MINUTES OF THE 7/17/19 MEETING OF THE
SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
SCCOG OFFICE, NORWICH, CT

PRESENT: Council Representatives: Glenn Pianka, Bozrah; Art Shilosky, Colchester; Mark Nickerson, East Lyme; Charles Grant, Franklin; Todd Babbitt, Griswold; Timothy Sharkey, Jewett City; Fred Allyn, III; Tom Sparkman, Lisbon; Ron McDaniel, Montville; Mike Urgo, North Stonington; Bob Congdon, Preston; Kevin Lyden, Salem; Cathy Osten, Sprague; Jeff Callahan, Borough of Stonington; Rob Simmons, Town of Stonington; Dan Steward, Waterford. Council Alternates: None. Tribal Liaison: Robert Hayward, Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation; Military Liaison: Adam Wright, U.S. Naval SUBASE. Staff: James Butler, Kate Rattan, Sam Alexander; Sustainable CT Interns: Joey Marsalisi, Sarah Mount. Other: Mike Carroll, Al Fritzsche, Cherise Perkins, SEAT; Jaroslaw Pizunski, Amalgamated Transit Union; Nancy Cowser; seCTer; Ayanti Grant, Congressman Courtney's Office; Ellen Graham, Senator Blumenthal's office; Grayson Wright, CTDOT; Eric Lindquist, OPM; Bob Ross, CT Office of Military Affairs; Jen Granger, UCFS; Deb Monahan, TVCCA; Nancy Cowser, seCTer; Norton Wheeler, SECHA; Catherine Young, CT Airport Authority; Dominick Celtruda; John Jolls; Tom Kasprzak; Tammy Daugherty; Lisa Tepper Bates, Governor's Senior Coordinator for TOD and Housing; Bridget Boucaud, Nick Fomenko, VN Engineers; two unnamed residents of Stonington; one reporter.

1. Call to Order: The Chairman called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

2. Roll Call: A quorum was present.

3. Pledge of Allegiance: The Chairman led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Act on Minutes 6/19/19:

   MOTION: To approve the minutes of 6/19/19 (Congdon, McDaniel). So voted unanimously.

5. Treasurer's Report:

   MOTION: To approve the July Treasurer's Report (Congdon, Osten). So voted unanimously.

6. Public Comment:

   None.

7. Communications:

   The Executive Director stated he had distributed at each place at the table an email sent to Dan Steward from Salem resident George Jackson, proposing a large

air show in southeastern Connecticut as part of any celebration of the 75th anniversary of the end of WWII. Discussion took place of any role the SCCOG might take and if any response needs to be sent to Mr. Jackson. The Executive Director noted that Catherine Young of the Connecticut Airport Authority was in the audience. In response to a question, she said that CAA Executive Director Kevin Dillon and CAA Chairman Tony Sheridan were aware of this proposal, but did not know if the CAA has an official position on it; she did say that Mr. Jackson has been advised that an air show of the magnitude he is proposing would require substantial fundraising. Bob Ross stated as a resident of Salem, he has spoken with Mr. Jackson about this and said that Mr. Jackson does not have a sponsor for an air show at this time. SCCOG members present no action/response was required at this time, and asked Ms. Young to keep the SCCOG informed of any developments associated with this proposal.

8. Guest Speakers:

A. Lisa Tepper Bates, Governor's Senior Coordinator for Housing and TOD re: Regional Housing Task Force

Ms. Tepper Bates introduced herself and said she was here to represent the Governor on some of the work he had asked her to do. She said the Governor is looking for better ways to work with cities and towns. She referenced SCCOG's JLUS project, and said that the region needs to meet the housing demand that the EB ramp up in shipbuilding will create. She said that proposed projects might benefit from State resources and loosening of agency regulation. She said toward that end she is tasked with putting together a task force to do that, work with leadership in the region, bring resources to priorities, and to create a partnership with the State.

Mr. Simmons asked about what is included in the transit part of TOD, noting this region's transit is different than the comprehensive transit systems cities with density had, and Ms. Tepper Bates agreed.

Ms. Osten asked that it be recognized that this region does not have the resources that Fairfield County has regarding the construction of housing.

