MINUTES OF 10/16/19 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; Keith Hedrick, City of Groton; Timothy Sharkey, Jewett City; Fred Allyn, III; Tom Sparkman, Lisbon; Ron McDaniel, Montville; Michael Passero, New London; Mike Urgo, North Stonington; Bob Congdon, Preston; Cathy Osten, Sprague; Jeff Callahan, Borough of Stonington; Rob Simmons, Town of Stonington; Dan Steward, Waterford. Council Alternates: John Burt, Town of Groton; John Salomone, Norwich; Jim Rivers, Windham. Tribal Liaison: Chuck Bunnell, Mohegan Tribe; Military Liaison: Captain Todd Moore, Adam Wright, U.S. Naval SUBASE; LCDR Dan Stefler, USCGA. Staff: James Butler, Amanda Kennedy, Kate Rattan. Other: Ayanti Grant, Congressman Courtney's Office; Mike Carroll, Al Fritzsche, Cherise Perkins, Deb Monahan, TVCCA; Nancy Cowser, seCTer; Wendy Bury, SECT Cultural Coalition; Representative Holly Cheeseman; Terry Jackman, Eversource; Tom Kasprzak; Mark Oefinger.

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 those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

   The Chairman then wished all SCCOG members well who were running for re-election, and recognized the four members not running for re-election: Betsy Petrie (Lebanon), Rob Simmons (Town of Stonington), Dan Steward (Waterford), and Bob Congdon (Preston).

4. Act on Minutes 9/18/19:

   MOTION: To approve the minutes of 9/18/19 (McDaniel, Osten). So voted unanimously.

5. Treasurer's Report:

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

6. Public Comment:

   None.

7. Communications:

   The Executive Director highlighted two items in a letter from OPM Secretary McCaw which was contained in the agenda packet.

8. Presentations:

A. Regional Bike-Pedestrian Plan, Kate Rattan, Planner III/Transportation Program Manager

Ms. Rattan provided the background and highlights of the draft Regional Bike-Pedestrian Plan. After her presentation, Ms. Rattan answered questions from SCCOG members. The Executive Director stated that Ms. Rattan did a terrific job in managing this project, resulting in the region's first bike-pedestrian plan.

MOTION: To approve of the SCCOG Regional Bike-Pedestrian Plan pending receipt of any further public comment by the close of the public comment period (Simmons, Grant). So voted unanimously.

B. JLUS Implementation Project – Frank Fish, BFJ Planning

The Chairman announced this presentation has been rescheduled to the November meeting, due to Mr. Fish's unavailability today.

9. Committee and Liaison Reports

A. Executive Committee

1. FY 2019 SCCOG Annual Report

The Executive Director summarized the Annual Report which has now been sent to OPM.

2. FY 2018 STIP/TIP Amendments

This item is taken up under New Business.

3. Proposed Amendment to SCCOG Sick Leave Policy

The Chairman stated that the Executive Committee was recommending a change in staff sick leave policy to add a buy-back provision, and asked for a motion to approve.

MOTION: To amend the SCCOG sick leave policy to add: "Employees leaving the Council's staff after ten (10) years of continuous service shall be paid for one-half (1/2) of their accrued sick leave, up to a maximum of sixty (60) accumulated sick days. Upon the death of an employee having ten (10) years of continuous service, the employee's designated beneficiary shall be paid for one-half (1/2) of their accrued sick leave, up to a maximum of sixty (60) accumulated sick days." (Osten, McDaniel).

Under discussion, Mr. Congdon asked how many sick days employees now earn a year. The Executive Director responded that employees accrue one sick day per month, or 12 per year. Mr. Congdon stated that this is higher than many SCCOG member municipalities. The Executive Director responded that he had only reviewed two SCCOG municipal policies, but that it was less than or equal to what the state's other COGs provide their employees.

Mr. McDaniel asked if sick leave could be taken in hourly increments. The Executive Director responded that this is allowed.

The motion was then voted upon and approved unanimously.

B. Legislative Committee/Legislative Update

Mr. Grant spoke to possible legislation regarding the overspending of budgets by Boards of Education; he said that last session, Senator Osten had introduced such a bill, but it did not pass. He said that CCM did not endorse this legislation, and wondered if the SCCOG might wish to make it part of its 2020 Legislative Agenda.

Mr. Urgo suggested that any SCCOG proposal on this issue be thoughtful, so as not to pit Boards of Selectmen against Boards of Education.

Mr. McDaniel raised the issue of Special Education costs, and how that can cause budgets to be overspent.

