SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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

Minutes of the December 17, 2025, Meeting of the Southeastern CT Council of Governments

Present:

Bozrah	Glenn Pianka	New London	Michael Passero
Colchester	-	North Stonington	Bob Carlson
East Lyme	Dan Cunningham	Norwich	
Franklin	Judi Novosad	Preston	Sandra Allyn-Gauthier
Griswold	Tina Falck	Salem	Sue Spang
Jewett City	Laurie Sorder	Sprague	Cheryl Blanchard
City of Groton	Jill Rusk	Town of Stonington	Bill Middleton
Town of Groton	John Burt Juliette Parker	Stonington Borough	-
Lebanon	Kathleen Smith	Waterford	Rob Brule
Ledyard	-	Windham	Tom Devivo
Lisbon	Tom Sparkman	SEAT Rep (MPO)	Tom Sparkman
Montville	-	CT DOT Rep (MPO)	-Jennifer Pacacha
Military Liaisons:	US Coast Guard Academy: RADM Gregory Rothrock, Tori Sparacino New London SUBASE: Captain Craig Litty, Steve Sadlowski		
Tribal Affiliates:	Mohegan Tribe: Rodney Butler Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation: Chuck Bunnell		

Additional Attendees: SECOG: Amanda Kennedy, Taylor Lussier, Wendy Leclair, Kate Rattan, Helen Zincavage, Dave Cook, Jennifer Lindo, Dominic Anziano, Avery Holzworth Office of Sen. Murphy: Erin McBride. Office of Sen. Blumenthal: Ellen Grant. Office of Rep. Courtney: Noah Carver seCTer: Paul Whitescarver. SEAT: Mike Carroll. Eversource: Rebecca Spurrier. Arc Eastern CT: Kathleen Stauffer.

1) Call to Order:
   a) The meeting was called to order by Cheryl Blanchard at 8:40 am.
   b) MOTION: To add the annual approval of the authorization of the Treasurer and

Chairman to adopt bank resolutions to New Business on the Agenda (Passero, DeVivo). Motion passed unanimously.

2) Roll Call:

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

3) Act on Minutes of the November 19th meeting *Action Item*

a) MOTION: To approve the November meeting minutes (Sparkman, Burt). Motion passed unanimously.

4) Treasurer's Report *Action Item*

a) MOTION: To approve the Treasurer's Report (Sparkman, Carlson). Motion passed unanimously.

5) Communications

6) Public Comment:

a) Eversource (Rebecca Spurrier) advised members to monitor emails for coverage updates during the holidays in case of a significant storm.

7) Speaker

8) Committee and Liaison Reports

a) Executive Committee

i) Meeting Summary 12/1/25

a) A summary of the Executive Committee meeting held on December 1st, 2025, was provided. Though the committee did not formally recommend two agenda items, those present advised bringing them to the full board.

b) LOTCIP Final Design Submission Endorsement- New London – Williams/Broad St (Memo)

MOTION: to endorse the application for New London – Williams/ Broad St for LOTCIP (Sparkman, Smith) Motion passed unanimously.

b) Legislative Committee – Adopted Legislative Agenda 2026

Ms. Kennedy mentioned that a date had been selected for SECOG's upcoming legislative meeting: Tuesday, January 6th at 9 AM.

c) Tribal Liaison Representatives: Rodney Butler reflected on a great year: the Great Wolf Lodge opened in May and has increased foot traffic and brought new families to the region. He highlighted that Hell's Kitchen season 2 was filmed at Foxwoods and throughout the region, including the Coast Guard Academy and Mystic. Mr. Bunnell also addressed a key legislative priority for the coming year: securing the full extension of the public funding bill/refunding for towns, which was originally set at $550 million but has been reduced to about $30 or $40 million.

d) Military Command Representatives:

a) Coast Guard: Lieutenant Greg Rothrock reported that he has been with the team for five months. He shared that the Coast Guard Academy recently played its annual rivalry game at Fenway, drawing over 10,000 fans, marking the largest attendance record ever for a Coast Guard football game. The "one big beautiful bill act" is bringing $380 million for investment and modernization to the academy, which first moved to its current location in 1932. Planning is underway to bring what is projected to be the largest and most advanced pool to the state of Connecticut within the next three years, which will also serve as a public resource. The investment includes critical maintenance projects and a new academic building focused on STEM, the first new academic building since 1974. This work will likely lead to an influx of construction workers and road traffic, prompting excitement to collaborate with SECOG on traffic calming efforts on Route 32.

b) Naval Submarine Base: Units are being brought home this week for the holidays, though a few folks remain on deployment. The Pier 31 Extension Project has begun, which will make the base the second pier to support the Block Five Virginia Class Submarine and the first pier available for the Block Five deliveries.

e) Congressional Office Reports:

i) Rep. Courtney's Office: Noah Carver reported that three of the 12 appropriation bills have passed, with no further movement anticipated this year. He highlighted the upcoming BUILD Grant, a surface transportation grant. The office is collecting potential projects for the reauthorization of WRDA and surface transportation next year. The biggest caseload portfolios are taxes, social security, veterans affairs, and immigration. Agency response times are decreasing. The IRS is phasing out paper checks immediately via executive order, which may affect older residents receiving social security, although carve-outs exist. The office will disseminate information regarding the process of exemption. The office will be closed from December 24th to January 5th.

ii) Sen. Murphy's Office: Erin McBride encouraged municipalities to apply for EPA brownfields grants. They offered letters of support for federal grant applications. The 10th annual essay contest will officially launch in January. The office will check emails during their holiday break.

iii) Sen. Blumenthal's Office: Ellen Grant noted that members should expect letters from their office regarding WRDA in the new year, advising of a tight turnaround.

