MINUTES OF 4/15/20 MEETING OF THE

SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

HELD VIA ZOOM

PRESENT: Council Representatives: Mary Bylone, Colchester; Mark Nickerson, East Lyme; Charles Grant, Franklin; Keith Hedrick, City of Groton; Todd Babbitt, Griswold; Kevin Cwikla, Lebanon; Fred Allyn, III, Ledyard; Tom Sparkman, Lisbon; Ron McDaniel, Montville; Michael Passero, New London; Mike Urgo, North Stonington; Sandra Allyn Gauthier, Preston; Cheryl Blanchard, Sprague; Jeff Callahan, Borough of Stonington; Danielle Chesebrough, Town of Stonington. Council Alternates: John Burt, Town of Groton; John Salomone, Norwich. Tribal Liaison: None. Military Liaison: Captain Todd Moore, Adam Wright, U.S. Naval SUBASE; RADM William Kelly, LCDR Dan Stepler, USCGA. Staff: James Butler, Amanda Kennedy, Kate Rattan. Other: Patrick McCormack, Uncas Health District; Mike Carroll, Al Fritsche, Cherise Perkins, SEAT; Ayanti Grant, Congressman Courtney's Office; Brianna DeVivo, Senator Murphy's Office; Grayson Wright, CTDOT; Erik Shortell, FHWA; Deb Monahan, TVCCA; Nancy Cowser, seCTer; Wendy Bury, SE CT Cultural Coalition; D. Denfeld; Dominick Celtruda; one reporter.

1. Call to Order: Chairman Nickerson opened the meeting at 8:30 a.m.

2. Roll Call: A quorum was present.

3. Pledge of Allegiance: The Chairman said we would dispense with the Pledge today.

4. Act on Minutes of 3/18/20:

   MOTION: To approve the minutes of 3/18/20 (Allyn, Grant). So voted unanimously.

5. Treasurer's Report:

   MOTION: To approve the April Treasurer's Report (Cwikla, Grant). So voted unanimously.

6. Public Comment: – none.

7. Committee and Liaison Reports:

   A. Executive Committee

   1. FY 2021 SCCOG Member Dues

   The Executive Director reported that he had recommended to the Chairman and the Executive Committee that SCCOG member FY 2021 dues be suspended or significantly reduced due to the impact that the pandemic was having on towns in terms of decreased

revenues. He said the Executive Committee thanked him for this suggestion, but rejected it as not necessary and they recognized the importance of the SCCOG during the region's response to this health emergency.

2. FY 2018 STIP/TIP Amendments – to be taken up under Agenda item 10. A., New Business.

8. Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director reported on a teleconference he attended yesterday with DECD, DPH, the Chairman of CADH, and representatives of the CT Campgrounds Owners Association, who wanted to open campgrounds in the state as early as today, April 15. This is of concern to the state's Directors of Health, and said he was asked to be on the call by DPH's Lori Mathieu to provide a COG/municipal perspective. He said he had discussed this with Uncas Health Director Patrick McCormack, who in turn had heard from a couple of municipal CEOs about this, and he relayed their concerns on this call. Ms. Mathieu had requested that the Association provide the state more information, and that he anticipated there would be a follow-up call. He asked the SCCOG members present if they concurred with his expression of concern over large populations moving from one area to another due to the impact this could have on the region's health care systems and first responders, and those present concurred.

The Executive said SCCOG staff was still working from home, and that major programs are still being advanced. He said staff members file weekly work plans which he and the Deputy Director review, and weekly staff ZOOM meetings are being held. He said staff is looking for new ways to assist the SCCOG member towns, and he mentioned a series of land use commissioner instructional videos being prepared by SCCOG Planner Justin LaFountain.

The Executive Director stated that on a CTCOG call yesterday, OPM staff suggested that levels of municipal aid and the COG's Regional Service Grant is uncertain, but for now, the COGs could budget for the same amount of RSG as last year.

The Executive Director reported on a communication he had received from Community Foundation of Eastern CT President/CEO Maryam Elahi, who is suggesting the formation of community committees and the designation of a regional Long Term Recovery Coordinator, to assist those in need as the region comes out of this health crisis. SCCOG members present expressed support for this concept and for the SCCOG's involvement.

The Executive Director stated that CTRides provides support for employers looking to start/improve teleworking for their organization. He invited any towns wishing to contact CTRides to reach out to him or SCCOG Transportation Program Manager Kate Rattan, and they would be happy to make that connection.

The Chairman then asked the SCCOG to take up Item 10. New Business before Old Business, to allow more time for pandemic response discussion.

9. New Business

A. FY 2018 STIP/TIP Amendments

- **0170-3563**, Statewide Trans Demand Mgmt, 2021

MOTION: To approve of the FY 2018 STIP/TIP amendments (Grant, Hedrick). So voted unanimously.

10. Old Business

A. COVID-19 Response Discussion

The Chairman recognized Mr. Salomone who asked for a discussion as to what towns were doing in response to the Governor's Executive Order 7S, concerning the deferral of property taxes or provision of low interest rates on property tax principal owed. Discussion ensued. The Chairman asked the Executive Director to survey SCCOG member municipalities on this issue.

The Chairman next asked Mr. McCormack if he had anything he wished to report. Mr. McCormack provided additional insight on the campground opening issue. He said that his "ask" to the State is that this decision be made in concert with the impacted municipalities and licensing agencies.

Mr. Callahan pointed out that if the pandemic continues much longer, then an analogous situation might occur when boaters start returning to marinas.

Ms. Bylone said she was receiving increasing pressure from her Town's Board of Finance and members of the public to hold a referendum on the budget, even if in September, despite the Governor's Executive Order eliminating the need to do so. Mr. Grant suggested that this issue be added to the survey of SCCOG members that the Executive Director will be emailing out on property taxes.

Ms. Cowser asked to be recognized and said that seCTer is providing counseling for small businesses.

11. Next Meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for May 27, 2020.

12. Adjournment:

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 9:32 a.m. (Urgo, Grant). So voted unanimously.