



145 Dennison Road  
Essex, CT 06426  
860/581-8554 FAX: 860/581-8543  
[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, May 24, 2017

**RiverCOG Members:**

Chester: Lauren Gister \* (9:03)  
Clinton: Bruce Farmer \*  
Cromwell: Anthony Salvatore \*  
Deep River: Angus McDonald, Jr. \* (9:13)  
Durham: Laura Francis \* (9:10)  
East Haddam: Emmett Lyman \*  
East Hampton: Michael Maniscalco \*  
Essex: Norm Needleman \* (9:50)  
Haddam: Lizz Milardo \*  
Killingworth: Cathy Iino \*  
Lyme: Ralph Eno \*  
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: Andrew Chiaravallo \*

**Others Present:**

Edgar Wynkoop, DOT  
Pat Bandzes, Eversource  
Christine Nelson, Old Saybrook Town Planner  
Carolyn Linn, Chester Selectman  
David LeVasseur  
Ellen Graham, Senator Blumenthal's Office  
Al Alper, Absolute Logic  
Lindsey Bitonti, CIRMA  
Carol Conklin, Election Monitor

**Others Present Continues:**

Matt Macunas, CT Green Bank  
Jean Gough, CT Green Bank

**Staff Present:**

Samuel Gold, AICP  
Judy Snyder  
Rob Haramut  
Torrance Downes  
Jon Curtis  
Margot Burns  
Janice Ehle/Meyer

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

Chairman Bonnie Reemsnyder called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. at the RiverCOG offices, 145 Dennison Road, Essex, CT. Roll call was taken by Sam Gold, Executive Director and guests were introduced.

a. Matt Macunas, CT Green Bank on Municipal Nissan Leaf Electric Car Program

Bonnie Reemsnyder introduced Matt Macunas, CT Green Bank State Sponsored Development Authority for Clean Energy. Mr. Macunas said that his organization is involved in the clean energy electric car market and has partnered with the Nissan Leaf Electric Car Program. The Leaf is the number one selling electric vehicle in the world. Nissan is offering, to selective markets in Connecticut, a flat \$10,000 off model years 2016 or 2017 Nissan Leaf for municipalities, COGs, municipal employees and for solar panel customers that participated in this state incentive program. He stated that the cost of driving an electric car is much less, including approximately one third the maintenance cost of a gasoline engine vehicle. He said potential customers are welcome to come to the Nissan website to complete a survey for sponsoring this deal and receive a registration flyer with a fleetail certification code that Nissan generates. Nissan will ask for that code to track how areas are performing and to receive the discount. Janice Ehle/Meyer asked where the charging stations are located. He said that charging station information is on the website.

b. Recognition of Ralph Eno

Bonnie Reemsnyder announced that Ralph Eno will be retiring as the First Selectman of Lyme at the end of June. She stated how much she has enjoyed working with him. She thanked him for his dedication over the years and wished him the very best in the future. Ralph Eno thanked everyone for the kind words.

c. Presentation by Janice Ehle/Meyer to the COG

Janice Ehle/Meyer gave a brief memorial remembrance of former Executive Director Linda Krause.

## 2. Guest Speaker - Al Alper, Absolute Logic on Cyber Attack Preparedness

Bonnie Reemsnyder introduced Al Alper, Absolute Logic. Sam Gold stated that Mr. Alper has been the COG's IT consultant for the last two years. He was asked to come and give a presentation on cyber security and Ransomware. Lindsey Bitonti, from CIRMA is also here to discuss this issue.

Al Alper gave a Powerpoint presentation on cyber security. He said his company is affiliated with the FBI, the Secret Service, and the National Cyber Security Alliance. Cybercrime is a business and cyber threats can spread around the world very quickly. He explained that all of our personal information is already on the web in some form and this is called the "dark net". Although this is not publicized this is where criminals go to make their money. Hacking into individual's personal information is not as lucrative as attacking a company with a large database. Ransomware is a service and anybody, anywhere can download the Ransomware application knowing nothing about hacking. A list of people can be uploaded and in a matter of hours tens of thousands of people have been infected. He said much of the spam that people receive is infected along with phishing, social media, etc. Today the big money is in Ransomware. Ransomware is very inexpensive and most people after being attacked don't report it but instead just pay the ransom in Bitcoins. Bitcoins are internet money however some countries will turn this into actual cash. The FBI says less than 1% of these people are caught and prosecuted. He warned that no company is too small to attack, 60% of all cyberattacks happen to companies that have less than 250 employees and this number is growing.