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f) seCTer: seCTer is partnering with Electric Boat and the Eastern Connecticut Defense Industry Partnership and is addressing storefronts displaced from the Crystal Mall redevelopment in Waterford. This partnership aims to keep Electric Boat—a major employer—at the forefront of community efforts. During the last fiscal year, seCTer provided approximately 2.4 million in small business grants and loans, offering non–traditional loans and grants up to $25,000.

g) Eastern CT Tourism District

h) SEAT: Ridership dropped slightly in November. SEAT is working with the state on facility improvements and the purchase of two electric buses. The budget cycle is challenging as federal COVID relief funds are expiring, shifting reliance primarily

back to state funds. They advised that the microtransit/small transit pilot grants for New London and Groton will expire at the end of the fiscal year. The Waterford microtransit service will end this month (December) due to grant expiration. SEAT services will end at 8:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve and there will be no service on Christmas Day or New Year's Day.

i) Regional Water Committee

j) Regional Emergency Planning Team: New officials were welcomed as members of the regional emergency planning team. An annual Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is required for the security program, and action is needed for those who received an email yesterday. Scott Belleville (Putnam Emergency Director/Fire Marshal) has replaced the retired Mike Licata as the new hair of the monthly steering committee. Members were reminded to submit their reimbursement documentation for the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) for fiscal year 24 before the close of the year.

k) Regional Human Services Coordinating Council: Kathleen Stauffer provided an overview of what the Regional Human Services Council has to offer for assistance to municipalities.

l) Southeastern CT Cultural Coalition

m) Health Districts

n) Solid Waste Committee: A reminder was given that wrapping paper is able to be recycled.

9) Executive Director's Report:

a) Amanda Kennedy announced two budgets for consideration: FY27 and an amendment to FY26. Funding received through SS PA 25-1 enables SECOG to staff housing and technical assistance or storm water management; SECOG is recommending the funding be used for storm water management assistance.

b) Staffing: Two new staff members will join in early January. SECOG is currently seeking a resilience and sustainability coordinator and two staff members

focused on housing and storm water, following the departure of Deb Pierce and Emily Bigl.

c) Transportation Updates: The draft Safety Action Plan, which includes improvement recommendations for all towns, is expected to be ready for circulation by mid-January. SECOG received several pre-applications for new projects during the LOTCIP solicitation last month. Work continues with ConnDOT on the New London Route 32 corridor study and gathering information for the East Lyme and Norwich projects.

d) Regional Planning: Eight letters of support were issued in the last month for four different grant programs, showing significant interest in the recreational trails program. SECOG is preparing an application for state funds (DCRF program) for recommendations to reduce flood risk on the Yantic River and may reapply for the FEMA BRIC grant.

e) Storm Water: A well-attended hybrid event on setting up the storm water authority was held at the New London Community Recreation Center, in partnership with the City.

f) Animal Control: A meeting about animal control services was held for the municipalities losing NECCOG animal control services. A map illustrating which towns provide services and who provides them will be sent out.

g) Staff Introductions: SECOG Staff introduced themselves and their roles.

10) Old Business

11) New Business

a) Approval of FY 2027 Budget

The proposed FY 2027 budget includes a 3% increase for all staff and accounts for the two additional positions enabled by the SS PA 25-1 bill. The budget allocates $100,000 for capital improvements to the building (addressing issues with the roof and HVAC units) and increased spending on computer equipment,

subscriptions, and cybersecurity. It also includes an $83,000 return to reserve as a contingency buffer.

MOTION: to approve FY 2027 Budget (Carlson, Sparkman). So voted unanimously.

b) Approval of FY 2026 Budget

An amendment was put forth to reflect an additional $300,000+ requested from OPM for the remainder of the fiscal year. This funding is related to the housing bill, and Helen Zincavage and Amanda Kennedy will develop a work plan for the use of these funds by the end of January.

MOTION: to approve FY 2026 Budget (Passero, Tom). So voted unanimously.

c) Appintment of EWIB CEO Council Designee: Tina Falck. So voted unanimously.

d) Appointment/Ratification of Nominating Committee

MOTION: to ratify the nominating committee comprised of Tom Sparkman, Michael Passero, and Rob Brule (Sparkman/Singh). So voted unanimously.

e) Election of the 2026 Executive Committee

MOTION: to appoint new members of the Executive Committee as follows: Chairman, Bob Carlson; Vice Chairman, Dan Cunningham; Treasurer, Tom DeVivo; Secretary, Lenny Bunnell; Rep at Large, John Salomone; Rep at Large, Cheryl Blanchard (Brule, Passero). So voted unanimously.

f) Bank Resolution Authorization

MOTION: to authorize SECOG to adopt bank resolutions related to check signing (Burt, Sparkman). So voted unanimously.

12)Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 21, 2026, 8:30 am at SECOG.

13)Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 9:28 am.