

SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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DRAFT Minutes of the September 18, 2024 Meeting
of the Southeastern CT Council of Governments
Via Zoom

PRESENT:

Bozrah	-	New London	Michael Passero
Colchester	-	North Stonington	-
East Lyme	Dan Cunningham	Norwich	John Salomone
Franklin	Alden Miner	Preston	Sandra Gauthier
Griswold	Tina Falck	Salem	Ed Chmielewski
Jewett City	Laurie Sorder	Sprague	Cheryl Allen Blanchard
City of Groton	-	Town of Stonington	Danielle Chesebrough
Town of Groton	John Burt	Stonington Borough	Michael Schefers
Lebanon	Kevin Cwikla	Waterford	Rob Brule
Ledyard	Fred Allyn	Windham	Thomas DeVivo
Lisbon	-	SEAT Rep (MPO)	-
Montville	-		
Military Liaisons:	US Coast Guard Academy: - New London SUBASE: Captain Kenneth Curtin, Steve Sadlowski		
Tribal Affiliates:	Mohegan Tribe: Robert Hayward Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation: -		
CT DOT	Kevin Tedesco		

SCCOG staff: Amanda Kennedy, Kate Rattan, Daniel Robinson, Helen Zincavage, Lana Melonakos-Harrison. seCTer: Captain Paul Whitescarver, Mark Oefinger. SEAT: Mike Carroll. Office of Sen. Murphy: Erin McBride. Office of Rep. Courtney: Noah Carver. SE CT Cultural Coalition: Deb Mathiasen. CT Office of Military Affairs: Bob Ross. Eversource: Jaquan Samuels. SEAT: Mike Carroll. Health District: Patrick McCormack. BL Companies: Dominick Celtruda.

1. Call to Order:

Chairman Brule called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m. Mr. Brule led the Pledge of Allegiance

2. Roll Call:

A quorum was present.

3. Act on Minutes of the July 17th and August 29th Meetings:

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

*If language assistance is needed, please contact SCCOG at 860-889-2324, office@seccog.org.
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MOTION: To approve the minutes (Cwikla, Chmielewski). Motion passed unanimously

4. Treasurer's Report:

Ms. Kennedy announced that reimbursement of \$125,000 was received from DEMHS for the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

MOTION: To approve the Treasurer's Report (Blanchard, Cwikla). Motion passed unanimously.

5. Communications

Ms. Kennedy stated that the Capital Region Council of Governments will be hosting a forum and workshop on October 8th in relation to shared services.

6. Public Comment:

Mr. Samuels expressed that municipalities should not hesitate to inform Eversource of any projects that involve electric services or other related fields. Mr. Samuels also brought up the availability of energy-adjacent tax credits for the region.

7. Guest Speaker – Ross Gionfriddo, General Dynamics; Courtney Murphy, Electric Boat:

Mr. Gionfriddo and Ms. Murphy presented metrics of large hiring increases for both GD and EB. They stressed that this mass hiring requires regional efforts to increase housing, childcare (recent testing of a tri-share model), transportation, etc. Though EB and GD do not want to construct said housing, they want to strongly convey the need. They spoke of their firms' involvement in education from a young age, through middle school, ultimately leading to recruitment after high school. They shared that they want to retain and upscale in accordance with the projections of 100,000 new shipbuilders in the next ten years. Mr. Allyn questioned whether EB and GD could serve as bodies speaking out publicly for more housing, utilizing their status as trusted regional actors. Ms. Murphy replied that different employees want different kinds of housing (i.e. engineers = apartments, trade workers = single family homes). Mr. Oefinger suggested a letter to the editor from EB/GD about a clear indication of their housing needs. Ms. Zincavage followed up with a request for more data on EB/GD's specific needs for potential plans down the road.

8. Committee and Liaison Reports:

a.) Executive Committee – Ms. Kennedy shared that there were currently no action items, but that there will be TIPS to approve at next month's board meeting.

b.) Legislative Committee – Mr. Allyn stated that there will be meeting in October to prepare for the upcoming Connecticut General Assembly legislative session. He also invited the board to send ideas to the legislative committee about early voting.

