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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, April 25, 2018

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: 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:

Pat Bandzes, Eversource
Tom Metzner, CT DEEP
Carol Conklin, Election Monitor
Mike Bernier, Essex Landfill
Frank DeFelice, Chairman, Regional Planning Committee

* Members Present

Staff Present:

Torrance Downes
Robert Haramut
Janice Ehle-Meyer
Dan Bourret
Paula Fernald
Margot Burns

1. CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS, PUBLIC SPEAKING

Chairman Bonnie Reemsnyder called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. at the East Haddam Town Hall, 1 Plains Rd., Moodus, CT. She thanked Emmet Lyman for hosting the meeting and congratulated him on the new building.

Roll call was taken by Torrance Downes, Deputy Director. Guests were introduced as well as Eliza LoPresti, new RiverCOG Office/Financial Assistant.

2. LCRVMPO BUSINESS

- a. Approval of the Minutes of the March 28, 2018 LCRVCOG and LCRVMPO Meeting

Upon motion of Carl Fortuna, seconded by Lauren Gister, it was voted to approve the minutes of the March 28, 2018 meeting.

- b. Section 5310 Application Rankings

Rob Haramut explained that the rankings pertain to the program run by the Federal Transit Administration for the purchase of lift assist wheelchair accessible vehicles. In the Hartford urbanized area, a vehicle from Cromwell ranked 78 and another from MARC ranked 76. St. Luke's is looking for operating funding which is not typically ranked as there is enough funding. He recommends submitting these applications to CTDOT in the ranked order. In the New Haven urbanized area one traditional vehicle application came from the Estuary Council of Seniors, ranked at 73. ETD also submitted operating application for Midshore, Riverside, and taxi vouchers which will be submitted to CTDOT.

Upon motion of Carl Fortuna, seconded by Tony Salvatore, it was voted to approve the submission of applications to DOT in the order ranked.

- c. LOTCIP Update

Rob Haramut updated the Council that the Old Saybrook project on North Main Street is almost done. Middletown is out to bid, the lowest bid that has come in is from DeRita Construction at around \$500,000 under the current estimate. The final design plans for Durham were just received; CTDOT review turn-around time is about two months. There was discussion on this length of time and how it may affect the construction season. Cromwell is about 90% designed and in rights of way, Chester and Haddam are on hold until the future of LOTCIP is determined.

- d. Route 66 and Route 81 Corridor Studies Update

Rob Haramut stated that a pre-kickoff meeting for Route 66 was held on April 12, background and GIS data are being collected for the towns. The kickoff meeting for Route 81 will be held Friday April 27.

Since this study is smaller and involves only one town there is hope it will get done this year. Route 66 will be a two year study. Christine Goupil asked that Killingworth be engaged more in the route 81 study; Cathy Iino agreed.

e. Regional Bus Operations Study

Rob Haramut said that this study was submitted similarly to the Routes 66 & 81 corridor studies. A meeting was held with CTDOT on April 13, they are receptive to the study. Lisa Seymour added that CTDOT has already assigned someone in their office be responsible for the study, so they will be moving forward with it. She indicated that there may be Federal and/or state money that can be used as funding sources.

Laura Francis asked that the scope of the study be distributed and that it be made clear that this is a regional bus study administered by the RiverCOG, not a study being directed by either Board of Directors of either transit district. Susan Bransfield asked if this study will be as protracted as the corridor study. Mr. Haramut replied that it most likely would be, dependent upon funding sources. Timeframe was discussed.

Ms. Seymour stated that this study is being called the Lower CT Valley Bus Operation Study and the CTDOT presented proposed goals of evaluating the integration of operations and government, identify a shared structure and location for assets and facilities to provide future service in the lower CT River valley region, and develop recommendations for subsequent planning and integration steps. She stated that this will be a longer process and it is not only gathering of information, but actually looking at the integration of the two transit districts.

Mr. Haramut stated the study is being initiated by the COG. Data collection on ridership is already complete which will shorten the time of the study.

f. Updates from MAT and 9 Town Transit

i. Transit Cuts Update

Lisa Seymour of MAT stated there would be a public hearing the evening of this meeting on the proposed transit cuts and possible fare reductions. She has completed the recertification process and has a handle on the ADA findings. The audit has been started and will be complete June 30. The COG members congratulated Ms. Seymour on a job well done.

Christine Goupil stated that an 830g affordable housing development is being built in Clinton as a transit oriented development. 9 Town Transit was rerouted for this, and that route has now been cut. This is a disconnect, as the state is saying that the 830g will be funded to be transit oriented development, yet they are not funding transit. Ms. Seymour agreed that there is a disconnect with CTDOT from their expectations and what the funding actually is, and cited MAT ADA problems.

3. How Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging Can Save Towns Money and Increase Recycling Rates – Tom Metzner, CT DEEP

Tom Metzner gave a presentation on the extended producer responsibility concept, which is that the manufacturer of a product should assume end of life financial responsibility for its management. He cited the mattress program in which the manufacturers externalize the fee, and the e-waste program in which the fee is internalized so that there is free recycling but the manufacturers are paying for it. DEEP is looking to expand the concept in terms of packaging as it costs towns money to dispose of recyclables.

