CT DESPP/DEMHS REGION 4
RECOVERY STEERING COMMITTEE

Community Planning, Capacity Building, and Infrastructure Working Group

Meeting Notes

Recordings and additional information can be found at www.seccog.org/recovery and www.neccog.org

Date/Time: January 26, 2021, 10:00am.

Location: Zoom teleconference/videoconference.

Members in attendance: Jennie A. Arpin (Town of Willington), Todd Babbitt (Town of Griswold), Lt. James Bee (Town of Groton Police Department), Scott Belleville (Town of Putnam), Mark Biron (Groton Utilities), Cheryl Blanchard (Town of Sprague), Matthew Bordeaux (Town of Colchester), Allan Cahill (Town of Hampton), Mary Calorio (Town of Killingly), James Campbell (Connecticut Airport Authority), Leslie Creane (City of Groton), Jack Cross (LEARN), Chief Patrick Daley (City of Norwich), Peter DeBiasi (Access Community Action Agency),Ken DeLisa (Eastern Connecticut State University), David Eaton (Town of Union), Maryam Elahi (Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut), Chief Chris Ferace (Putnam Police Department), Chief L. J. Fusaro (Town of Groton Police Department), Tracey Hanson (Town of Voluntown/Region 4 Recovery Steering Committee),Joseph Lanzafame (City of New London DPU), Chris LaRose (Norwich Public Utilities), Stephen Mansfield (Ledge Light Health District), Patrick McCormack (Uncas Health District), Russell Melmed (Chatham Health District), Rob Miller (Eastern Highlands Health District), Deb Monahan (Thames Valley Council for Community Action/Region 4 Recovery Steering Committee), Michael Passero (City of New London), Kristen Pisani (Mitchell College), Jonathan Reiner (Town of Groton), Deanna Rhodes (City of Norwich), Bill Rose (Town of Chaplin), LCDR Daniel Stepler (United States Coast Guard Academy), Eric M. Trott (Town of Coventry), John Turner (Town of Putnam), Janene Vandi (UConn Avery Point), Norton Wheeler (Southeastern Connecticut Housing Alliance), COL Mathew Wilkinson (Connecticut Army National Guard), Adam Wright (U.S. Naval Submarine Base New London).

Staff in attendance: Sam Alexander (SCCOG), James Butler (SCCOG), Mike Caplet (DEMHS Region 4), Amanda Kennedy (SCCOG).

1) Call to Order and Introductions.

   Sam Alexander (Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG)) called the meeting to order at 10:02am. Sam Alexander briefly explained the purpose of the Community Planning, Capacity Building, and Infrastructure (CPCBI) Working Group and the general membership of the Working Group, which includes eastern Connecticut representatives from the following areas: Municipal Long-term Recovery Managers and chief elected officials, electrical, gas, water, and sewer utilities, emergency medicine, local health districts, Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs), technical education, higher education, law enforcement, military, housing advocacy, airports, transit and paratransit, and other transportation.

2) <u>Purpose of Working Group and Statewide Recovery Framework.</u>

Mike Caplet, Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP), Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS), Region 4 Coordinator began a presentation overview of the purpose of the CPCBI Working group, its relationship to the DEMHS Region 4 Recovery Steering Committee, and its role overall in the Connecticut Disaster Recovery Framework.

- ➢ Statewide Recovery Steering Committee.
    - o Emergency Support Function (ESF) 6, Mass Care, and ESF 14, Disaster Recovery Statewide Task Force/Working Group.
    - o Charitable and Governmental Funding Sub-Committee.
    - o Higher Education Working Group.

- ➢ Five Regional Recovery Steering Committees (RRSCs) in the five DEMHS Regions
    - o Composed of DEMHS Regional Coordinators, Regional Long-term Recovery Coordinators, Councils of Governments (COGs), municipal officials, non-profits, faith leaders, business leaders, and others.
    - o COG staff and DEMHS Regional Coordinators provide support.

