



Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments

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Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments and Lower Connecticut River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization

DRAFT MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, July 24, 2019

RiverCOG Members:

Chester: Lauren Gister *
Clinton: Christine Goupil *
Cromwell: Anthony Salvatore *
Deep River: Angus McDonald, Jr. *
Durham: Laura Francis *
East Haddam: Emmett Lyman *
East Hampton: Jeremy DeCarli *
Essex: Norm Needleman
Haddam: Lizz Milardo
Killingworth: Cathy Iino *
Lyme: Steve Mattson
Middlefield: Ed Bailey *
Middletown: Dan Drew
Old Lyme: Bonnie Reemsnyder * (10:05)
Old Saybrook: Carl Fortuna *
Portland: Susan Bransfield
Westbrook: Noel Bishop

MPO Members:

Middlesex Chamber of Commerce: Darlene Briggs * (until 9:55)
Estuary Transit District: Joe Comerford *
Middletown Area Transit: Lisa Seymour *

Others Present:

Pat Bandzes, Eversource
Cathy Lezon, Eversource
Andy Brydges, Eversource
Dan Giungi, CCM
Eric Shortell, Federal Highway Administration
Courtney Burkes, Westbrook Senior Center Director
Jake Manke, DEHMS Region 2

Staff Present:

Sam Gold
Robert Haramut
Eliza LoPresti

RiverCOG

Torrance Downes
Dan Bourret
Brian Higgins
Catherine Xi
Mackenzie Pias

1. Call to Order, Roll Call/Introductions, Public Speaking

At 9:10 Andy Brydges from Eversource began his presentation (agenda Item #2) though there was not yet a quorum and the meeting was not yet called to order. After that presentation the meeting was called to order at 9:37 by Chairman Salvatore.

Roll was called by Sam Gold, Executive Director.

Mr. Fortuna moved to add agenda item 4d) Website budget increase from \$14,000 to \$18,675. Second by Ms. Francis; vote was unanimous in favor.

Jake Manke – New Region 2 DEMHS Field Coordinator

Mr. Manke discussed some things that he will be working on in Region 2. He asked that CEOs use the web platform to put information in regarding hurricane preparedness and that they let him know when they are on vacation so he doesn't try to contact during that time. The CT State Information Center is now back under DEMHS, and Mr. Manke has sent out a request for large-scale events happening in the region so that the critical infrastructure management team can do security and pre-planning. He explained that each region has a regional information liaison officer (RILO) whose job is to talk to local PDs and bring local issues to CTIC to help solve crimes. This year's emergency planning preparedness initiative (EPPI) will have a regional delivery between November and December. Mr. Manke is creating a cyber security team for the region that will focus on recovery, not only the incident. The Homeland Security Grant program has been released for Region 2.

There are a significant number of towns that have not submitted school exercise logs (fire & lockdown drills, etc.). Those need to be submitted by July 1 in order to be eligible for state funding if a school is being updated or built. Local emergency operation plans were due Feb. 1; out of 30 towns only 11 have been submitted.

Ice dam training will occur at the Guilford FD on 8/9 from 1:00 – 3:00 and the Haddam VFD on 8/8 from 1:00 – 3:00 and 6:00 – 8:00. The DEMHS website has a training calendar. Mr. Manke then discussed the cyber security reporting forms that were received.

Public Speaking: Courtney Burkes, Westbrook Senior Center Director, and Catherine Xi, SustainableCT Fellow, created a brochure for senior citizens outlining transit options including fees and schedules. She asked for feedback or suggestions on where to publish this. Libraries and town websites were suggested.

2. Andy Brydges, Eversource – Municipal Energy Efficiencies Opportunities

Mr. Brydges gave a presentation on opportunities for energy efficiency programs through partnership with Eversource. He used the town of Montville as an example, showing what their high school building has achieved in this realm. It was suggested that this presentation be repeated for regional school superintendents.

3. LCRVMPO Business

a. Approval of Minutes of the June 26, 2019 LCRVCOG & MPO Meeting

Upon motion of Ms. Francis, seconded by Mr. Fortuna, it was unanimously voted to approve the June 26, 2019 Minutes of the LCRVCOG & MPO Meeting.

b. New Haven TMA Transportation Alternatives Program Review & Prioritization

Upon motion of Ms. Gister and second of Ms. Francis, it was unanimously voted to table item 3b) New Haven TMA Review & Prioritization.

There will be a special meeting on August 28 in which this issue will be discussed.

c. Other Transportation Updates

Mr. Comerford gave an update on the micro transit program currently being piloted by ETD. They are now making 30-40 trips per day. CT DOT has stated they will fund the program for the full six months. There has been discussion of adding this into the transit integration study to more fully understand how people are using the service.

