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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**

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**  
Wednesday, December 5, 2018

**RiverCOG Members:**

Chester: Lauren Gister \*  
Clinton: Christine Goupil \*  
Cromwell: Anthony Salvatore \*  
Deep River: Angus McDonald, Jr. \*  
Durham: Frank DeFelice for 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  
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:**

Carol Conklin, Regional Election Monitor  
Cathy Lezon, Eversource  
Christine Palm, Representative-Elect, 36<sup>th</sup> District  
Ellen Graham, Senator Blumenthal's Office  
Meg McGaffin, Milone & MacBroom  
Peter Shea, Milone & MacBroom  
Katelyn Murdock, Henry, Raymond & Thompson  
Martin Henry, Henry, Raymond & Thompson

**Staff Present:**

Sam Gold  
Torrance Downes

\*Members Present

Robert Haramut  
Janice Ehle-Meyer  
Margot Burns  
Eliza LoPresti  
Jon Curtis  
Dan Bourret  
Paula Fernald

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

Chairman Bonnie Reemsnyder called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. at the Old Lyme Town Hall, 52 Lyme St., Old Lyme, CT.

Roll call was taken by Sam Gold, Executive Director.

Public Speaking:

- a. Christine Palm, Representative-Elect of the 36<sup>th</sup> House District, attended the meeting to learn about the COG. She stated her legislative goal of protecting the environment, particularly banning the seismic surveying off the coast.

### **2. Audit Report – Martin Henry & Katelyn Murdock of Henry, Raymond & Thompson**

Mr. Henry and Ms. Murdock presented highlights from the draft financial audit of RiverCOG. They explained their procedure for conducting the audit and answered questions related to the presentation. There was nothing negative in the results of the audit to report. There were no adjustments proposed in the outcome of the audit, which is a career first for Ms. Murdock. Chairwoman Reemsnyder thanked Ms. Fernald and the rest of the staff for their hard work.

*Ms. Milardo moved to accept the audit report; second by Mr. Fortuna. Vote was unanimous in favor.*

### **At this time, Senator-Elect Norm Needleman arrived and items 1a) GOG Legislative Goals and 4f) Legislative Agenda (for January meeting) were discussed**

Senator-Elect Needleman will try to meet with each Selectman in the region to discuss needs assessment. He plans to stay First Selectman of Essex. He invited the CEOs to call him any time; his mission is to advocate for the small towns in the region in Hartford, and he feels strongly about marketing and promotion for tourism and the state becoming a priority. The recent OPM appointment was briefly discussed.

A welcome letter to Governor-Elect Lamont was sent around for signature by all the CEOs, and Mr. Gold handed out information on the 9-Town transit taxi voucher program.

Mr. Gold asked for ideas to be sent to him for the legislative agenda for the January meeting. Items that were mentioned include waste water systems, concern over COG funding, and the functioning of state agencies.

### **3. Wetlands Mapping Project Presentation –Megan McGaffin & Peter Shea of Milone & MacBroom**

Ms. McGaffin and Mr. Shea of Milone & MacBroom discussed the regional wetland mapping project, through the regional performance incentive (RPIP) grant funded by OPM. Mr. Bourret will be rolling the

maps out to the towns within the next few months. The intent of the project was for all the RiverCOG towns to have access to a digital system for their wetland lines and to create an aggregated regional view of wetlands. Mr. Bourret's gathering and scanning of the necessary maps furthered the project's scope by helping to expand the budget.

Access to this information by town staff will reduce counter time during public interactions and provide staff and residents with more complete information. The mapping will also be useful for towns obtaining the MS-4 permit as watershed, and drainage information, catch basins, etc. are integrated.

Ms. McGaffin, Mr. Shea and Mr. Bourret answered questions from the CEOs in relation to the project.

**At this time, a moment of silence was observed for former President, George H.W. Bush.**

#### **4. LCRVMPO Business**

- a. Approval of the Minutes of the October 24, 2018 LCRVCOG and LCRVMPO Meeting

*Upon motion of Mr. Fortuna, seconded by Mr. Salvatore, it was unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the October 24, 2018 meeting.*

- b. Approval of 2019 Meeting Dates

*Upon motion of Mr. Fortuna, seconded by Ms. Iino, it was unanimously voted to approve the 2019 Meeting Dates.*

- c. Endorse 2019 Safety Targets

Mr. Haramut explained that the MPOs are adopting the state's safety target measures to create consistency and ease of use/creation. This will be an annual report. The measures are the number of fatalities, the rate of fatalities per hundred million, number of serious injuries, rate of serious injuries per hundred million, and the rate of non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries.

*Upon motion of Mr. Fortuna and second of Mr. Maniscalco, it was unanimously voted to approve the resolution to endorse the 2019 safety targets.*

- d. ADA Compliance Assessment

CT DOT is updating their ADA transition plan. A survey of all towns will take place; Mr. Haramut asks that the survey is returned to him by the end of the month. He ran through the survey questions with the CEOs. There was question as to whether there would be liability to a town by answering this questionnaire. This was discussed and it was noted that transportation/road projects will be looked at, not town buildings.

- e. LOTCIP Update

Applications are due January 11, 2019 for MPO board review in January or February. Durham received their project authorization letter, Cromwell's should be coming soon. The Chester job had an 8% increase from 2.4 to 2.6 million. Haddam's concept design increased from 1.9 to 2.9 million, which is over the 20% increase that needs board approval, so this will need to be approved before the commitment to fund letter is sent.