Mr. Rivers cited examples form Windham where budgets were overspent by the Board of Education, and how the Town reacted to this.

Mr. Allyn said that this issue should be taken up by the Legislative Committee. The Executive Director stated that the Executive Committee will stand up the Legislative Committee after the November elections, and he asked anyone interested in serving on this committee to contact him.

Mr. Hedrick said there needs to be some mechanism for the accountability of Boards of Education.

Mr. Pianka discussed his examples of education budget overspending in Bozrah, and Mr. Simmons recounted experiences in Stonington.

Mr. Shilosky said this is not much of an issue in Colchester, where the same CFO serves both the Town and the Board of Education.

The Chairman sated that he would ask the Legislative Committee to recommend possible legislation to address this issue.

Ms. Osten said she wished to bring up another matter concerning a reduction in renter's rebates.

C. Tribal Liaison Representatives

Mr. Bunnell reported on the swearing in of three new Tribal Councilors; and expressed appreciation to outgoing Preston First Selectman Congdon for keeping the Preston Riverwalk project on track.

Mr. Simmons suggested that the SCCOG recognize the Mohegan Tribe's Mark Brown for his service as his term on the Tribal Council had ended; Mr. Bunnell stated Mr. Brown was in a special election and could be returning to the Tribal Council. The Chairman said that he will discuss Mr. Simmons' suggestion at the next Executive Committee meeting.

D. Military Command Representative

Captain Moore reported on a two year study of contaminated water at the SUBASE, and on ongoing efforts to improve communications with residents of off-base housing. He also encouraged towns to participate with their Superintendents of Schools on the Regional Military Council.

LCDR Dan Stefler reported that Academy Superintendent, RADM William Kelley, hoped to attend a SCCOG meeting in the near future; reported that the USCG Barque Eagle will spend this winter in New London.

E. Congressional Office Report

Ms. Grant reported on Congressman Courtney's recent work.

F. seCTer

Ms. Cowser reported on the New England Real Estate conference that seCTer will host on October 31, and their Annual Meeting on November 21.

G. Eastern CT Tourism District

Mr. Hedrick stated that statutes require all 42 towns in eastern Connecticut to have a representative on Tourism District board. He urged those towns not having appointed a representative to do so.

H. SEAT

Mr. Carroll stated ridership was up 8% in the first quarter, and reminded that the Board would be meeting immediately following the SCCOG meeting.

I. Regional Water Committee

No report.

J. Regional Emergency Planning Team

No report

K. Regional Human Services Coordinating Council

No report.

L. SE CT Cultural Coalition

Ms. Bury mentioned the new statute allowing the formation of local cultural districts.

10. Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director stated that he had received from Teresa Jackman of Eversourse a request to publicize the dates of upcoming PURA hearings where Eversource's performance will be evaluated. He said the three remaining dates are October 28 in Windsor, November 12 in Fairfield, and November 21 in Killingly.

Mr. Pianka mentioned double poles being left in the right of way and said the SCCOG might want to raise this issue with PURA. Mr. Callahan said that the Borough of Stonington has also experienced this problem.

11. Old Business

Mr. Grant reminded that at his request, the Executive Director had emailed all SCCOG members about the possibility of SCCOG member municipalities sharing grant writing services. He asked that this email be re-sent to see if a larger response than that which had been generated to date might occur.

12. New Business

A. FY 2018 STIP/TIP Amendments

- STPNL, 0044-0154, CT 156, East Lyme, Rehab BR 06026 o/Niantic River, CON, 2020, $5,496,000, Add Phase
- HIPA, 0044-0154, CT 156, East Lyme, Rehab BR 06026 o/Niantic River, CON, 2020, $14,124,000, Add Phase
- REP, 0044-0154, CT 156, East Lyme, Rehab BR 06026 o/Niantic River, CON, 2020, $980,000, Add Phase

- NHPP, 0172-0490, Various, District 2, Replace Highway Signs & Supports, PD, 2020, $100,000, New Project
- NHPP, 0172-0490, Various, District 2, Replace Highway Signs & Supports, FD, 2020, $250,000, New Project

MOTION: To approve of the FY 2018 STIP/TIP Amendments (Steward, Congdon). So voted unanimously.

Mr. Simmons noted this would be his last SCCOG meeting as Stonington First Selectman, and he thanked members for their help and support over the past four years.

13. Next Meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for November 20, 2019.

14. Adjournment:

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 9:40 a.m. (Grant, Shilosky). So voted unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Fred Allyn III, Secretary