



Minutes of the April 16, 2025 Meeting
of the Southeastern CT Council of Governments

PRESENT:

Bozrah	Glenn Pianka	New London	Michael Passero
Colchester	-	North Stonington	Bob Carlson
East Lyme	Dan Cunningham	Norwich	John Salomone
Franklin	Alden Miner	Preston	Sandra Allyn-Gauthier
Griswold	Tina Falck	Salem	Ed Chmielewski
Jewett City	Laurie Sorder	Sprague	Cheryl 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	Tom Sparkman	SEAT Rep (MPO)	Tom Sparkman
Montville	-	CT DOT Rep (MPO)	Jennifer Pacacha
Military Liaisons:	US Coast Guard Academy: Lt. Victoria Sparacino New London SUBASE: Captain Ken Curtin, Steve Sadlowski		
Tribal Affiliates:	Mohegan Tribe: - Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation: -		

SECOG staff: Amanda Kennedy, Kate Rattan, Daniel Robinson. seCTer: Paul Whitescarver. SEAT: Mike Carroll. Office of Sen. Murphy: Erin McBride. Office of Rep. Courtney: Noah Carver. Health Districts: Jennifer Muggeo. Eversource: Jaquan Samuels, Rebecca Spurrier. BL Companies: Dominick Celtruda.

1) Call to Order:

- a) Chairman Blanchard called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2) Roll Call:

- a) A quorum was present to vote on all matters.

3) Act on Minutes of the March 19th meeting:

- a) MOTION: To approve the minutes (Cwikla, Passero). Vote: Approve: Glenn Pianka, Dan Cunningham, Alden Miner, Laurie Sorder, John Burt, Kevin Cwikla, Fred Allyn, Tom Sparkman, Michael Passero, Bob Carlson, John Salomone, Ed

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Chmielewski, Cheryl Blanchard, Danielle Chesebrough, Michael Schefers, Rob Brule, Thomas Devivo, Tom Sparkman. Oppose: None. Abstain: Tina Falck, Sandra Allyn-Gauthier. Motion passes.

4) Treasurer's Report:

- a) MOTION: To approve the Treasurer's Report (Salomone, Allyn). SECOG Treasurer Cunningham spoke to the validity and accuracy of the prepared Treasurer's Report. Motion passed unanimously.

5) Communications

- a) Ms. Kennedy shared that CT DEEP is hosting a webinar on the afternoon of this month's board meeting. The webinar is focused on the Broadband Connectivity Grant. She added that this grant still has substantial funds left for awards.

6) Public Comment:

- a) Ms. Spurrier of Eversource announced that the annual Emergency Response Plan meeting for Connecticut's Eastern Region will take place on September 16th in New London. She added that if towns were working on gas infrastructure, they should reach out to Eversource.

7) Committee and Liaison Reports:

a) Executive Committee

- i) Ms. Kennedy shared that the minutes of the April Executive Committee meeting are available. She presented one item for potential board approval.

(1) 2025 LOTCIP Application, Vauxhall Rd. Roundabout, New London

MOTION: For SECOG Board to advance the relevant LOTCIP Application for CTDOT Commitment to Fund (Sparkman, Allyn). Motion passed unanimously.

- b) Legislative Committee – Mr. Allyn provided an update on several of SECOG's expressed legislative priorities for the ongoing CGA session, highlighting Veterans' Property Tax Exemption as well as street takeovers and the Municipal Employee Retirement System. Ms. Kennedy inquired about possible reimbursement for municipalities for tax loss incurred by Veterans' Property Tax Exemption. Mr. Allyn shared that there was an attempt to include said reimbursement in the bill and that he will be talking to Senator Osten to discuss the matter further. Ms. Kennedy then spoke about the Office of Policy and Management's Fair Share Housing study and the difference between achieving affordability through the construction of new units vs. achieving affordability through other means that aren't exclusively new construction.

Ms. Chesebrough spoke about a SECOG municipal-focused letter she drafted and the possibility of multiple COGs signing on to send a cohesive message to the CGA. Ms. Kennedy stated she should share it with other COG directors. Mr. Sparkman wondered if it was worth it to wait for other COGs' approval considering there are roughly 45 days left in the legislative session. Mr. Brule agreed and suggested sending Ms. Chesebrough's letter to the CGA ASAP.

MOTION: For SECOG Board to send Ms. Chesebrough's letter to the CGA (Sparkman, Brule). Motion passed unanimously.

- c) Military Community – Captain Curtin shared that the USS Iowa submarine was commissioned on April 5th and that the new Secretary of the Navy was in attendance. Additionally, the USS Newport News was deployed. Next, he shared that the SUBASE's Annual Hurricane exercise will be starting soon.

Lt. Sparacino spoke about the end of the Coast Guard Academy's Spring semester and the graduating cadets' impending assignments. She stated that Commencement will be on May 21th and that invitations will be arriving in email inboxes soon.