The Chairman asked how the task force will be populated/who will serve on it. Ms. Tepper Bates responded it would include SCCOG members, along with others who are not elected officials and who might not be associated with government. In a follow-up, the Chairman asked who will ultimately decide who is on the Task Force and Ms. Tepper Bates responded the Governor.

B. Bridget Boucaud, VN Engineers re: Regional Transportation Safety Plan

Ms. Boucaud introduced herself and her colleague Nick Fomenko. She stated that her firm has been retained by CTDOT to create a Regional Transportation Safety

Plan in all of the state's nine regions at no cost to the regions; SCCOG's will be the fifth to be prepared. The goal of these plans is to reduce fatal and injury causing crashes on all roadways in the region. She presented a Power Point presentation which outlined the plan elements and the process to be used during this study.

9. Committee and Liaison Reports

A. Executive Committee

1. Regional Wastewater Management Plan

The Executive Director stated that at the last SCCOG meeting, a presentation on this plan was made by the SCCOG's consultant, Milone and MacBroom. He said he emailed the draft plan last month to all SCCOG members. He commended the work of SCCOG Planner Sam Alexander, who managed this project. The Executive Committee recommends adoption of the plan, and is in agreement that the next step would be to form a SCCOG Regional Wastewater Management Committee.

MOTION: The SCCOG adopts the Regional Wastewater Management Plan (Osten, Grant). So voted unanimously.

2. Regional Ethics Commission

The Executive Director stated that the Executive Committee has taken a re-look at this subject in response to an inquiry from a SCCOG member. At their request, the Executive Director stated that he included in this month's agenda packet work previously generated including his 2012 memorandum proposing how this might be accomplished at the SCCOG.

Mr. Pianka said that his town recently adopted an ethics policy, and would be interested in participating in a regional ethics commission.

Mr. McDaniel said that Montville would also be interested, because right now by ordinance, the Town Council investigates ethics complaints against itself, and this is not a good situation.

Mr. Simmons says that the Town of Stonington has an ethics commission by charter, but said they only populate the commission with members until after a complaint is brought. He posed the question: to what extent does the SCCOG want to adjudicate local issues?

Mr. Lyden said that he felt that if the SCCOG were to establish such a commission, it would possibly incur additional risk and he recommended that the SCCOG's insurance provider be contacted.

Mr. Congdon said that Preston has an ethics policy and ethics commission, and he felt that a regional ethics commission could have merit if a local commission from a small town could refer a difficult case to a regional body.

The Chairman asked staff to keep this item on the agenda, until such time as answers to the issues raised can be addressed.

3. FY 2019 STIP/TIP Amendments

The Executive Committee has recommended in favor of these amendments. Chairman Sparkman noted these will be taken up under New Business.

B. Legislative Committee/Legislative Update

No report.

C. Tribal Liaison Representatives

Mr. Hayward reported that Foxwoods has named Mr. John J. James as their new President and CEO.

D. Military Command Representative

Mr. Wright said that Captain Moore could not attend today's meeting, but hoped to make many more in the future. He said the Captain was energized after the last SCCOG meeting, and that he plans to make the SUBASE a destination.

E. Congressional Office Report

Ayanti Grant from Congressman Courtney's office and Ellen Graham from Senator Blumenthal's office both made reports on the work of their congressional offices.

F. seCTer

Ms. Cowser reported that seCTer would host a developer's roundtable at Mohegan Sun on October 31.

G. Eastern CT Tourism District

No report.

H. SEAT

Mr. Carroll reported that SEAT ridership is up 1% in 2019; there are discussions about the extension of the Jewett City service north to Plainfield; discussing

better transit service to the SUBASE; working on a micro-transit project in Stonington and discussing a similar project in New London; he said the SEAT Board meeting would immediately follow the COG meeting.

I. Regional Water Committee

No report.

J. Regional Emergency Planning Team

The Executive Director reported that there is one outstanding MOA from a NECCOG municipality which needs to be provided before FY 2018 HSG funds can be distributed. The Chairman said he would speak with DEMHS Region 4 Coordinator Mike Caplet about the best way to secure this last MOA.

K. Regional Human Services Coordinating Council

Ms. Monahan reported that the RHSCC will meet on Friday, July 19.

L. SE CT Cultural Coalition

No report.

