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[www.rivercog.org](http://www.rivercog.org)

Chester, Clinton, Cromwell,  
Deep River, Durham, East Haddam,  
East Hampton, Essex, Haddam,  
Killingworth, Lyme, Middlefield,  
Middletown, Old Lyme,  
Old Saybrook, Portland, Westbrook

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

**APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**  
Wednesday, September 27, 2017

**RiverCOG Members:**

Chester: Lauren Gister \*  
Clinton: Bruce Farmer \*  
Cromwell: Anthony Salvatore \*  
Deep River: Angus McDonald, Jr. \*  
Durham: Laura Francis \*  
East Haddam: Emmett Lyman \*  
East Hampton: Michael Maniscalco \*  
Essex: Norm Needleman \*  
Haddam: Lizz Milardo \*  
Killingworth: Cathy Iino \*  
Lyme: Steve Mattson \*  
Middlefield: Ed Bailey  
Middletown: Daniel Drew (Joe Samolis, proxy)  
Old Lyme: Bonnie Reemsnyder \*  
Old Saybrook: Carl Fortuna \*  
Portland: Susan Bransfield \*  
Westbrook: Noel Bishop \*

**MPO Members:**

Middlesex Chamber of Commerce: Darlene Briggs  
Estuary Transit District: Joe Comerford \*  
Middletown Area Transit: Lisa Seymour \*

**Others Present:**

Edgar Wynkoop, DOT  
Christine Nelson, Old Saybrook Town Planner  
Carolyn Linn, Chester Selectman  
Carol Conklin, Election Monitor  
Erik Shortell, Federal Highway Administration  
Eloise Powell, Federal Highway Administration  
Daniel Giungi, CCM  
Scott Choquette, Dewberry

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\* Members Present

**Staff Present:**

Samuel Gold, AICP  
Judy Snyder  
Robert Haramut  
Torrance Downes  
Jon Curtis  
Margot Burns

**1. CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS, PUBLIC SPEAKING**

Chairman Bonnie Reemsnyder called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. at the RiverCOG offices, 145 Dennison Road, Essex, CT. Roll call was taken by Sam Gold, Executive Director and guests were introduced. Mr. Gold introduced Lisa Seymour, the new interim Middletown Transit District administrator.

**2. REGIONAL FLOOD MODEL PRESENTATION, SCOTT CHOQUETTE, DEWBERRY - RESILIENCE SOLUTIONS GROUP**

Sam Gold said that Margot Burns was the project manager for this project. RiverCOG received grants from CIRCA and HUD to fund it.

Margo Burns said that this project was focused on inland flooding instead of coastal flooding. This project was done with a new modeling technique that she feels, in the future, will be much less expensive way to do flood modeling. She introduced Scott Choquette from Dewberry. He said that the focus is on the ramifications of climate change impacts, recovery planning and local land use planning. He stated that in Connecticut most of the modeling has been on sea level rise and coastal communities. He said that the RiverCOG recognized the importance of being able to provide useful data to the inland communities. Another condition of the grants was that this had to be used in a way to be a model that could be used in different parts of the state as a benefit to others. A series of workshops were held throughout the region and there was a review of municipal Plans of Conservation and Development, Hazard Mitigation Plans and zoning regulations. He stated that these maps do not replace the FEMA flood maps. Mr. Choquette said that first the threats have to be identified and this has to be conveyed to the residents in a way that they understand what is at risk. This project focuses on the creation of this risk portfolio. He said over the years rainfall totals have increased. Geospatial statistic models were used. The first piece of the modeling exercise was to gather available data on factors that we contribute to flooding and then correlate those factors and to compare those to a particular event. Land cover, slope, elevations, distance from water, soils, vegetation, etc. data was collected and overlaid on top of one another, then compared to known flood events to evaluate the importance of different factors in predicting inland flooding. They found that the elevation and distance from water contributed the most to flooding, with land cover being a close third. He said that the research shows that today's 100-year 24-hour rainfall event will become a 53 year event by 2045 and a 45 year event by 2075.

Laura Francis asked if flood plain areas that are supposed to flood were taken into account. Mr. Choquette said yes these areas were.

Tony Salvatore said that a lot of our flooding comes from up north when there are dam releases.

Laura Francis asked if this is a final report and for a definition of a 100-year flood. What is the probability of a 100-year flood. He said a 100-year flood means there is a 1% chance of this severity flood in any year. An example is over a course of a 30 year mortgage you have a 26% chance of being flooded if you live in a FEMA mapped flood area. Ms. Francis asked if this is a final report or can it be altered. Margot Burns said that the funding has ended and it would depend on what the change was. Ms. Francis felt that in the executive summary it would be helpful to have a paragraph of what we just discussed. Sam Gold thought this was in the report.

