



Minutes of the May 14, 2025 Meeting
of the Southeastern CT Council of Governments

PRESENT:

Bozrah	Glenn Pianka	New London	-
Colchester	-	North Stonington	Bob Carlson
East Lyme	Dan Cunningham	Norwich	-
Franklin	-	Preston	Sandra Allyn-Gauthier
Griswold	Tina Falck	Salem	-
Jewett City	-	Sprague	Cheryl Blanchard
City of Groton	Keith Hedrick	Town of Stonington	Danielle Chesebrough
Town of Groton	-	Stonington Borough	-
Lebanon	Kevin Cwikla	Waterford	Rob Brule
Ledyard	Fred Allyn	Windham	-
Lisbon	Tom Sparkman	SEAT Rep (MPO)	Tom Sparkman
Montville	-	CT DOT Rep (MPO)	Jennifer Pacacha
Military Liaisons:	US Coast Guard Academy: New London SUBASE: Captain Ken Curtin		
Tribal Affiliates:	Mohegan Tribe: Chuck Bunnell Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation: Bob Hayward		

SECOG staff: Amanda Kennedy, Kate Rattan, Daniel Robinson. seCTer: Paul Whitescarver. Office of Sen. Murphy: Erin McBride. Office of Rep. Courtney: Noah Carver. Office of Sen. Blumenthal: Ellen Graham. Health Districts: Patrick McCormack. Eversource: Jaquan Samuels, Egzon Balidemaj. BL Companies: Dominick Celtruda. America 250: Jason Mancini.

1) Call to Order:

- a) Chairman Blanchard called the meeting to order at 8:35 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 April 16th meeting:

- a) MOTION: To approve the minutes (Cwikla, Hedrick). Motion passed unanimously.

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Si necesita asistencia lingüística, por favor comuníquese a SECOG.

如果需要残障或语言帮助, 请联系 SECOG.

4) Treasurer's Report:

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

5) Communications

- a) There were no communications to share.

6) Public Comment:

- a) Mr. Balidemaj of Eversource shared that tropical storm season is beginning and provided updates on other matters. If municipalities' Emergency Management Directors are going to be out of the office, please let Eversource know what the updated point of contact would be. In June, there will be a new electric discount rate for the Hardship Program, expanding from 2 price tiers to 5.

7) Guest Speaker:

- a) Jason Mancini, Vice Chair of America 250 shared a presentation on the upcoming 250th anniversary celebration of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 2026. Mr. Mancini explained the vision of the celebration, to bring people together to remember the past and move forward into the future. Guiding themes of America 250 are to tell inclusive stories that represent the common good, demonstrate the power of place, and the act of doing history. There are grants available to municipalities for cultural and capital expenses/projects. Additionally, local committees can be formed to coordinate local celebrations. There will also be a large "Signature Event" on July 4th, 2026, in Hartford, paired with a fireworks show.

8) Committee and Liaison Reports:

a) Executive Committee

- i) Ms. Kennedy shared that the minutes of the May Executive Committee meeting are available. She presented several items for potential board approval.
 - (1) Unified Planning Work Program 2026-2027 (Brule, Cwikla). Motion passed unanimously.
 - (2) Resolution – Delegation of Authority (Brule, Cwikla). Motion passed unanimously.
 - (3) Prioritization, 5310 Funding – Senior, Disabled Transportation (Brule Cunningham). Motion passed unanimously.

- (a) Ms. Rattan shared with the committee the criteria for entities being traditional vs. non-traditional applicants. Municipalities or nonprofits seeking to purchase vehicles under this program are considered “traditional.”
- (4) Resolution – MMI Grant, CT DEEP (Sparkman, Cwikla). Motion passed unanimously.
- (5) Resolution -- Amendment to Southeastern CT MJ-HMCAP including SECOG Specific Annex (Cwikla, Sparkman). Motion passed unanimously.
- b) Legislative Committee – Mr. Allyn provided an update on legislative items related to municipal matters in the SECOG region, including Veterans Tax Exemption and Summer Camp State-Licensing and additional regulations. Mr. Chuck Bunnell commented on the shortage of APRNs in the state and how that will negatively impact municipalities’ ability to meet state criteria for camp compliance. Mr. Pianka and Ms. Gauthier echoed these concerns and raised other issues with camp licensing, such as municipalities’ ability to afford the new mandates.
- c) Tribal Liaisons – Mr. Bunnell, of the Mohegan Tribal Nation, invited the commission to attend the Route 2A Informational Meeting on May 29th on the Mohegan Reservation. He clarified that OPM, DECD, DRS, CTDEEP, and CTDOT will be in attendance. He stated that he is thankful for the SECOG Board’s years of support and thanked his neighbor, the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation. He then provided an update on the Mohegan Tribe’s WNBA Team, The Connecticut Sun. Following a question from Mr. Hedrick, Mr. Bunnell shared that the tribe is exploring what the team is worth but has not committed to selling it in the near future. Next, Ms. Rattan, Mr. Allyn, and Mr. Bunnell spoke about expanding the Route 2A Bridge and discussed the parties that are in support of the effort.