Mr. Metzner stated that assigning the financial responsibility for this to the manufacturers as is done in Canada and Europe yields better economic and environmental results.

He explained that it works by manufacturers forming a stewardship organization that internally raises the money to hire and create recycling infrastructure. The State provides oversight. He discussed the details on how an EPR program could work, citing examples from British Columbia.

Tony Salvatore asked about the DEEP position and if they have proposed a bill. Mr. Metzner stated that their materials management strategy supports EPR across the board and that a bill has not been proposed. Lauren Gister asked if there is evidence that the manufacturers are changing how they produce packaging in BC and other places Mr. Metzner referenced in his presentation. He stated that this isn't widespread. Carl Fortuna asked if any state has EPR; Mr. Metzner confirmed that no states do. Mr. Fortuna wondered if there was another factor rather than manufacturer resistance if no state has adopted; Mr. Metzner stated that it is not just manufacturers that are opposed but also haulers and others whose businesses will potentially be impacted and also states are focused on other things. Mr. Fortuna asked about the potential increase in volume of recyclables as they are now being warehoused. Mr. Metzner stated that the businesses in the private sector would have the resources to deal with this. Susan Bransfield asked the impact on jobs and what kinds of jobs would be added. Mr. Metzner stated that he has talked to haulers in BC that are growing their businesses. This was discussed further and Ms. Bransfield stated she believes an economic study is necessary before this issue goes further and suggested the methodology of implementing EPR by commodity might work better. Bonnie Reemsnyder advocated for consumer education on recycling. Laura Francis stated that government has to stop being afraid to disrupt industry because even if jobs are lost, different jobs will be created. Christine Goupil pointed out the gas price disparity between countries. Enforcement of proper recycling was briefly discussed. Joe Pizzmenti of USA Hauling & Recycling stated the EPR is more beneficial for tires, TVs, or other specific commodities, not on packaging as a whole. Cathy Iino stated the necessity for EPR for smoke detectors.

4. LCRVCOG BUSINESS

a. RiverCOG Auditor RFP and Appointment of FY18 Audit Auditor

Paula Fernald stated that an RFP has been put out, two firms sent back proposals. The recommendation is to use Henry, Raymond & Thompson, LLC of South Windsor as the lowest bidder. They have experience with WestCOG, who is happy with their services. The RFP was posted on the RiverCOG website, the State's BizNet website, and about twenty letters were sent to various firms. There was discussion on the frequency of change in auditors and the impact this has on the bidding process. There was discussion on amending the time frame for changing auditors and the possibility of adding an extension clause into the contract. At the next meeting there should be a discussion on the terms of the contract with the auditors.

Michael Maniscalco moved to direct Sam Gold to negotiate an agreement with the firm of Henry, Raymond & Thompson, LLC consistent with the by-laws, to be voted on by the Council at the next meeting.

Discussion: Next meeting will be too late for this vote to occur as the information is due to OPM by the end of May. The terms of the contract can be discussed and voted upon for the future. For right now, the vote will be to hire the recommended firm. There was no second to the above motion.

A motion was made by Michael Maniscalco and second of Cathy Iino to approve the firm of Henry, Raymond & Thompson, LLC, as auditors, as recommended by RiverCOG staff.

Discussion: Susan Bransfield will abstain from the vote as she did not feel comfortable as it was unclear whether the vote was on approving the firm or approving a contract. Ms. Fernald explained that the firm offered pricing for the first year, then will offer pricing for the next few years once they see how the audit

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runs. Because of this the contract may be for one year in case their prices significantly change in the subsequent years. Therefore, the contract negotiation is still open.

Mr. Maniscalco amended the motion to state that the firm of Henry, Raymond & Thompson, LLC be approved as auditors for this year (FY ending 2018), and direct staff to negotiate a contract for subsequent years. Second by Cathy Iino. Vote passed unanimously.

b. RiverCOG Draft Budget

Paula Fernald presented the draft budget, which Sam Gold would like to revisit after May 9 once the State budget passes. The final draft will be presented at the May meeting for a vote. Bonnie Reemsnyder read an email that Mr. Gold sent her stating that the budget shows the COG being funded at the level requested, which is \$1 per capita statewide. This is approximately 78% higher than what the COGs received this year. Mr. Gold met with Senators Osten and Formica and asked them to fund us at that higher level, due to past year's cuts. He asks that any CEOs in Senator Formica's district reach out to him as well.

A discussion on the State budget occurred, and what may happen with funds. Council members discussed status of their current town funding. The budget will be addressed again at the May meeting.

c. CRERPA IRS Issue

The financial office received notification on IRS paperwork issues with the former CRERPA. Thanks to Carl Fortuna, this is being worked on pro bono by a tax attorney and will be resolved quickly.

d. Regional Plan Survey

Frank DeFelice, Chairman of the Regional Planning Committee, stated that attendance at the RPC meetings has improved and thanked the Council members for sending people to the meetings. John McDonald has been working on the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development since John Curtis has been ill. He is helping to assemble a unified document that will be distributed to RPC members this week. Mr. DeFelice asked for submissions of photographs from each town to be included in the document.