There is currently enough funding for the Cromwell and Durham jobs, which will leave about 1.2 million in the LOTCIP pot when they are done. The FY 19 allocation is 2.6 million, which will cover Chester. FY20 & FY21 have not yet been allocated; Mr. Haramut estimates about 2.8 million for those years. There will be an additional \$350,000 left over from the Middletown job as well.

f. Other Transportation Updates

There should be a large TIP amendment package coming soon based on the impending federal highway funding rescission. The state is trying to reorganize the money that comes from federal funding to spend the money in the programs that are most at risk now before Oct. 1, 2019.

The corridor studies are moving along. There is a public meeting for Rt. 81 in January; Route 66 will probably happen in February or March. Mr. Maniscalco asked to be billed for East Hampton's share of the project so that the money is not at risk in upcoming budget talks.

The long-range transportation plan is also moving forward, it should be ready for approval at a spring meeting. Mr. Gold is still negotiating with the chosen consultant on the contract for the Transit Integration Study.

The price increase for the Haddam LOTCIP project was briefly discussed. Mr. Bishop noted that Mr. Haramut has been a great, helpful resource for Westbrook and the other towns in our region.

*Upon motion of Mr. Bishop and second of Ms. Gister it was unanimously voted to approve the price increase for the Haddam LOTCIP job.*

**5. LCRVCOG Business**

a. MIRA Update

Ms. Milardo reported that in November, MIRA had a turbine down for scheduled repair. During this time the other turbine was down due to a foreign object in it. The process for diversion was initiated and the turbine is in the process of being repaired. All trash is still being accepted. There is some room still at the Murphy Road facility and other places in PA and NY are being utilized. Transportation expenses and weight limits for transporting are high. The board is weighing options on how to pay for this, but there will be some type of increase to the towns. As of this meeting date, the turbine was scheduled to be up in service the next day.

RFQs went out for privatization of MIRA. None of the respondents fit the RFQ requirements. Commissioner Klee now has a better understanding of what the board's requests are based on recent meetings.

Mr. Fortuna mentioned that he talks publicly about garbage in Old Saybrook; general discussion occurred on what can be done such as community composting, buying bags, etc. Ms. Ehle/Meyer mentioned that there are some pilot composting state projects happening now, and that she will be holding a regional compost bin sale in the summer.

b. Nominating Committee Report

The nominating committee consisted of Mr. Fortuna, Ms. Milardo and Ms. Francis. Mr. Fortuna reported that the following nominees were identified: Chairman – Mr. Maniscalco from East Hampton, Vice Chairman – Mr. Salvatore from Cromwell, Treasurer – Mr. Bishop from Westbrook, Secretary – Ms.

Gister from Chester, At-Large Executive Committee Members – Ms. Reemsnyder from Old Lyme and Ms. Iino from Killingworth.

c. Election of 2019 Officers

*Mr. Fortuna moved the slate of nominees forward; Mr. McDonald seconded. Vote was unanimous in favor.*

Mr. Maniscalco thanked Ms. Reemsnyder for her service and presented her with a plaque. Ms. Reemsnyder acknowledged Mr. Gold and the COG staff.

d. Regional Election Monitor Report

Ms. Conklin noted that the election technically went fairly smoothly, other than a few issues that cropped up in a few towns. Both problems were because of human error and had procedural corrections. There is new audit equipment that will save the towns money and will eventually be used for recounts. This is the end of the grant for the Election Monitor.

Mr. Gold commended Ms. Conklin for the job she did preparing the registrars for the election and that moving forward there should be outreach to the Secretary of State's office from the towns for the need to fund this position.

e. Shared Services Discussion

At the last meeting there was a discussion on the tree issues that included Eversource, foresters from UCONN and DEEP, public works from various towns and other town employees.

f. Legislative Agenda

Mr. Gold asked for ideas for the legislative agenda to be sent to him and encouraged outreach from the CEOs to their representatives to invite them to the meeting.

*Mr. Fortuna moved to add an HHW Update to the agenda. Ms. Gister seconded. Vote was unanimous in favor.*

g. HHW Update

Ms. Ehle/Meyer distributed information regarding adding an additional collection for the northern towns, which are Cromwell, Durham, East Hampton, Portland, Middletown, and Middlefield. She suggested Cromwell or Durham for the location. If the northern towns are fine with the proposal she will proceed with putting it in the upcoming budget. There is a fixed cost of \$5,500, but there is an unknown cost due to the actual number of residents that may show up. The number in the proposal is an estimate.

## **6. Chairman's and Executive Director's Reports**

Mr. Gold stated the RiveCOG is pursuing a lighting upgrade to LED for the office. The energy savings will mostly offset the cost. There is also an offer of a close to \$4,000 grant from Eversource for this. The office will receive a 0% interest loan for 48 months and the net cost over what we pay now will be \$40.91 a month. The only risk is that if we do not renew our lease with the landlord, a small amount of money could be lost.

Mr. Gold also reported that he has been elected the Chairman of the CT Association of COGs.

## **7. Other Business**

- a. Update on DEMHS (Field Day Presentation) & Interim ZEO Work

Mr. Downes reported that Clinton has hired a ZEO. He and Mr. Bourret are working to bring him up to speed.

He also presented photos from the DEMHS Region 2 field day, showing what kind of equipment the DEMHS program has purchased. Mr. Downes will share the presentation with the CEOs so that they can share with their EMDs that were not able to make it to field day.

- b. Next meeting on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019 – 8:30 AM in the Dining Room at the LOB, Hartford

Ms. Iino noted that she attended a forestry meeting regarding the dead tree issues throughout the state and that there is a possibility for FEMA funding to aid. She suggested everyone keep careful accounts of costs incurred to remove the trees, equipment costs, staff time, etc. in case funding comes through.

## **8. Adjournment**

*Upon motion of Mr. Salvatore and second of Ms. Milardo, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:10 a.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

Eliza LoPresti  
Recording Secretary