



**SOUTHEASTERN
CONNECTICUT
COUNCIL OF
GOVERNMENTS**

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**Representing 22 towns, cities, and
boroughs in Southeastern
Connecticut.**

Minutes of the February 18, 2026, Meeting of the Southeastern CT Council of Governments

Present:

Bozrah	Glenn Pianka	New London	Michael Passero
Colchester	Bernie Dennler	North Stonington	Bob Carlson
East Lyme	-	Norwich	-
Franklin	Judi Novosad	Preston	Sandra Allyn Gauthier
Griswold	Tina Falck	Salem	-
Jewett City	Laurie Sorder	Sprague	Cheryl Blanchard
City of Groton	Jill Rusk	Town of Stonington	Bill Middleton
Town of Groton	John Burt	Stonington Borough	Michael Scheffers
Lebanon	Kathleen Smith	Waterford	Rob Brule
Ledyard	Fred Allyn	Windham	Tom Devivo
Lisbon	-	SEAT Rep (MPO)	-
Montville	Lenny Bunnell	CT DOT Rep (MPO)	-
Military Liaisons:	US Coast Guard Academy: Victoria Sparacino New London SUBASE: Captain Craig Litty		
Tribal Affiliates:	Mohegan Tribe: - Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation: Bob Hayward		

Additional Attendees: SECOG: Amanda Kennedy, Taylor Lussier, Wendy Leclair, Kate Rattan, Helen Zincavage, Dominic Anziano, Avery Holzworth
Office of Sen. Murphy: Erin McBride. Office of Rep. Courtney: Rep. Courtney, Noah Carver seCTer: Paul Whitescarver. Eversource: Rebecca Spurrier. Health District: Patrick McCormack (UNCAS) Office of Early Childhood: George Perry Arc Eastern CT: Kathleen Stauffer

1) Call to Order:

- a) The meeting was called to order by Bob Carlson at 8:33 am.

2) Roll Call:

- a) Ms. Kennedy determined that a quorum was present.

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office@secogct.gov.*

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3) Act on Minutes of the January 21st meeting *Action Item*

a) MOTION: To approve the January meeting minutes (DeVivo, Blanchard).

Motion passed unanimously with one abstention (Allyn-Gauthier).

4) Treasurer's Report *Action Item*

Tom reported that he reviewed the accounts and found them to be in good order.

The Treasurer's report was accepted.

5) Communications

6) Public Comment:

a) Eversource (Rebecca Spurrier) Announced that first-quarter meetings with emergency managers are underway. She noted she would be stepping away in March for military duty, with other contacts covering her role in the interim.

b) Office of Early Childhood (George Perry): Shared information regarding special education funding during the legislative session. He emphasized the importance of funding for the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) to decrease long-term costs for towns, noting that 50% of children receiving "Birth to Three" services do not require later special education.

7) Speaker: Congressman Joe Courtney

a) Congressman Courtney provided updates on several federal issues:

i) Federal Budget: The FY 2026 budget omnibus was recently signed into law, covering departments such as DOD, EPA, and Education. However, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is currently under a 10-day patch, effectively causing a partial shutdown.

ii) Electric Boat (EB) Growth: EB is expected to hire 8,000 new employees in the coming year, a growth trend likely to continue into the 2040s. This expansion necessitates regional focus on housing and job training.

iii) Avery Point Campus: Courtney advocated for better utilization of the UConn Avery Point campus, specifically the construction of student housing/dorms to support the engineering workforce needed for the SSN (X) submarine class.

iv) Education & Healthcare: Courtney highlighted the success of career pathway programs in high schools for manufacturing and healthcare (e.g., CNA certification). He also addressed the federal commitment to special education funding and the current debate regarding the future of the Department of Education.

8) Committee and Liaison Reports

a) Executive Committee

i) [Minutes 2/3/26](#)

ii) LOTCIP Application: [Colchester Community and Schools Sidewalk Enhancements \(endorsement\)](#)

MOTION: Endorse the application for Colchester Community and Schools Sidewalk Enhancements for LOTCIP funding. (Passero, Allyn-Gauthier) Motion passed unanimously.

b) Legislative Committee: Discussion included HB 526 regarding fair rent commissions for mobile home parks, HB 5234 concerning short-term rental fees, and SB 6 regarding early voting procedures.

c) Tribal Liaison Representatives: Reported on the 34th anniversary of Foxwoods and 40th anniversary of Mohegan Sun. Updates were provided on a new healthcare facility breaking ground in April and interest in housing development on the reservation.

d) Military Command Representatives:

i) Coast Guard Academy: Announced a spring ribbon cutting for new library archives and work on renewing New London's status as a Coast Guard City. The Academy is celebrating multiple anniversaries, including 50 years of female cadets.

ii) Naval Submarine Base: Noted improvements in delivery timelines for the military industrial base. Ongoing efforts include the Compatible Use Plan and engagement with local school superintendents.

- e) Congressional Office Reports:
Erin McBride (Sen. Murphy's Office) and Noah Carver (Rep. Courtney's Office):
Updates were provided on staff reassignments at Social Security and the IRS,
which may lead to increased wait times for constituents. The deadline for bill
applications is February 24th.
- f) seCTer: Highlighted the Tri-Share Childcare Program pilot in Southeastern CT,
where the state, business, and individual each pay one-third of childcare costs.
- g) Eastern CT Tourism District
- h) SEAT
- i) Regional Water Committee
- j) Regional Emergency Planning Team: The Homeland Security Grant Program for
FY 25 is now open for applications.
- k) Regional Human Services Coordinating Council: Kathleen Stauffer offered to
connect municipalities with human services, such as services for seniors, mental
health, and addiction.
- l) Southeastern CT Cultural Coalition
- m) Health Districts: Discussed free virtual smoking cessation programs starting in
March. Emphasized the importance of municipal newsletters for public
communication and the need for updated emergency contact lists for
dispatchers.
- 9) Executive Director's Report:
 - a) Staffing: SECOG has hired a new stormwater coordinator and is actively
interviewing for housing and a sustainability planner.
 - b) Municipal Services: Assistance is being provided to several towns for building
official, zoning official, and planning roles. Doug Colter (SECOG's building official)
is no longer providing assistance to Montville now that Montville has hired a full
time building official. Doug Colter is available to provide services to more
municipalities.

- c) Housing: Work continues on the regional housing plan and collaboration framework. A statewide housing needs assessment is underway.

10) Old Business

11) New Business:

- a) TIP Amendment: [0172-0560](#) Replace Traffic Control Signals at Various Locations
MOTION: to endorse TIP Amendment (Burt, Rusk) Motion passed unanimously.
- b) TIP Amendment: [0499-202RL](#) Sec 5310 Prgrm-Enhanced Mobility of Seniors/Individuals w/Disabilities-Rural FY24
MOTION: to endorse TIP Amendment (Blanchard, DeVivo) Motion passed unanimously.
- c) SECOG Meeting Structure: Bob Carlson initiated a discussion on making meetings more efficient. Suggestions included creating space for CEO-to-CEO dialogue, standardizing start times, and potentially adjusting the frequency of liaison reports to ensure the most important topics receive adequate time.

12) Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 18, 2026, 8:30 am at SECOG.

13) Adjournment: MOTION: to adjourn the meeting at 9:43 am. (Allyn-Gauthier, Pianka) Motion passed unanimously.