Susan Bransfield asked how much were the towns involved and will we receive a copy of the report. Margot Burns answered yes they have been involved and that every town will receive a copy when completed. Scott Choquette said that the survey had been sent and they received 27 replies. Ms. Bransfield asked will this help in getting hazardous mitigation grants. Ms. Burns is hopeful this will be quite helpful. Mr. Choquette said that three additional sessions were held where emergency management, planners and engineering from the communities were invited.

Cathy Iino asked if there is a way to intersect this data with our roads. Scott Choquette said this is addressed in the plan, road flooding and recovery. Margot Burns said that the RPO map package is available to everyone with the ARC View GIS program. Ms. Iino asked if this information will identify roads that flood and roads that will flash flood. Mr. Choquette said that the road drainage issues are not included. Laura Francis asked if this information is good enough for grant purposes. Mr. Choquette said that this will help.

Christine Nelson thanked the RiverCOG staff for taking this on.

### **3. LCRVMPO BUSINESS**

- a. Approval of the Minutes of the July 19, 2017 LCRVCOG and LCRVMPO Meeting

*Upon motion of Susan Bransfield, seconded by Bruce Farmer, it was unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the July 19, 2017 meeting.*

- b. Transportation Updates

- i. TIP and STIF updates

Robert Haramut said that the TIP is our transportation program and the STIF is the statewide transportation improvement program. He said this was sent out for their approvals. Once approval is granted work will begin on the 2018-2021 TIP.

- ii. Long Range Plan update

Robert Haramut said this plan is current with its adoption in April, 2015. This plan is revised and adopted every four years. The next adoption day is April, 2019.

- iii. Corridor study status update

Robert Haramut said this is the Route 81 and 66 studies. He is waiting for the authorization letters then we can enter into negotiations with the consultants. Sam Gold said that DOT has sent out the next round

of transportation studies and the plan is to submit a proposal for a comprehensive transit study looking at our two transit companies. The funding is 80% federal and the state is committed to matching 20%.

Mr. Haramut said he will contact the transit companies for their capital plan.

iv. LOTCIP update

Robert Haramut said that CTDOT wants to keep this program going. Durham, Cromwell and Middletown are the next projects on the schedule however only one would be able to be done. He said that there were 4-5 sidewalk type jobs submitted. Laura Francis asked if Durham's project was at DOT. Lauren Gister asked if Mr. Haramut had received any comments on their LOTCIP proposal. Mr. Haramut stated he has not.

v. Urbanized Area MOU update

Robert Haramut said that he has not received the templet from DOT, but he is hoping that it will be done shortly.

vi. 2017 TIGER Grant Application – Endorsement of Haddam Swing Bridge (motion)

Sam Gold stated that notice of funding was released by USDOT for this year's round of TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) grants. He said that last year he approached the CTDOT with the idea of potentially having the Haddam/East Haddam swing bridge as a TIGER grant project to enhance pedestrian facilities by adding sidewalks. The engineering has to be done and paid by DOT putting us in a good position to apply for this grant. This would be a 100% federal funded project.

*Upon motion of Noel Bishop, seconded by Laura Francis, it was unanimously voted to endorse the TIGER grant for the walkway along the Haddam/East Haddam swing bridge.*

Laura Francis asked Mr. Haramut if there was any word on the grants, when they would be awarded, and does this have anything to do with the state budget. Mr. Haramut said no, not yet.

c. Bus Company Updates

i. Middletown Area Transit

Lisa Seymour introduced herself as the Middletown Area Transit Administrator. She was the financial consultant for First Transit when they took over. She said that an emergency contract with First Transit from now until August 2018 has been signed. Administrative changes have been made to reduce costs and routes are being looked at and being reconfigured if needed. The Portland and East Hampton rural routes are also being looking at. The public hearing on these issues is October 3<sup>rd</sup> at 4:00 p.m. in the Middletown City Hall. She feels that less routes will be cut than originally thought because some of the routes are overlapping so scheduling changes need to be made. The fixed routes are running under budget. ADA, Dial-A-Ride, etc. are over budget, but routes could be worked on.

ii. 9 Town Transit

Joe Comerford said that all transit districts were cut 2%. He held on for as long as he could but had to cut the shoreline route from 40 hours to 35 hours/week. He has an administrative staff of three and

nowhere else to cut. He said that he will be good until the end of the December and also added that the 9 Town Transit is also managed by 1<sup>st</sup> Transit.

Noel Bishop said that he is impressed and thanked both Ms. Seymour and Mr. Comerford for their hard work.

#### **4. LCRVCOG BUSINESS**

##### **a. DEMHS Update**

##### **i. Authorization for 2016 Emergency Management Planning Grant (motion)**

*Upon motion of Laura Francis, seconded by Cathy Iino, it was unanimously voted to approve the authorizing resolution for the 2016 State Emergency Performance Grant Program Application. Resolution allows Samuel Gold, Executive Director to sign application documents on behalf of the COG. This is an annual grant that requires an annual resolution to be executed.*

##### **ii. Other Grant Updates**

Sam Gold said there is a 2017 homeland security grant program. The grant has been approved for funds becoming available as of October 2017 three 3-year grants will be overlapped.

