

# SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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## Minutes

June 14, 2023 Executive Committee

Held at SCCOG, 5 Connecticut Ave., Norwich

### PRESENT:

Danielle Chesebrough (Chairman), John Salomone (via phone), Cheryl Blanchard, Charlie Grant, Rob Brule. Staff: Amanda Kennedy, Kate Rattan.

Chairman Chesebrough opened the meeting at 8:32 AM.

### 1. Regional Code Enforcement Program Update

Ms. Kennedy reported on the status of the regional code enforcement program, which funds one full-time Building Inspector and a Land Use Specialist working ½ time as blight and/or zoning enforcement officer. The program was set up to include four towns receiving building inspection services and four towns receiving blight/zoning enforcement services. One town has since dropped out of the program for building inspection, leaving SCCOG with additional capacity to provide building inspection services to additional towns, and a funding challenge wherein SCCOG funds must make up a portion of the revenue expected to come from the fourth municipality. Ms. Kennedy briefed the Committee on the potential budget impact if a funding gap were to continue. Members discussed several options to pursue, identifying at least three towns that may also have need of services, and an additional option to hold capacity open to cover vacations or unexpected leave by permanent staff in other SCCOG towns. Ms. Kennedy, Mr. Grant, and Mr. Salomone will follow up on the municipalities identified as having potential immediate need but there was consensus that both options were good.

### 2. FY 2024 Regional Services Grant Funding/Workplan

Ms. Kennedy reported that the Legislature's Budget Implementer bill passed last week included an increase of funding to Councils of Governments from \$4.1 million to \$7 million each year, with an allocation formula to be determined by OPM and reviewed every five years. This is expected to increase SCCOG's annual RSG grant from \$380k to approximately \$656k (note: OPM confirmed later on 6/14 that the amount SCCOG would receive would be \$656,911.96). A Statement of Work and Grant Award Budget for FY 2024 is due to OPM by July 1, so Ms. Kennedy asked for a conversation on how SCCOG should prioritize the use of this additional

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#### 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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funding. Members proposed several focus areas to consider additional/new work in: Resilience Planning/Implementation work, stormwater/MS4 assistance, activities related to the future Municipal Solid Waste working group, and facilitating the sharing of large equipment. Ms. Kennedy proposed the creation of a Municipal Services Manager position to manage our existing planning and enforcement services, staff the Regional Planning Commission and municipal planner support activities, and develop additional programs such as the sharing of equipment. She shared a hypothetical budget showing the additional revenue and additional expenses to cover any gap in funding of the enforcement program, the additional staff person, and consultant services to update SCCOG's website and other communications media; this budget leaves \$100k unprogrammed that could be used for staff or consultant work. Members supported the submission of a workplan that maintains SCCOG's flexibility to develop work programs in the mentioned areas.

### 3. Accounting/Payroll Services

Ms. Kennedy reported that SCCOG's long-time accounting firm had requested that SCCOG retain the services of a payroll company to process payroll in lieu of the accounting firm continuing to do it. The firm has served SCCOG since 2004 and last raised its rates in 2019. Ms. Kennedy and Ms. Leclair interviewed three firms and selected ADP. This switch will add a maximum cost of \$3,433.30 to FY 24's annual accounting services line. The service includes payroll and additional HR policy support.

### 4. Status of Grants

Ms. Kennedy stated that staff are preparing a Safe Streets and Roads for All grant (SS4A), reviewing the PROTECT grant opportunity to fund a resilience improvement plan (transportation infrastructure focus), waiting on the results of an application for CT DEEP brownfields funding, and waiting on the results of an application for Areas of Persistent Poverty funding that would enable the creation of a new transit services plan.

### 5. Speaker Requests/Scheduling

Ms. Kennedy reviewed the current schedule of speakers and new requests received, which included requests from Eversource to present re: new energy efficiency programs, from the Eastern CT Land Bank to present their brownfields support work, and from the America 250 CT Commission, presenting plans to commemorate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United States. Ms. Kennedy also reminded them of the idea of inviting someone to brief the SCCOG on municipal opioid settlement activity. Eversource's Steve Sullivan is scheduled for November 15<sup>th</sup>. The Committee recommended the following priority in scheduling: 1- energy efficiency, 2- opioid settlement, 3- Land Bank, 4- America 250.

### 6. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting (Grant).

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda E. Kennedy, Executive Director