The RPC survey was discussed, through which useful data and suggestions were obtained. Mr. DeFelice distributed another survey that was assembled by staff, and approved by the RPC in which Clinton and Old Saybrook comprised 67% of the responses received. The survey will be reopened for representation from all the towns through the summer.

Michael Maniscalco asked that the RPC look at water issues within the communities and the impact on economic development. The possible upcoming state water plan was discussed. Bonnie Reemsnyder thanked Mr. DeFelice for his work.

e. Regional Election Monitor Update

Carol Conklin updated that today is the beginning of the three-day registrars conference. This fulfills some or part of their continuing education requirements, which is separate from the certification program. Ms. Conklin stated that this winter was busier than normal as the town committee caucuses saw a lot of activity. There were some town committee petitions produced, which are rare, some office upheaval that resulted in some registrars stepping down or retired and new registrars have gone through the certification

process. Also the Secretary of State's office has had more cuts so they reached out to the regionals several times for special projects.

This summer will have an active primary, Ms. Conklin will be reaching out town by town, especially to the new people, in relation to this. She emphasized that the two registrars should be sharing the workload and to reach out to her if there is a sense that this is not happening. There was further discussion on this since the registrars are elected officials, with suggestions to pay them by the hour and to share resources. Bonnie Reemsnyder mentioning that the situation has improved since Ms. Conklin has been more involved. The primary will be held August 14.

f. Wetlands Mapping Project

Dan Bourret stated that the wetland mapping project is continuing and going well. He is happy with the work of Milone and MacBroom. He will be going to reach out to the towns with the fewest georeference surveys done - Cromwell, Middletown, Durham, East Haddam, Old Saybrook, and Westbrook so that a similar amount of work will have been done in each town.

g. Long Island Sound Dredging Spoils Lawsuit – Amicus Brief

Federal Court in Brooklyn accepted our status and will be allowing us to submit an Amicus Brief supporting the eastern disposal site for dredging materials in LI Sound. There is a lawsuit in New York to stop this and the COG has taken a role in filing the brief that the CT Port Authority has taken the lead on.

h. Strengthening Agriculture – Know Your Farmer Website Update

Torrance Downes stated that a website was developed on a marketing grant. There is some funding left, and it was decided to take the existing site and hire a consultant to transfer the website into a content management site, rather than a coded site. This will be a WordPress site, with the intent of also transforming the RiverCOG site similarly. There was discussion on the limitations of functionality and customization of WordPress along with updating and funding constrictions.

7. CHAIRMAN'S AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

Bonnie Reemsnyder had nothing to report, though she did reiterate that Sam Gold would like Council members to reach out to Senators Osten and Formica about the aforementioned budget.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

a. HHW

Janice Ehle-Meyer stated that the Household Hazardous Waste season has started. The Clinton collection was done and the upcoming weekend will be in East Hampton. Two weeks after that will be the first collection in Essex.

b. DEMHS Update

Torrance Downes stated that four grants are open now. The oldest of those grants closes on May 31, a great effort has been made to spend down most of the funds. There will be a 2018 Homeland Security grant though the timing and amount is unknown. The same timing as the last one should be assumed for now, with the new grant going into place Oct. 1. The budgeting will be done based on the last grant.

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Pat Bandzes reminded everyone that the annual emergency response training offered by Eversource will be held on May 16.

Margot Burns stated that she sent a memo to the Council on the Natural Hazard Mitigation plans and the choices for how to update the plans. She asked the towns to look for their approval letters from the 2014 plans for the final assessment. There will be a meeting in Middletown on May 11 for town staff to learn the process. Cathy Iino asked for advisement on how much updating will need to be done; Ms. Burns stated it could be \$10,000 - \$15,000 per town as a general rule. There was discussion on the possibility of individual town estimates or working as groups of towns, and the actual amount of updating necessary. Torrance Downes and Ms. Burns discussed and agreed with Ms. Iino's point that there should not be too much substantial updating, though the mapping and the public outreach components are unknown.

Christine Goupil expressed concern on the fracking waste ordinance brought before Clinton's Inland Wetland Committee in that is asked for policy implementation and regulation of any natural gas or oil waste coming in. Michael Maniscalco stated that East Hampton did pass an ordinance but it is watered down in regards to regulation of products. It is on the town website for viewing. Madison has also recently passed an ordinance. Frank DeFelice suggested letting the Inlands & Wetlands commissions know this is happening so they can prepare.

Laura Francis asked if the Election Monitor position is still state funded as she is concerned that the state is reducing their staff, causing more work for the monitor. She is concerned that state could transfer the funding to municipalities.

Ms. Francis expressed concern about the regional bill that includes COG's eligibility for STEAP and other grants and the effect on the municipalities.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion of Michael Maniscalco, seconded by Lauren Gister, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eliza LoPresti
Recording Secretary (Not present during the meeting)

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