SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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

Executive Committee
October 7, 2025
Draft Minutes

Present: Via Zoom: Cheryl Blanchard (Chairman), Dan Cunningham, Bob Carlson, Rob Brule, John Salomone. In Person: Thomas DeVivo

Additional attendees: SECOG: Amanda Kennedy, Kate Rattan (Zoom), Taylor Lussier (in-person)

1) Call to Order:
   a) The meeting was called to order by Cheryl Blanchard, Chairman at 9 AM.
2) Roll Call:
   a) Ms. Kennedy determined that a quorum was present.
3) Program Updates:
   a) Staffing: Ms. Kennedy stated that SECOG has been down a staff person since Nicole Haggerty left last year for Colchester, and Dan Robinson left in August for the town of Branford to be assistant planner. Two new planners (Planner 1) have been hired. Taylor Lussier was hired as a Municipal Programs Specialist. Taylor has a bachelor's in anthropology and a graduate certificate in community planning. She comes with two years of municipal experience from the Voluntown land use department. Taylor will focus on municipal services, legislative issues, and contract projects (including liaising with municipal elected officials/staff and assisting with plans of conservation development and planning regulatory tasks). Dominic Anziano (Planner 1) was hired. He has a master's in environmental engineering from UConn and experience with brownfields. He is currently supporting transportation and regional planning but will move to regional planning. Lana Harrison gave notice that she is leaving to go to NVCOG. The

COG is currently hiring one other planner dedicated to transportation to support that program. Once this hiring is complete, the COG will be fully staffed, pending any additional funding from HB5002 for housing and solid waste.

b) Regional Plan of Conservation and Development: Helen is currently setting up meetings with the points of contact that towns have sent her.

c) Defense - DCIP Groton Water Main Grant: The $5 million grant for a water main replacement in Groton, serving the submarine base, has been inked. This is a significant achievement as it is the first time in the regional planning side that the COG has secured capital implementation money for an infrastructure project, following previous planning, design, and engineering funds administered while working with Groton Utilities.

d) After-Hours Building Official Coverage: Ms. Kennedy gave a heads-up regarding additional costs for after-hours building official coverage, which was not arranged for when Doug Colter was hired. Due to his commute distance, Mr. Colter is not able to be available for emergency calls after hours (which are infrequent in small towns). Ms. Kennedy has been working with the City of Norwich to be able to access their established on-call program, but the retainer for this service will be $13,000 a year (plus 3 hours minimum overtime for actual calls) It was suggested that the hourly costs for emergency calls could be paid by the participating towns that call the official in (e.g., $300 if the official is there for two hours in Franklin). Doug Colter will be the one to receive the calls. John Salomone noted the difficulty and lengthy process (over a year) of establishing this agreement due to requiring union approvals on interlocal agreements.

4) <u>2025-2028 TIP Amendments:</u>

a) GROTON Bridge improvements (0058-0350): This amendment was held for next month. Ms. Rattan stated that because the interstate bridge project goes

through the reservoir, it requires coordination with Keith Hedrick and Groton Utilities.

5) PRESTON – Poquetanuck Heritage Trail (0113-0114): Ms. Rattan recommended this project for approval. This is a TA-funded trail project that starts at Lincoln Park Road and includes the replacement of a local bridge that is in poor condition. The total project cost is $5.4 million. Right of Way acquisition is scheduled for 2026, with construction anticipated in 2028.
6) MOTION: to recommend that the SECOG MPO Board endorse the TIP amendment for the Preston Poquetanuck Heritage Trail (0113-0114). (DeVivo, Cunningham) *Motion passed unanimously.*
7) New Business:
   a) Adoption of Safety Performance Targets (Resolution) (Targets):

8) MOTION: to recommend SECOG MPO Board adoption of Resolution 26-3 endorsing targets for safety performance measures established by CT DOT (DeVivo, Cunningham) *Motion passed unanimously.*

a) LOTCIP Application for Funding- Stonington Bicycle Facility - US Route 1 (Memo):

9) MOTION: to recommend the board endorse the Application for Stonington Bicycle Facility – US Route 1 for LOTCIP funding. (DeVivo, Cunningham) *Motion passed unanimously.*

a) 2026 Meeting Schedule (schedule): Ms. Kennedy shared the draft schedule. The May COG meeting is moved up one week to avoid the Coast Guard Academy graduation. The November Executive Committee meeting was moved up one day to avoid conflict with elections. Mr. Brule noted that the December 2025 Executive Committee meeting, conflicts with the CCM convention (December 2nd). Members concurred with moving that meeting to Monday, December 1st. Mr. DeVivo asked whether the meetings should remain at 9 AM and 8:30 AM.

Members confirmed that the Executive Committee meeting time should remain at 9:00 AM, and that 8:30 is probably better for the full board meeting.

b) Passing of Dick Erickson: Ms. Kennedy shared that former SCRPA/SECOG Executive Director Dick Erickson passed away in February and that a column was printed in The Day last weekend noting has passing. She shared an in memoriam statement prepared by former Executive Director Jim Butler. Mr. Butler would like a moment of silence at the next meeting and plans to attend. Ms. Kennedy asked for other thoughts on how to recognize Mr. Erickson's passing, and Mr. Brule suggested naming the conference room in his honor. Ms. Kennedy will work to arrange a commemorative sign.

10) Potential Speakers:

a) Comptroller Scanlon/CT DEEP: Comptroller Scanlon is currently scheduled for the November meeting. Staff are lined up for the October meeting.

b) United Way of SE CT: Scott Umbel, ALICE Report An inquiry was received from the United Way of Southeastern Connecticut asking to present the updated ALICE report (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed). The committee agreed this would be helpful as the report frequently changes and elected officials should be up to date. Staff will keep them on the speaker list.

c) Senior Resources Area Agency on Aging: Ms. Kennedy stated that the City of New London is having issues with its elderly services coordinator receiving many calls from people in other towns who were told no resources were available. Staff proposed asking Senior Resources Area Agency on Aging to present to the full board to provide a refresher on available services and better assist towns in referring elderly individuals. Members agreed that this would be helpful.

11) Adjournment:

a) MOTION: to adjourn (DeVivo, Cunningham). Motion passed unanimously.