Bonnie Reemsnyder asked if there is a class available that staff could attend. Mr. Alper said there are three 1-hour seminars plus individual training. Noel Bishop asked what specifically is the greatest threat town governments face from a cyberattack. Mr. Alper said that personal use of the computers. He stated that right now Facebook is the second largest platform for launching cyberattacks. Lauren Gister and Laura Francis asked what to do with their town Facebook account. Mr. Alper said to allow just one person to access the town Facebook page. Bonnie Reemsnyder said she would be very interested in a training class and if other towns were interested to contact the RiverCOG.

Lindsey Bitonti said that CIRMA has cyber liability insurance available to the towns. Carl Fortuna asked Ms. Bitonti to explain the limits of the policy because it is a blanket policy for all the policy holders with limits. Ms. Bitonti said the policy, because it is shared with our liability, auto policy pool, has a million dollar limit per occurrence, a two million dollar member aggregate limit and a ten million dollar pool aggregate limit. This is an annual policy and these limits are for one policy term for the year. There is also a ten thousand dollar deductible per occurrence.

## 3. LCRVMPO BUSINESS

- a. Approval of the Minutes of the April 26, 2017 LCRVCOG and LCRVMPO Meeting

*Upon motion of Carl Fortuna, seconded by Lauren Gister, it was voted to approve the minutes of the April 26, 2017 meeting.*

Bonnie Reemsnyder and Ralph Eno abstained from voting.

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- b. Transportation Updates

- i. Adopt 2018-2019 UPWP (UPWP Resolution, Roles and Responsibilities Resolution, Authorizing Agreement)

Robert Haramut said that the UPWP had been sent to the members for the April meeting and again for this meeting with slight changes to the financial tables and some description revisions. There are 3 different resolutions. 1) the UPWP; 2) the adoption of the transportation planning roles and responsibilities; and, 3) an authorizing resolution to enter into an agreement with DOT for funding. Mr. Haramut said there is a 30-day comment period which ends on the 30th so this is a conditional approval provided there are no significant comments received between now and the 30<sup>th</sup>.

*Upon motion of Carl Fortuna, seconded by Lauren Gister, it was unanimously voted to endorse the Lower CT River Valley Region Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Unified Planning Work Program with the condition that no significant comments are received between now and the 30<sup>th</sup>.*

- ii. Authorization of the Chair to sign 10-Year Master Agreement with CTDOT

Sam Gold said that the state is trying to move to a 10-year master agreement with no funding associated with it. CTDOT is asking for authorization for the Chairman to enter into this 10-year master agreement which would set framework for simple project letters that then could be signed by the Chair for future funds without having to go to the Attorney General's office. Mr. Gold stated that our attorney along with attorneys from other COGs have reviewed this agreement.

*Upon motion of Carl Fortuna, seconded by Tony Salvatore, it was unanimously voted to authorize the Chair to sign 10-year master agreements with the CTDOT.*

- iii. Endorse TAP letter of support (RT 82 Haddam)

Robert Haramut said at the last meeting the transportation alternative program projects were discussed. CTDOT has requested a formal letter in support of the project.

Susan Bransfield asked when a project, such as a bridge, is in two different towns are there any type of relationship or agreement that needs to be done. Sam Gold said that when a project involves two towns there are provisions for sharing the match, although one town could be designated as the lead on the project. Laura Francis stated that towns can have inter-local agreements and the members agreed.

*Upon motion of Lizz Milardo, seconded by Cathy Iino, it was unanimously voted to support the advancing phase II of the Route 82 pedestrian improvement project in Haddam.*

- iv. Letters of Support for OPM Responsible Growth and TOD Grant Applications

Jon Curtis said that one of the requirements for getting this grant is to have staff recommendations for each application, but a letter of support from the entire COG would be better. He stated that six projects have been received from three towns, Deep River, Old Lyme and Old Saybrook and he would like a motion that letters of support be sent.