Mr. Hayward, of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, extended his tribe’s well wishes to the SECOG Board. He shared that the New Great Wolf Lodge is now open and reminded the board that the 17th Annual Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day will be hosted at the tribe’s Community Center Gym on May 30th from 4:00 to 6:30 PM. He noted that this event is grant-funded.
- d) Military Community – Captain Curtin shared that the ribbon cutting for the Thames River Heritage Park near the USS Nautilus Museum will be on May 16th. There will be a water taxi to take passengers from New London and Groton to the Nautilus Museum. He also shared that there will be a Tabletop Event on May 22nd at the SUBASE for the Utilities Grant that SECOG is a partner on. Additionally, the Galley Crew at the SUBASE won a navy-wide cooking competition. Mr. Whitescarver spoke about having folks over to the SUBASE to try the galley’s food.

- e) Congressional Office Report – Mr. Carver, of Representative Courtney’s Office, shared that Rep. Courtney has been splitting time in Washington D.C. and Eastern CT. There is an ongoing information gathering effort, any federal implications to local matters should be shared with Rep. Courtney’s office. OPM is changing the way federal retirements are processed, if any residents are confused, they should reach out to Rep. Courtney’s office.

Ms. McBride, of Senator Murphy’s Office, shared that Sen. Murphy and Sen. Blumenthal signed on to the Childcare Tax Credit Act. TANF, HeadStart, and social services block grants are losing funds – Sen. Murphy’s office is trying to defend these services. Social Security field offices are slated to be closed. Though there are few offices in Eastern CT, the implications of the closure of one of these offices will have a regionwide impact. Mr. Brule congratulated Ms. McBride’s recent promotion.

Ms. Graham, of Senator Blumenthal’s Office, shared that she echoed the concerns of Mr. Carver and Ms. McBride’s statements.

- f) seCTer – Mr. Whitescarver shared that the upcoming opening of the Heritage Park is quite momentous, marking the culmination of two decades of work. Small harbor grants are available and Stonington, New London, and Norwich have already capitalized on the opportunity. He also talked about America 250 celebrations making use of the water taxis for tours up and down the Thames River. Mr. Whitescarver then spoke about energy poverty in Southeastern CT and shared that he has been having conversations about nuclear and solar power possibilities. He asked the Board to start thinking about increasing production and distribution in our area, and to ponder strategies for increasing capacity. He concluded by notifying the Board that small business grants have been utilized in almost every SECOG member municipality, as well as giving an update on childcare efforts in the region.
- g) SEAT – Mr. Sparkman, on behalf of Mr. Mike Carrol, provided an update that ridership was up in the last month and that new services are beginning on June 15th. Additional service expansions are on the horizon, dependent on new bus operators being hired.
- h) Human Services – Ms. Kennedy noted that RHSCC meetings are on hold until staff can be reassigned to support this group.
- i) Health Districts – Mr. McCormack shared that Uncas Health District (UHD) is currently relicensing pools, campgrounds, salons, and more. He instructed the board to notify UHD of businesses not paying taxes, as the health district has the ability to revoke licenses if payments are not made. He stipulated that the UHD is not interested in shutting places down, they want to help businesses make their

payments, but if they don't -- licenses can be ultimately revoked. Mr. Doug Coulter and Ms. Jennifer Lindo will be assisting with inspections.

- j) Solid Waste Committee – Mr. Allyn stated that the recently-held Solid Waste Bus Tour was great and thanked the SECOG staff for putting it together. Ms. Kennedy shared that a lot of Public Works folks were in attendance, which was nice to see. She added that SECOG is working on a Sustainable Management Infrastructure grant and is looking for ideas to help determine the scope.

9) Executive Director's Report:

- a) Ms. Kennedy shared that FEMA BRIC funds that were intended to be used for Yantic River Flooding planning efforts have been cancelled. She is in conversations with Senator Osten to secure state funds for Phase 2 of the project. An audit was recently performed at SECOG, and the results were positive. Amtrak is conducting a new planning effort, a Rail Capacity study in the corridor between New Haven, CT and Providence, RI. She clarified that this is not a high-speed rail matter but is more oriented around commuter rail and increasing transit in the region. A meeting will be taking place soon for RiverCOG and SECOG folks to attend and learn/engage with the project. The Buckeye Fuel Terminal in the City of Groton is in danger of closing, which would have negative regional implications. SECOG is looking into the matter and is in touch with relevant personnel. Grant funding could be an avenue to preserve the terminal. SECOG is working with other COGs on the Housing Fair Share study and the final report will be releasing soon. Ms. Kennedy shared concerns about how the report's findings are being communicated. She concluded that she is staying on top of a large housing bill that will soon be voted on in the Connecticut General Assembly.

10) Old Business

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

11) New Business

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

0170-3640	Service Plaza Sign and Support Replacement, scope changed to focus on certain regions, including the SECOG region
0172-0552	Route 2A/12 & Mohegan Bridge Study, new project

0414-2025EQ	SEAT Administrative Capital/Misc. Support FY25, moving project into new TIP cycle, cost estimates adjusted
0414-2025PA	SEAT paratransit vehicles FY25, moving project from 2025 to 2026, section 5307 grant carryover, increase project budget

12)Next Meeting

- a) Chairman Blanchard stated that the next Board Meeting will take place on June 18th at 8:30 AM at SECOG's Office.

13)Adjournment

- a) MOTION: To adjourn the meeting (Cwikla, Falck). Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:48 AM.