- c.) Tribal Liaison Representatives – Mr. Hayward announced the hiring of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe’s new tribal manager, Michael Picaro. He also informed the board of upcoming events at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center.
- d.) Military Command Representatives – Captain Curtin informed the board that higher-ups from the Defense Industry recently visited the Sub Base. He also shared that the base’s microgrid project was completed and that there will be a ribbon cutting in November. Captain Curtin stated that the existence of a base microgrid will allow them to be independent from Groton utilities in the event of a security threat. He mentioned that construction on the new Nautilus Dock has commenced – it will connect the ferry to the museum.
- e.) Congressional Office Report – Ms. McBride, of Senator Murphy’s Office, spoke of their support for the Long Island Sound Investment Plan and offshore wind. Ms. McBride also informed the board of funding opportunities for STEM careers and the Department of Transportation Reconnecting Communities grant. Mr. Carver, of Representative Courtney’s Office, spoke of his attendance at a recent federal funding fair. He also informed the board of their office’s letters of support for housing needs across the state and their role as liaisons for the IRS Direct pay grant. Mr. Carver concluded with the mentioning of debt forgiveness for public service workers.
- f.) seCTer – Mr. Whitescarver informed the board of their meeting last week on their Comprehensive Economic Development strategy. He then further elaborated on seCTer’s Blue Economy Coalition and their loan program for small businesses.
- g.) SEAT – Mr. Carroll expressed that ridership rates were increasing, and that SEAT was expanding service during weekday hours. Mr. Carroll also spoke of the HOP microtransit service coming to Waterford in October. He concluded with an announcement of a new labor contract with SEAT employees for the next three years.
- h.) Regional Emergency Planning Team – Mr. Caplet brought up the topic of election security preparations and instructed municipalities to share related materials on the topic with their election staff.
- i.) SE CT Cultural Coalition – Ms. Mathiasen shared that the annual Grantmakers and Funders Forum is coming up on October 1st.
- j.) Health Districts – Mr. McCormack shared that the existing outdoor naloxone kiosks had to be taken down in accordance with state rules. Mr. McCormack expressed the importance of the availability of these kiosks and shared anecdotes about fireman seeing Narcan boxes in homes, citing that they are preventing deaths. He also stated that the availability of these kiosks greatly reduced drug-related issues in Jewett City. Mr. McCormack stated that he was worried that, in relation to Narcan, that the focus was on restriction, and not on access. He expressed that the goal of the region should be to get naloxone out to the public, that it should be free, and that state organizations should get involved.
- k.) Solid Waste Committee – Mr. Allyn stated that the Solid Waste Report is complete and thanked the SCCOG staff for their hard work. He also announced that their next meeting will be on October 22nd at 8:30AM.

9. Executive Director's Report:

Ms. Kennedy shared about the capital improvements made to the SCCOG office. These improvements included general repairs, new carpeting, new paint, reorganization of the floor plan, and the addition of new workspaces. Ms. Kennedy also formally announced the board the hiring of four new employees: Debra Pierce, Lana Melonakos-Harrison, Daniel Robinson, and a part-time building inspector apprentice, Paul Curry (who will start October 1). In relation to transportation, Ms. Kennedy talked about new projects and funding opportunities. Increased bus shelter installation was also mentioned. Ms. Kennedy also spoke of SCCOG's work on the IRS Direct Pay grant and informed the board of Ms. Bigl's info sheet on the topic. Ms. Kennedy also announced that the Regional Open Space Plan will be up for adoption at the next board meeting in mid-October. She concluded with that SCCOG staff were currently working with several municipalities on applying for the EPA CHANGE grant.

10. Old Business

There was no old business to report on.

11. New Business

Mr. Cwikla inquired about the existence of formalized moderator trainings for public meetings.

Charmian Brule thanked Chief Wright of the New London Police Department and member municipalities for their hard work in addressing the illegal dirt-bike/ATV activities that have taken place in recent years.

12. Next Meeting

Chairman Brule stated that the next board meeting will be on October 16th, 2024. He also mentioned that a board photo would be taken.

13. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting (Cwikla, Chmielewski). Motion passed unanimously.