Tony Salvatore asked what the DEMHS grants are for. Laura Francis said they are the allocation that each region gets every year. Cromwell is in the DEMHS Capital region.

##### **b. State / COG Budget Update**

Sam Gold stated that the State does not have an approved budget at this time and it is unclear if the COGs are funded.

##### **c. Regional Plan Update – Workshops and Next Steps**

Jon Curtis said that the two workshops and the eight pop-ups went well. He said that between the August 17<sup>th</sup> workshop and September 16<sup>th</sup> workshop approximately 60 people attended. Both of these workshops were introducing what the POCD is, what the region is, and what the RiverCOG is.

The top three challenges that were repeated by the various groups were:

1. Attracting and retaining young people in the region
2. Housing/affordability
3. Need to promote the regional identity - “branding”

Jon Curtis said he will e-mail the survey link for the “Regional POCD Full Survey” and asked the members to please forward to as many people as possible. The survey will be open to the January or February meeting. He stated that the full draft of the existing conditions is slated for November.

Mr. Curtis said that a ZOOP meeting was held last week and Eric Lindquist, OPM presented the state plan’s locational map. The staff is hoping to have a ZOOP meeting every two months. Christine Nelson thanked the staff for hosting that presentation. She said that she has been dealing with the state on the

location of a parking facility next to the train station. Sam Gold said that the state plan goes into effect on any state action that is \$200,000 or more.

The staff will compile a list of comments and suggestions for the RiverCOG members to review before it is sent to OPM.

d. GrowSmart Implementation Update

Jon Curtis said that the number one priority coming out of the GrowSmart regional economic plan was to create a regional economic development entity. The first meeting was held at the end of August with 12 people and went very well. The next meeting will be at the end of October. Please fill out the survey "Economic Development Survey".

Laura Francis suggested that Mr. Curtis should meet with the Middlesex Chamber on this issue.

Tony Salvatore said that Cromwell has submitted two major projects to DOT. He said it took the State Traffic division of DOT 6 months to review an application and was told it will be 6-9 months on another project. He said this is upsetting to two large businesses that want to come to Cromwell.

Edgar Wynkoop will check into this.

e. Trapa Updates

Margot Burns said that trapa is under control south of Middletown. She said that it was a good season for the RiverCOG region with the exception of a new occurrence found in Chester and Deep River. Another species was found in deeper water in Wethersfield.

f. Regional Election Monitor Report

Carol Conklin said that the election is November 7th in all towns in the state. She thought that the appointment and training of a deputy registrar was a good idea just in case the registrar couldn't be at the election.

## **5. CHAIRMAN'S AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORTS**

Bonnie Reemsnyder thanked the staff for their hard work during the budget times.

Sam Gold gave the financial report.

Sam Gold said that he has been speaking with Christine Nelson about our next round of pre-disaster mitigation planning money grants. Our towns all have these plans. Last time the northern towns were done as a group and the southern towns were done individually. He said that we need to be thinking about how we are going to update those plans. He explained that what these plans do is if there is a natural disaster declaration in the state a portion of the recovery money is set aside for projects that are identified in your town's plan to prevent the next natural disaster.

## **6. OTHER BUSINESS**

### a. Household Hazardous Waste/Recycling

Sam Gold started that traffic counts are up at the household hazardous collections. He reminded the members that the Middletown Collection is September 30<sup>th</sup> at Middlesex Community College.

Laura Francis wants to congratulate Middlefield/Durham and East Haddam for receiving the grants for drug awareness. She said all towns should apply for it.

Laura Francis said that at the CCM Convention we are going to be rolling out the Sustainable CT program. She also stated that Sam Gold is being considered to be on the board of directors as a representative for the RiverCOG.

Laura Francis said that she was saddened to hear that Middletown was withdrawing from CCM. She felt that we are stronger together instead of separately. Susan Bransfield said that CCM did reach out to Middletown and thanked them for their years of participation.

Laura Francis asked if anyone has put any freezes on spending or made adjustments to the school budgets. Cathy Iino said that they had met with the BOS, BOF and BOE last week. She thinks now they understand the cuts, especially to ECS money the school has to be part of the solution. She asked if anyone was sending out supplemental tax bills.

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

Bonnie Reemsnyder announced that the next RiverCOG/MPO meeting will be October 25<sup>th</sup> at the Lyman Grill Room Restaurant in Middlefield.

*Upon motion of Cathy Iino, seconded by Laura Francis, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:12 a.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Snyder  
Recording Secretary

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