10. Executive Director's Report

A. The Executive Director said he wished to highlight the first item in his written report to the SCCOG contained in the agenda packet concerning the formula used for distribution of this year's Regional Service Grant (RSG) funding to the state's nine COGs. He said that PA 19-117, the budget implementer bill, includes $4.1M in Regional Service Grant (RSG) funds for the COGs in both years of the biennium, which is a $700,000 increase over what was appropriated this past year. A meeting was held on June 28th at the LOB which he said he was unable to attend, where OPM informed the COGs that the implementer bill, because it referenced CGS 4-66k(c), has been interpreted by OPM legal counsel to mean they must use a distribution formula that would provide the four COGs that merged by December 31, 2013 an additional base payment of $125,000 over the base payment in the same amount that the other five COGs would receive in addition to a per capita funding at the rate of $0.50 per capita. To compound this inequity, the formula described above was applied to the $3.4M in RSG distributed this past fiscal year, and the additional $700,000 this year will be distributed as "supplemental funds" with the doubled base payment factored into the distribution of the supplemental payments, resulting in those four COGs receiving an increase over their FY 2019 RSG averaging $127,250, while four sister non-merger COGs (including SCCOG, which will receive $18,467 less than last FY) experienced a loss in funding from FY 2019 averaging $63,366. He said he discussed this with a staff member at OPM, and let him know that I believed

that using PA 19-117's reference to CGS 4-66k(c) as the reason for continuing a merger bonus created 6 years ago and for the intended purpose of compensating one time the COGs that merged for their costs to do so is specious. In fact, the argument can be made that this statute actually only required a one-time additional $125,000 for the merged COGs, as it states "Any regional council of governments …..that voluntarily consolidated on or before December 31, 2013, shall receive ***a*** payment in the amount of one hundred twenty-five thousand dollars for each such regional planning organization that voluntarily consolidated on or before said date". This merger bonus has not been paid the last couple of years with all of the COGs' concurrence; it is not reasonable to now put the merger bonus back in play. The OPM staff member agreed to discuss his call with Undersecretary Jonathan Harris, and will ask the Undersecretary if it makes sense for him to write and request an interpretation from the Attorney General on this issue. OPM said they had considered doing so themselves, but did not wish to hold up the sending of the RSG agreements to the COGs. Since he has not heard back from OPM, the Executive Director said he wanted to make sure that the SCCOG approved of him making such a request; SCCOG members present indicated their concurrence and asked that he copy Senator Osten on this letter.

11. Old Business

A. Request to Reconsider TAP Grant Applications

The Chairman stated that he wanted to clarify this agenda item as it is not to reconsider the prioritization of the three projects that the SCCOG had prioritized last month, but to see if the SCCOG wished to add the Stonington sidewalk project as a fourth priority to the list previously submitted to CTDOT. He said he has discussed this with Mr. Simmons who concurred this was the action being requested.

MOTION: That the SCCOG inform CTDOT that they wish to add as a fourth priority to the list of TAP grant applications previously submitted 4) Town of Stonington, Sidewalk Gap Closure on Route 1 in Pwcatuck$727,040 requested; $908,800 total project cost (Urgo, Steward).

Mr. Simmons thanked the SCCOG, stated he had prepared a detailed presentation he would not now make, and noted that there were two Stonington residents in the audience who arrived after the Public Comment section of the agenda so could not speak but who supported this project.

The motion was then voted upon and unanimously approved.

12. New Business

A. FY 2018-2019 STIP/TIP Amendments

- 5307C, 0414-XXXX, SEAT, Norwich, Replace 2 2007 40ft Buses FY 19, ACQ 2019, $1,162,000, New Project.
- 5307C, 0414-XXXX, SEAT, Norwich, Facility Improvements at Terminal FY 19, CON 2019, $100,000, New Project.
- 5307C, 0414-XXXX, SEAT, Norwich, New Admin/Maint Facility – Facility Assessment FY 19, OTH 2019, $100,000, New Project.
- 5307C, 0414-XXXX, SEAT, Norwich, Replace Six 2007 35ft Buses FY 19, ACQ 2019, $4,090,000 – **Delete Project.**

MOTION: To approve of the FY 2018-2019 STIP/TIP amendments (Congdon, Osten). So voted unanimously.

13. Next Meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for September 18, 2019.

14. Adjournment:

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 9:42 a.m. (Nickerson, Osten). So voted unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Fred Allyn III, Secretary