about to commence and comments staff has submitted to

CTDOT about the scope of that study, the Executive Committee decided to not recommend action to the full SCCOG on the I-95 STIP amendments until such time as CTDOT responds to staff comments/concerns on the I-95 PEL study as that study and its implementation could impact/be impacted by the improvements in the proposed STIP amendment. The amendment concerning traffic signal controllers and cabinet replacement was recommended by the Executive Committee for SCCOG approval and will be taken up under Item 10. A, New Business.

6) Other

The Executive Director said that the Executive Committee discussed a letter from Congressman Courtney to him regarding the Department of Energy's request for feedback on the development of a consent-based process to move spent nuclear waste to interim storage sites. The Congressman referred this to the SCCOG because entities such as the COG are eligible to submit comment. He said the Executive Committee agreed that Rob Brule, First Selectman in Waterford which is host to Dominion's nuclear power plant at Millstone, would write a response and that the Executive Director would work with Mr. Brule to draft a statement of SCCOG support for Waterford's position. Mr. Brule reported that he was working with his team in Waterford to prepare such a comment, and he thanked the SCCOG for support of Waterford's position.

B. Legislative Committee

No report.

C. Tribal Liaison Representatives

No report.

D. Military Command Representatives

RADM Kelly reported on a Coast Guard display at the State Capitol which will be through February 24th, and thanked State Representative Nolan for his assistance. CMDR Preston reported on COVID status at the SUBASE; recent security drills at the SUBASE; the deployment recently of two submarines from the SUBASE and the return of one in March; and that the Historic Ship Nautilus was still undergoing overhaul and was expected to be returned to its dock at the SUBASE by late summer.

E. Congressional Office Report

Ms. Grant from Congressman Courtney's office and Ms. Graham from Senator Blumenthal's office provided their respective reports.

F. seCTer

Mr. Whitescarver said that seCTer's Phase 2 BBBRC grant application has moved from six projects to eight, due to the UCONN component being split into two parts; said this application could bring \$75-80 Million in grant funds to the region; mentioned seCTer's non-traditional grant program; and listed seCTer work ongoing in towns in the region.

G. Eastern CT Tourism District

No report.

H. SEAT

Mr. Carroll reported on a tragic accident involving a SEAT bus that occurred this past weekend; COVID status of drivers; drop in ridership in fixed-route service; New London Smart Ride service experiencing a 60% increase in ridership from December to January, and he was now recommending that New London start charging a fare for that service.

I. SCCOG Regional Water Committee

The Executive Director said that the Eastern CT WUCC met last week..

J. Regional Emergency Planning Team

The Executive Director stated that only 1 FY 2021 MOA still needed to be collected.

K. Regional Human Services Coordinating Council

Ms. Monahan reported on the activities of the members of the RHSCC, and reminded of the three priorities that the Regional Recovery Steering Committee had recommended for expenditure of ARPA funding: housing, mental health, and child care.

L. SE CT Cultural Coalition

Ms. Bury reported on recent activities of the Cultural Coalition including their offer to assist towns in expenditure of ARPA funds for arts and culture; she asked if anyone was tracking how SCCOG towns were allocating their ARPA funds, and the Executive Director responded that SCCOG staff was and would make that information available to her.

8. Executive Director's Report:

The Executive Director stated that after Ms. Chesebrough had raised the issue of a possible SCCOG application to CIRCA for a Municipal Resilience Grant, staff quickly put one together to meet that day's deadline. The SCCOG application would analyze and set forth the steps needed to establish a stormwater utility in one or two SCCOG

municipalities. He said CIRCA has informally contacted SCCOG staff to inform that this application is being favorably looked at, and encouraging the potential addition of additional SCCOG towns. He said he would email the SCCOG today with the scope of work for the proposed project with a request that any additional town interested in being part of this plan to contact him.

The Executive Director summarized the mid-year financial report, a copy of which was contained in the agenda packet.

9. Old Business:

A. COVID-19 Response Discussion

Mr. McCormack reported on recent meetings where new guidance has been issued by various agencies, including the lifting of the statewide mask mandate for schools; he noted and answered questions on the recent increase in drug overdoses occurring in the region.

10. New Business:

A. FY 2021 STIP/TIP Amendments

- STPA, 0172-0516, Various, District 2, Replace Traffic Signal Controllers & Cabinets at Various Locations – AC ENTRY, CON, 2022, \$0, New Project
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MOTION: To approve of the FY 2021 STIP/TIP amendments (Grant, Sparkman). So voted unanimously.

B. Resolution No. 22-1 Relating to a Build Back Better Regional Challenge Phase 2 Grant Application

The Executive Director explained the purpose of the proposed resolution.

MOTION: To approve Resolution No. 22-1 Relating to a Build Back Better Regional Challenge Phase 2 Grant Application (Sparkman, Grant). So voted unanimously.

11. Next Meeting:

The Vice Chairman stated that the next regularly scheduled meeting would be held on March 16th. A COVID Call will be scheduled for March 2nd.

12. Adjournment:

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 9:40 a.m. (Burt, Hedrick). So voted unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cheryl Blanchard, Secretary