

MINUTES OF 10/21/20 MEETING OF THE
SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
HELD VIA ZOOM

PRESENT: Council Representatives: Mary Bylone, Colchester; Mark Nickerson, East Lyme; Charles Grant, Franklin; Todd Babbitt, Griswold; Keith Hedrick, City of Groton; Timothy; Kevin Cwikla, Lebanon; Fed Allyn, III, Ledyard; Tom Sparkman, Lisbon; Ron McDaniel, Montville; Michael Passero, New London; Mike Urgo, North Stonington; Jeff Callahan, Borough of Stonington; Danielle Chesebrough, Town of Stonington. Council Alternates: John Burt, Town of Groton; John Salomone, Norwich. Tribal Liaison: Rodney Butler, Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation; Chuck Bunnell, Mohegan Tribe. Military Liaison: Captain Todd Moore, Adam Wright, U.S. Naval SUBASE; CDR David Milne, USCGA. Staff: James Butler, Amanda Kennedy, Kate Rattan, Wendy Leclair. Other: Deborah Monahan, TVCCA; Mary Glassman, Governor's office; Mike Caplet, DEMHS; Mike Carroll, Al Fritsche, Cherise Perkins, SEAT; Philip Johnson, WRTD; Grayson Wright, CTDOT; Erik Shortell, FHWA; Brianna DeVivo, Senator Murphy's office; Ellen Graham, Senator Blumenthal's office; Ayanti Grant, Congressman Courtney's office; Nancy Cowser, seCTer; Wendy Bury, SE CT Cultural Coalition; Randy Collins, CCM; Catherine Young, CAA; Theresa Jackman, Eversource; Carey Redd, City of New London; Patrick McCormack, Uncas Health District; Dominick Celtruda; one reporter.

1. Call to Order: Chairman Nickerson opened the meeting at 8:33 a.m.
2. Roll Call: A quorum was present.
3. Act on Minutes of 9/16/20:

MOTION: To approve the minutes of 9/16/20 (Allyn, Sparkman). So voted unanimously.

4. Treasurer's Report:

MOTION: To approve the September Treasurer's Report (McDaniel, Salomone). So voted unanimously.

5. Communications: The Executive Director highlighted the two letters in the agenda packet from Sandy Fry, Chair of the CT Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board about their efforts to designate a coastal US Bike Route, and form OPM Secretary Melissa McCaw approving funding to the COGs for COVID response work for the period from March 1, 2020 – June 30, 2020.
6. Public Comment:

The Chair called on Mr. McCormack, Director of Uncas Health District, to provide an update on the region's COVID-19 cases and the status of his health district's response. Mr. McCormack provided a report and said he was working closely with LLHD Director Steve Mansfield who could not be on this morning's call.

7. Guest Speakers:

A) Mary Glassman, Governor's Office re: Statewide COVID Recovery Effort

Ms. Glassman introduced herself and provided an update on the state's recovery efforts. She stated that she had replaced Lisa Tepper Bates who previously served in this role. She noted that the Stat had retained the consulting firms GRI and the McChrystal Group to assist in this effort. She provided a schedule for the collection of data and information to be collected from representatives of people in various sectors around the state; the Regional Recovery Steering Committees that the SCCOG participates in will be involved in these discussions.

B) Wendy Bury, SE CT Cultural Coalition re: Municipal Cultural Districts

Ms. Bury provided background on the legislation that enabled the formation of these districts, the criteria for their establishment, the three options for the formation of municipal cultural commissions, and the advantages of forming cultural districts. She said they are holding an information session on this subject for municipal officials on November 5th.

8. Committee and Liaison Reports:

A. Executive Committee

- 1) Draft 2021-2024 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), including Resolution No. 20-5 On Conformity with the Clean Air Act Ozone; Resolution No. 20-6 Annual Urban Planning Certification; Resolution No. 20-7 Adopting the FFY 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program

The Executive Director stated that this document had been subject of a robust public outreach effort including two public hearings, resulting in two comments received, which are acknowledged in the final draft of the STIP/TIP. He said that the Executive Committee has recommended adoption of the document, including the accompanying three resolutions.