- ➢ Working Groups, whose membership will identify "unmet needs" of their organizations and of the community. Connecticut Disaster Recovery Framework typically calls for six Working Groups per region. The current crisis will utilize three, combining groups as appropriate.
    - o Health & Social Services/Housing (HSSH) Working Group
    - o Economic/Natural & Cultural Resources (ENCR) Working Group
    - o Community Planning & Capacity Building/Infrastructure[/Housing] Working Group
    - o Membership of working groups derived from guidance in the Connecticut Disaster Recovery Framework.
    - o Working Group invitees are encouraged to attend meetings of other Working Groups or elevate unmet needs across Working Groups.
    - o Identify unmnet needs in Working Group meetings or conversations with assigned staff. Unmet needs elevated to the state and RRSC level to identify resources such as funding, needed legislation or regulatory changes, and other forms of assistance.
    - o Community Resource Coordinators also assist with mission of the HSSH Working Group, dealing with human service issues, working directly with the population.

3) <u>Brief Discussion of Unmet Needs and Issues Related to Long-term Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic.</u>

Using a presentation, Sam Alexander recapped the role and membership of the CPCBI Working Group and described in greater detail the process for identifying unmet needs:

- ➢ Unmet needs a) arise from the pandemic, b) have seemingly no solution or could imply a state-level response, c) create an issue for the way organization operate, or an issue that organizations see clients/residents experiencing, d) makes organizations and the region more vulnerable.

       o   If it's a problem that members are no longer experiencing, the RRSC would still like to hear about it. If it's a problem that members found a unique solution to, the RRSC would still like to hear about it.

    ➢ Identifying and reporting unmet needs.
        o   Use Working Group meetings for discussion, elevating unmet needs to staff.
        o   Communicate with staff off-line.
        o   Staff will use a reporting form to elevate the need to the Statewide Recovery Steering Committee and RRSC.
        o   Committees will identify resources, develop solutions (regulatory changes, legislation, etc.), and collate information (get the big picture) from around the state.

a. *Issues experienced by municipal Long-term Recovery Managers.*

Sam Alexander asked for examples of unmet needs experienced by Long-term Recovery Managers at the municipal level.

Jennie Arpin (Director of Human Services, Town of Willington) stated that Willington does not have a main street, where there is steady foot traffic and the ability to post written notices. This creates an issue reaching seniors, many of whom do not use the internet. This is an issue in many rural towns.

Bill Rose (First Selectman, Town of Chaplin) explained that the Town of Chaplin has a Google Groups town email list that is used to get information out to residents. The entire list became subject to a Freedom of Information (FOIA) request. The Town was forced by the FOI Commission to release the email list to the requestor. The Town is apprehensive about maintaining the list now, or building a more comprehensive list having to do with a COVID-19-related topic, which hurts its communication ability. Steve Mansfield (Director of Health, Ledge Light Health District) offered the suggestion that if the Town is collecting contact information for a public health purpose, the information may not be subject to FOI requests.

Jack Cross (Director of Innovation & Development, LEARN) explained that school districts initially had difficulty purchasing computers and tablets for students. Luckily funding became available, but he worries about the future when the electronics need to be replaced; many have a short life cycle (2 years).

Mary Calorio (Town Manager, Town of Killingly) explained that many of the town's rural residents have difficulty connecting to the internet because of inadequate broadband capacity, particularly when children are distance-learning and parents are working from home. It does not make sense economically to upgrade infrastructure in rural areas, where it's benefitting a small number of customers per unit cost to upgrade. She has contact Atlantic Broadband but with no solution in sight.

b. *Issues related to preparedness at the municipal/organizational level.*

c. *Issues related to continuity of essential functions.*

(Discussion of Items A, B, and C combined.)

4) Public Comment.

   There was none.

5) Next Steps.

   Mike Caplet encouraged Working Group members to discuss and think about unmet needs prior to the next meeting. Mike Caplet underscored the purpose of the Working Group.

   Sam Alexander will email Working Group members about the date and time for a next meeting. The RRSC is hoping to organize Working Group meetings in early February.

6) Adjourn.

   The meeting was adjourned at 11:00am.

Links:

[DEMHS Region 4 Recovery Steering Committee](#)
[Connecticut's Disaster Recovery Framework](#)
[DESPP/DEMHS Region 4](#)
[Connecticut Recovers](#)