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*Upon motion of Laura Francis, seconded by Lizz Milardo, it was unanimously voted to send letters of support for the six projects as presented in the towns of Deep River, Old Lyme and Old Saybrook.*

- v. 2018 TIP update

Robert Haramut stated that the air quality conformance statement has not been completed and the vote on this issue will be at the June meeting. The public comment period is May 26<sup>th</sup> thru June 24<sup>th</sup> with the public hearing on June 14<sup>th</sup>. He will send the members a link to this document.

vi. Corridor Study update

Robert Haramut said next Wednesday interviews will be conducted to hire a consultant for the Routes 66 and 81 corridor studies.

#### 4. LCRVCOG BUSINESS

a. River COG Budget and b. State Funding / Town Budgets

Sam Gold said that a draft budget had been sent to the members. Two weeks ago he received an e-mail from OPM saying not to expect the fourth quarter payment of the regional service grant which is about \$75,000. This is on top of the reduction funding over the previous year of about 12%. As of now the fiscal '18 budget is balanced with \$5,000 going into reserves.

*Upon motion of Tony Salvatore, seconded by Laura Francis, it was unanimously voted to accept the budget for fiscal year '17-'18.*

Bonnie Reemsnyder thanked Sam Gold and Paula Fernald for watching the budget so closely.

c. RiverCOG Office Space

Sam Gold said that the COG's attorney has been negotiating with the landlord's attorney on the terms of the lease which would be a 5 year lease for 4,000 sq. ft. at 7 Island Dock Road in Haddam with two 5-year renewals. Mr. Gold stated that there is still a purchase option written into the lease, but that decision cannot be made until the state budget is approved.

Angus MacDonald said that pursuing a purchase, in his opinion, is the wrong avenue for this organization. Commercial properties are always a question on whether that property value is going to go up or go down and we are experiencing right now the uncertainty of what our funding is going to be. He just thinks it is not a good idea to pursue.

Susan Bransfield asked the date of the first meeting there. Sam Gold stated that we will be taking the July meeting "on the road" and expects our first meeting will be at the end of September in Haddam.

d. Regional Election Monitor Funding MOU and Contract

Sam Gold said that to his surprise the Secretary of State came through with a MOU for funding the regional election monitor program. He said he has spoken to Carol Conklin about a two year budget.

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He said he is looking for two motions one for entering into the MOU with the Secretary of State's Office for the \$11,111 grant and then entering into a two year contract with Carol Conklin for the Regional Election Monitor position.

*Upon motion of Susan Bransfield, seconded by Carl Fortuna, it was unanimously voted to authorize the RiverCOG to enter into a MOU agreement with the Secretary of State's office to receive the \$11,111 grant.*

A motion was made by Carl Fortuna, seconded by Lauren Gister, to authorize Sam Gold, Executive Director to enter into a contract with Carol Conklin for the Regional Election Monitor position. Motion was not carried.

Tony Salvatore amended the motion to add as long as the funding is available.

*Upon motion of Carl Fortuna, seconded by Lauren Gister, it was unanimously voted to authorize Sam Gold, Executive Director to enter into a 2 year contract with Carol Conklin for the Regional Election Monitor position as long as the funding is available.*

Carol Conklin updated the members on the answer to the COG that ignored the State Statues and chose not to have a regional election monitor. The question that was asked is what is the penalty? In the event any of those towns in that COG have an error, and the error is registrar based, faulted, lack of training, not enough intervention, there is a fining process for registrars. That fining process would be looked upon very unfavorably without having a monitor who could have called or checked up on.

Janice Ehle/Meyer introduced Linda Krause's daughter Miranda.

Janice Ehle/Meyer said there is a suggestion to combine the Department of Agriculture with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. Susan Bransfield noted that if we are looking to reduced state expenditures there are going to be these kinds of decisions that merit discussion. She felt that sometimes consolidation is a good decision. Cathy Iino agreed, but felt that the operations of these departments have to be looked at also. Ms. Bransfield said that the way some of these departments are organized they may need to be restructured. She wants to continue this discussion on how administrative costs are mitigated because that is essential to our survival. Bonnie Reemsnyder suggested that the letter should articulate our understanding and the reasoning behind it, but question the merging with the DEEP. The COG's letter could say "looking for other opportunities with other departments other than DEEP". Understanding the efforts but questioning the details of that merger.