MOTION: To approve the 2021-2024 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), including Resolution No. 20-5 On Conformity with the Clean Air Act Ozone; Resolution No. 20-6 Annual Urban Planning Certification; Resolution No. 20-7 Adopting the FFY 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (Grant, Burt). So voted unanimously.

2) LOTCIP Cost Increase: Cross Road Project, Waterford

The Executive Director reported that the Executive Committee, acting as the Transportation Committee, approved an increase in cost for the LOTCIP funded Cross Road Project in Waterford to \$2,926,800, a 6.2% increase. The Executive Director explained that the Final Design construction estimate for this project was about \$172,800 more than the Preliminary Design cost estimate in the Commitment to Fund letter. The increase was primarily due to drainage deterioration since project scoping and unit price and unit number adjustments made by CTDOT. He said the SCCOG had adequate LOTCIP funds available to cover this increase.

3) DEMHS Region 4 Regional Recovery Steering Committee – Update

The Executive Director stated that he had been a call with DEMHS Region 4 Coordinator Mike Caplet and NECCOG Executive Director John Filchak yesterday, where they discussed convening a meeting of the Regional Recovery Steering Committee in the next week or two. This will coincide with the consultants' requests to the region for names to interview which Ms. Glassman had referred to earlier in this meeting.

4) Funding for COG COVID Work

The Executive Director said as had been reported earlier in the meeting, the SCCOG would receive around \$40,000 in CARES Act funding from the State for the period from March 1 - June 30, 2020. He said that OPM has given approval for COGs to use RSG funds for COVID-related work during the period from July 1 – December 31, 2020. He said that as Ms. Glassman had stated, the COGs and the State have submitted a single grant application to the EDA for funding for COVID recovery efforts beginning in January 2021.

B. Legislative Committee/Legislative Update – No report.

C. Tribal Liaison Representatives – Mr. Bunnell reported on a COVID-19 testing program that the Mohegan Tribe is working to establish working with both the State and the Town of Montville. He also reported on the Tribe's business ventures in Greece, Nevada, and South Korea.

D. Military Command Representatives

CDR Milne reported on USCGA activities, including the status of COVID-19 infections at the Academy.

Captain Moore said that the SUBASE remains in an elevated health protection status due to the increase in local infections. He reported that the Navy has awarded a \$67M MILCON grant to construct a new Pier 32 at the SUBASE.

E. Congressional Office Report

Ms. Grant from Congressman Courtney's office. Ms. Graham from Senator Blumenthal's office, and Ms. DeVivo from Senator Murphy's activities all reported on the status of a new stimulus bill.

F. seCTer

Ms. Cowser updated the SCCOG about seCTer's current activities including that they are about to hire a new economic recovery coordinator; they are working on a regional marketing prospectus; site finding; support for 12 EDA projects; the lending program; the PTAC program; and the Annual Meeting which will be held on November 20th.

G. Eastern CT Tourism District

No report.

H. SEAT

Mr. Carroll reported on SEAT ridership, which is down 20% from the previous September. He also said that fares have resumed.

I. SCCOG Regional Water Committee – No report.

J. Regional Emergency Planning Team

Mr. Sparkman said the Executive Director had just sent out a reminder that the deadline for sending in required MOAs and Resolutions has passed, and urged towns not yet submitting these to SCCOG to do so.

K. Regional Human Services Coordinating Council

Ms. Monahan reported on the RHSCC meeting last Friday, where members discussed services needed/provided during this pandemic.

L. SE CT Cultural Coalition

Ms. Bury provided additional information on the \$9 Million cultural funds that the Governor recently announced as available for performing arts.

9. Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director said he had no additional report other than what is in his written report in the agenda packet.

10. Old Business

A. COVID-19 Response Discussion

Mr. Cwikla inquired about how to deal with fund-raiser events involving food during the State's Phase 3. Mr. McCormack said they can hold these events if they meet the sector rules, and suggested they contact their regional health district. Discussion on additional COVID issues took place including enforcement of State COVID protocols/regulations and how municipalities will/should deal with Halloween.

11. Next Meeting

The Chairman suggested that a COVID-19 response call be held in two weeks on November 4th, and the members present agreed this call should be scheduled.

The Chairman then announced the next regularly scheduled meeting would be held on November 18th.

12. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 9:50 a.m. (Grant, Allyn). So voted unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Keith Hedrick, Secretary