Ms. Seymour noted that at MAT some route changes have been made and all buses finally meet up together for transfers. The outstanding credit line will be paid off next week, and MAT has been running under budget with no cuts to service. The CEOs congratulated and thanked Ms. Seymour.

- i. TIP - There are no amendments. Potential projects for the TIP update should be to Mr. Haramut by Friday.
- ii. Corridor Studies – The Route 81 study is close to being wrapped up; the final report still needs to be released. For the Route 66 study, the existing conditions and future conditions reports will be finalized soon. Hopefully next month there will be a meeting with the COG, the Towns, and the consultant to look at some of the recommendations. Mr. Gold noted that there was a meeting about the Airline Trail; there is a preliminary engineering study on connectivity order by CT DOT but no funding for it yet.
- iii. Transit Integration Study – The study is moving along; existing condition reports have been submitted for the Middletown facility, the ETD facility has been reviewed, passenger route surveys have been conducted. A website is being constructed for the project and public outreach meetings will be set up shortly.

4. LCRVCOG Business

a. FY2020 Regional Services Grant Agreement

Upon motion of Mr. Bailey and second by Ms. Francis, this item was tabled by a unanimous vote.

OPM didn't send the agreement in time for the meeting.

b. Agreement between RiverCOG and the Lower CT River Land Trust, Inc.

The agreement is to host the nonprofit for five years and provides a framework in order to pay staff for their time if money is ever raised.

Mr. Bailey moved and Ms. Reemsnyder seconded to pass the agreement. The motion was approved unanimously.

At this time Ms. Francis asked about the possibility of using the 501c3 as a vehicle for other projects. Mr. Gold noted that we recently used the 501c3 to receive a donation of software. It can be used to apply for a number of grants in the future. Ms. Francis suggested using the 501c3 as a vehicle to raise money for the Sustainable CT IOB initiative, or other projects that do not get funded.

c. Roadside Vegetation Control – Brian Higgins, RiverCOG Summer Intern

Mr. Higgins gave a short presentation on his summer project which is looking at roadside invasive species management. His focus is on Clinton, though the information is relevant to all towns. He will send additional information by email, such as the names of some alternative herbicides.

d. Website Budget Increase

Mr. Gold explained that some add-ons to the project were needed, specifically the ability to have a news blog, some pre-created blank pages, a tabbed section on the main page with quick access to features, and to upgrade the calendar and search functions.

Upon motion of Mr. Fortuna and second of Ms. Francis, it was unanimously approved to increase the budget for the website from \$14,000 to \$18,675.

Discussion: Ms. Francis asked about only having 35 blank pages. Mr. Gold explained that these will be the pre-formatted pages, we will have the ability to add any amount of pages after that. Ms. Francis also asked if there was money in the transit integration study to cover \$1,000. Mr. Gold explained that yes, but this money will be used to pay for our web hosting, which we have not been paying for for the last few years. The difference in budget will come out of RSG. Ms. Iino asked if the regional GIS mapping will operate through this site. There will be a GIS page with a library of maps, but there will not be a live GIS browser. Mr. Gold is working with the state to convince them it is in their best interest to maintain one parcel layer at the state level.

5. Chairman's and Executive Director's Reports

Chairman Salvatore complimented Ms. Ehle/Meyer on the outstanding job she does on HHW collections. The first satellite collection happened in Cromwell on Saturday and it was a success.

Mr. Gold reported on behalf of Ms. Ehle/Meyer that 242 households brought waste to the inaugural Cromwell satellite event. She is also promoting a "take a bag, leave a bag" program at farmer's markets.

Mr. Gold gave a brief financial report. FY19 spending was in the parameters of the COG's adopted \$1.9 million budget; the council is expected to close the fiscal year by adding over \$150,000 to its fund balance.

Mr. Gold spoke with the Secretary of State's office about funding for the Regional Election Monitor position. There is no funding from the SOS for that position. He is waiting to send a letter to the state (as discussed during the June meeting) until he hears if the program will be funded through RSG. If there is no OPM approval on this Ms. Conklin is aware that we will not be able to continue the program.

A job posting for a Regional Planner is currently being drafted. Two RFPs will be sent out shortly; one for a consultant to create the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan Update and one for a consultant to finish the Regional Plan of Conservation & Development. We will be looking for volunteers to serve on the selection panels shortly.

Mr. Gold was asked by the state's water council to be on a subcommittee for implementation. He has given a tentative yes, though the plan has yet to be adopted.

6. Other Business

a. SustainableCT Fellows

Catherine Xi and Mackenzie Pias introduced themselves and explained what they have been working on for SustainableCT with the towns. Currently 12 of the 17 towns in our region are registered.

b. HHW Update – previously updated in Executive Director's report

7. Adjournment

Upon motion of Ms. Gister and second of Mr. Bailey, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Eliza LoPresti, Recording Secretary