*Upon motion of Cathy Iino, seconded by Tony Salvatore, it was unanimously voted to send a letter in opposition to the proposal to combine the Department of Agriculture with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. The COG understands the efforts but questioning the details of that merger.*

e. New Clean Harbors Contract

Janice Ehle/Meyer distributed the Clean Harbors contract for the members to sign.

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f. Regional Plan

Jon Curtis updated the members of the progress on the regional plan. He expects by next September the Plan to be completed and submitted to the COG for approval. Sam Gold stated that the kick off meeting

will be in Westbrook on August 17<sup>th</sup>. This was set to accommodate the seasonal population along the shoreline. The second kick off meeting will be at Wesleyan University in Middletown on September 16<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Curtis said that leading up to these meetings there will be pop up events. Bonnie Reemsnyder asked Mr. Curtis if he needed any suggestions of upcoming events in their towns which might be an opportunity for a pop up. Mr. Curtis said that any suggestions would be appreciated. Susan Bransfield asked who would be staffing these events. Mr. Curtis said RPC members and staff will be at these functions.

g. COG Regional Boundaries as County Analog for Federal Grant and Statistics Purposes

Jon Curtis said that the RiverCOG has been trying to work with the other COGs to try to get the COG boundaries recognized as an analog for federal grant and statistics purposes. He explained that there are grants that Connecticut misses out on because we are not a county government.

*Upon motion of Susan Bransfield, seconded by Laura Francis, it was unanimously voted to authorize RiverCOG to work with the other Connecticut COGs, CCM, and Legislators to get the regional geography recognized as an analog for county geography for Federal Grant and Statistics purposes.*

h. Resiliency Plan

Margot Burns told the members that a third meeting was held in Middletown on May 9<sup>th</sup> and the planners from Middletown and Cromwell were there. The draft report is due tomorrow with a presentation of the plan probably in September.

Margot Burns stated that field work collection of trappa (water chestnuts) in the Lower Connecticut River has started. She said that though the winter she has worked with the Connecticut River Watershed Council, (changed their name to the Connecticut River Conservancy), and the Connecticut River Museum on getting training together, information sessions for volunteers, and then doing a one-day sweep of the river from the Massachusetts border to Long Island Sound.

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

Bonnie Reemsnyder thanked the office space committee for their hard work. Cathy Iino and Sam Gold thanked Ms. Reemsnyder for her diligence in this search.

Sam Gold said that this summer will be busy with the move. The landlord in Haddam has given the COG \$20,000 towards painting and carpeting which needs to be completed by the time we move in. He stated that he has been discussing with Al Alper the need for a new server and then running the lines for all the computers. He said he is holding back on purchasing any room dividers or cubicles until a decision on purchasing have been made.

## **6. OTHER BUSINESS**

a. DEMHS Update

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Torrance Downes said the members of Region 2 are negotiating for the next grant that is due in October 2017. He said they are currently operating under three grants. The 2015 grant is almost spent down, the 2015 special hazard grant that has to be spent down by the end of June, and the 2016 grant that went into place this past October. This grant is unspent at this time and will last until 2019. The grant

that is being negotiated now starts in October 2017 and will continue until 2020. Mr. Downes stated that every year there is a requirement for a Memorandum of Understanding to be signed. He said there are two RiverCOG towns needing to have those Memorandums of Understanding signed, Deep River and Middlefield.

Hughes-Net Emergency Satellite Communications Service, which six of the RiverCOG towns participate in, has been previously paid through Region 2 funds. This charge will now be transferred to the municipalities for payment starting July 1, 2017. The six towns affected are: Chester, Durham, Essex, Haddam, Killingworth, and Westbrook.

Carl Fortuna spoke about the LOPCIP program in Old Saybrook in which four bids were received. He presented these bids at the Board of Selectmen where a scope review was conducted and the lowest bid was selected. That bid was withdrawn by the company the next day and the next lowest bid was accepted. Mr. Fortuna was told by DOT that the LOPCIP guidelines will be revised.

David LeVasseur thanked the members for all their help over the years as he is retiring from OPM. Bonnie Reemsnyder thanked him for all his help with the RiverCOG through the merger.

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

*Upon motion of Tony Salvatore, seconded by Lauren Gister, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:03 a.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Snyder  
Recording Secretary

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