- d) Congressional Office Report – Ms. McBride, of Senator Murphy's Office, instructed the SECOG Board to inform her office of any grant program terminations. Mr. Salomone spoke about social security complaints being heard in Norwich. He stated that folks are worried about their checks and/or being refused service, as well as websites being down. Ms. McBride told Mr. Salomone that those folks can reach out to Senator Murphy's office – they have been anticipating these kinds of local impacts. She shared that Senator Murphy is in talks with relevant federal agencies to address this issue, as well as the possibility of the closure of Torrington's Social Security office.

Mr. Carver, of Representative Courtney's office, spoke about his office being a place for fielding residents' concerns as well. He then shared that the federal employees' deferred resignation period is ending – agency employee counts are going down. He informed the board that uncertainty is to be expected going forward. Mr. Carver then spoke about Representative Courtney's presence in the district and his assessments of federal impacts at the local level.

- e) seCTer – Mr. Whitescarver spoke about United Way of Southeastern Connecticut's childcare collaborative and the event they will be putting on in Norwich on June 7th, focused on family childcare providers. He talked about seCTer's visit to Washington D.C. with SECOG to learn about OLDCC functions. He then shared that funding sources for seCTer's grant programs have not been changed in relation to federal initiatives, and that seCTer is starting to utilize Placer.AI. Mr. Allyn spoke about how Governor Lamont's universal Pre-K bill

might address childcare issues in Southeastern Connecticut. Mr. Whitescarver stated that it wouldn't solve it, and that seCTer is providing grants to facilitate in-home daycare providers.

- f) SEAT – Mr. Carroll informed the Board that SEAT's ridership increased in March to almost 100,000 boardings. He stated that new operator positions are being filled. Additionally, new services will start in May in Groton, adding Sunday service, late night service, and state-funded microtransit. He included that SEAT is working closely with CTDOT on their new facility in Preston and that a public session on the matter will be held soon. Construction on SEAT's new facility for battery electric buses will begin in Spring 2027.
- g) Human Services – Ms. Kennedy noted that RHSCC meetings are on hold until staff can be reassigned to support this group.
- h) Health Districts – Ms. Muggeo shared that Ledge Light Health District is figuring out how to navigate federal shakeups to their funding sources. Additionally, they are trying to stay on top of measles and bird flu issues – she instructed folks to reach out to the health districts as health issues increase over the summer.
- i) Solid Waste Committee – Mr. Allyn spoke about the upcoming in-person meeting on April 22nd at 8:30 AM and bus tour May 8th. Mr. Sparkman stated that providers of trash pickup services are going down, businesses are being consolidated. Ms. Chesebrough stated that Stonington is changing their trash pickup process.

8) Executive Director's Report:

- a) Ms. Kennedy shared that FEMA's BRIC program, which SECOG had prepared a Yantic flood prevention application for, is not being continued. SECOG is speaking with Senator Osten to try and get state funds to continue SECOG's work tied to FEMA's affected grants. She reminded the Board of SECOG's visit to Washington D.C. to attend the OLDCC conference and learn about changes to their grant programs. Next, Ms. Kennedy shared information on funding opportunities including CTDOT's Community Connectivity Program. Next, she spoke about Amtrak's Capacity Planning Study for the area between New Haven, CT and Providence, RI. COGs and municipalities in the study area were informed and a webinar on the matter will be hosted soon. Ms. Kennedy then stated that Ms. Rattan met with CTDOT about matters relating to Interstate 95. Ms. Kennedy and Ms. Rattan also had a productive discussion with SEAT about land use, transportation improvements, and how to tie SEAT into SECOG's next Regional Plan of Conservation and Development. Next, she shared that SECOG's building official was able to help Windham while their own official was on medical leave and vacation. SECOG has limited capabilities to provide interim building official

duties for municipalities if their own staff is unavailable. Additionally, Colchester and Windham were added to the latest MS4 permit as qualifying municipalities. Lastly, SECOG's application to the EPA's Change grant application was submitted late last year. SECOG resubmitted a portion of the project scope to Environmental Justice of New England's grant program.

9) Old Business

- a) There was no old business to report on.

10) New Business

- a) MOTION: To approve the TIP amendments as of March 2025 (Passero, Cwikla). Motion passed unanimously.

0028-0207 Project removal of Resurfacing, bridge rehab & safety

Improvements on Rt. 2, Colchester

0103-0284 Bridge improvements over Yantic River, Norwich

0120-0097 Bridge improvements over Eight Mile River, Salem

11) Next Meeting

- a) Chairman Blanchard stated that the next Board Meeting will take place on May 21st at 8:30 AM at SECOG's Office.

12) Adjournment

- a) MOTION: To adjourn the meeting (Cwikla, Falck). Motion passed unanimously.