

MINUTES OF THE 1 MARCH 2022
SCCOG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
VIA ZOOM

Present: Fred Allyn, III, Danielle Chesebrough, Cheryl Blanchard
Staff: James Butler, Kate Rattan

Chairman Allyn opened the meeting at 8:34 a.m. A quorum was not present, so no action was taken by the Executive Committee proper; however, members present made recommendations to the Executive Committee concerning items on the agenda.

1. Update on Hiring of Regional Zoning Official

The Executive Director reported that to date only two applications have been received in response to the most recent job posting, one of which has experience and whom may be interested in taking the position.

2. Update on Funding for Hiring Regional Recovery Coordinator

The Executive Director briefed Executive Committee members present that Windham Town Manager Jim Rivers has requested his town's funding be returned because it had been inadvertently sent to the SCCOG, bringing the total of contributing towns to eight. He noted that Norwich City Manager John Salomone has emailed him to tell him that Norwich will be sending the SCCOG their requested contribution.

3. Route 32 and Route 161 Corridor Study Updates

The Executive Director informed the Executive Committee that Project Authorization Letters (PALs) were received late last week from CTDOT, and that the contract with BETA for the Route 161 study has been fully executed and that he expected the contract with Fuss & O'Neill to be signed in the next few days. He said he and Transportation Program Manager Kate Rattan were beginning to form the Advisory Committee for each study.

4. FY 2021 STIP/Amendments

The Executive Director and Transportation Program Manager reported on the two sets of proposed amendments. Executive Committee members present asked that these be forwarded to the full SCCOG for action.

5. Bozrah Fitchville Sidewalk Extension LOTCIP Application

The Executive Director and Transportation Program Manager presented this application which is requesting \$1,893,500 in SCCOG LOTCIP funding. This item will be placed on the March 16th SCCOG agenda for possible action.

6. BBRC Grant Application Match

The Executive Director reminded that the SCCOG had approved of this grant application by adoption of a resolution at last month's meeting. The SCCOG project is one component of seCTer's BBRC grant which has additional components. He said the SCCOG is requesting \$536,800 from EDA for its proposed "Thames River Region Offshore Wind Industry Cluster Site Predevelopment Assistance & Digital Dashboard" which requires a 20% or \$134,200 match. He said he has made it clear to seCTer from the outset of SCCOG's involvement that the SCCOG had not budgeted funds for this required match. seCTer and the State are partnering with the energy company Avangrid which has committed funding to the State for the development of the offshore wind industry in Connecticut, and which has verbally stated that it would provide SCCOG this required match from these funds. The Executive Director stated that while the SCCOG has accepted private funding in the past, he could not recall it having done so in conjunction with a grant application and in such a large amount. He felt that the SCCOG should be aware of where the proposed match was coming from and that the board should take an action approving of its acceptance. Members of the Executive Committee present discussed with the Executive Director whether or not there were any conditions attached to the offer of the match, and he said that there had been no such indication by the Avangrid official that any would be required. It was agreed that this should staff should include this proposed match in submission of the grant application EDA's March 15th deadline, but that the full SCCOG board would consider this for action at their March 16th meeting, and if for some reason they do not approve of accepting the match the SCCOG application will be withdrawn.

7. I-95 PEL Study

The Executive Director referred to the handout in the agenda packet concerning this Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study which CTDOT has just initiated. This PEL will study and make recommendations for the section of I-95 from the Connecticut River to the Rhode Island State Line. He said that staff will inform the SCCOG throughout this study process.

8. Goldstar Bridge Pedestrian Upgrade Study Update

The Executive Director summarized a memorandum from the Transportation Program Manager to the Executive Committee.

9. SCCOG Participation in State of Connecticut Deferred Compensation Section 457 Plan

The Executive Director said that when revising the SCCOG Personnel Policies last summer, he was reminded that at one point around 2008, the SCCOG had revised the Personnel Policies to allow the establishment of a supplemental retirement plan in addition to MERS, but this was never done because of the economy at that time. He said he recently contacted his fellow COG Executive Directors to see if and what types of retirement plans they offer their employees and discovered that several provide their employees to join the State's Deferred Compensation Plan, to which political subdivisions like COGs can become

members. There is no management fee to the COG as employer; this is picked up by the employee. He said that with a younger, potentially more mobile work force than the SCCOG had when it became members of MERS defined benefit plan, it makes sense to allow employees to have this portable option for saving towards retirement. All the State requires is that the SCCOG executes a Participating Employment Agreement. The members of the Executive Committee present voiced no disagreement with the Executive Director executing this agreement allowing SCCOG employees to join the State of Connecticut Deferred Compensation Section 457 Plan.

10. Other

The members of the Executive Committee present agreed to invite staff of CRHO to make a presentation on that office's requirements at the March 16th SCCOG meeting.

The Executive Director reported that yesterday, based on new CDC guidance and information from the region's health district directors, he informed SCCOG staff that mask wearing in the office was now optional. He said the SCCOG might wish to consider scheduling in-person meetings in the near future; Chairman Allyn said he would discuss this with the SCCOG.

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:18 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

James S. Butler, Executive Director