

SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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Minutes

January 3, 2023 Executive Committee

Held by Zoom

PRESENT:

Danielle Chesebrough (Chairman), Rob Brule, John Salomone, Fred Allyn II, Cheryl Blanchard, Charlie Grant.

Staff: Amanda Kennedy, Kate Rattan, Jim Butler.

Chairman Chesebrough opened the meeting at 8:31 AM.

1. Regional Code Enforcement/RPIP Grant

Ms. Kennedy provided an update on the status of hiring a Building Official and Zoning Enforcement Officer and asked for input as to how to address costs that are coming in higher than what was anticipated in the grant application. The current prospective candidate is asking for a much higher salary than was anticipated, and SCCOG's FY22 indirect cost rate (which will be applied during FY 24) is higher than usual because of FY 22 personnel transitions which resulted in higher costs for leave in FY 22. The RPIP grant will subsidize costs at a rate of 75% in year 1, 50% in year 2, and 25% in year 3, but the available grant funds will not last three years given the higher potential costs. Ms. Kennedy asked for input as to whether to hire the current candidate at their asking rate or reopen the search. Mr. Grant asked how the higher salary would impact the costs to municipalities. Multiple members expressed concern that hiring a building official at such a high salary would set a precedent that could affect other employers.

Ms. Kennedy and Mr. Butler talked through the options for addressing the indirect rate issue, which include charging a reduced indirect rate of 89% that covers only the expenses directly related to personnel (excluding other costs such as administrative staff and building expenses), charging an indirect rate closer to the usual indirect rate of 102%, or charging a personnel-only indirect rate based on previous years' rates (69%). At the higher salary cost, grant funds are sufficient to last three years at the 69% and 89% rates, but the foregone revenue must come from dues or reserve.

Mr. Salomone and Mr. Brule both suggested that SCCOG continue to look at alternatives going

Member Municipalities:

Bozrah * Colchester * East Lyme * Franklin * Griswold * Borough of Jewett City * City of Groton * Town of Groton * Lebanon * Ledyard * Lisbon * Montville * New London * North Stonington * Norwich * Preston * Salem * Sprague * Stonington * Stonington Borough * Waterford * Windham

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forward, which include more sharing of municipal staff. Ms. Kennedy stated that she would ask the candidate to accept SCCOG's original offer and reopen the search if the offer is declined, and continue to evaluate options for indirect cost allocations.

2. STIP/TIP Amendments

Ms. Rattan provided information regarding the TIP amendments being presented for endorsement:

Norwich Mobility Study: approves funding for the corridor study being administered by SCCOG for downtown Norwich. This project is in the consultant selection process.

SEAT Facility Modernization: approves funding to rehabilitate SEAT's main facility and retrofit it to accommodate electric vehicles.

SEAT Buses: approves funding for 5 paratransit buses for use in the New London Smart Ride service, replacing obsolete buses that had temporarily been pulled back into service.

MOTION: To recommend approval of the TIP amendments by the full SCCOG Board (Salomone, Brule). So voted unanimously.

3. LOTCIP

Ms. Rattan requested a recommendation for endorsement of the Norwich—New London Turnpike Sidewalk & Rehabilitation project, as described in the provided memo, and re-endorsement of the New London—Williams & Broad project, which has an updated cost estimate of \$4.1 million (up from \$3.2 million in March). The project is now at 30% design and the estimate has been reviewed and accepted by CT DOT. Ms. Rattan stated that projects are now being estimated with a CT DOT tool that includes costs recently impacted by inflation.

MOTION: to recommend endorsement of the two LOTCIP projects by the full SCCOG Board (Brule, Allyn). So voted unanimously.

4. Speaker Requests

Ms. Kennedy stated that staff request that Dave Murphy of Resilient Land and Water brief the SCCOG at the January meeting regarding the Hazard Mitigation Plan and Resilient CT recommendations. Ms. Kennedy also stated that Ms. Chesebrough had suggested inviting Frank Burns to provide an update on tourism and that Ms. Kennedy had proposed to Jim Bellano that he also provide an update on eastern Connecticut tourism. Ms. Kennedy stated also that Sen. Somers was co-leading the tourism caucus. Members agreed to invite Mr. Murphy to speak in January and hold off until February to invite speakers regarding tourism.

5. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting (Chesebrough).

The meeting adjourned at 9:24 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda E. Kennedy, Executive Director