



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

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, April 24, 2019

RiverCOG Members:

Chester: Charlene Janecek *
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: Joe Samolis *
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
Edgar Wynkoop, CT DOT
Eric Shortell, Federal Highway
Ellen Graham, Sen. Blumenthal's Office

Staff Present:

Sam Gold
Robert Haramut
Daniel Bourret
Margot Burns
Eliza LoPresti
Paula Fernald

RiverCOG

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

Chairman Michael Maniscalco called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. at RiverCOG, 145 Dennison Rd., Essex, CT.

Roll was called by Sam Gold, Executive Director.

There was no public speaking.

Ms. Reemsnyder made a motion to move agenda items up and add a new item. Second by Mr. Salvatore. Vote was unanimous in favor.

Agenda items moved up and new listed here:

New: Sustainable CT MOA

4c. Legislative Update

4d. RiverCOG Website

5. Executive Director's Report

6c. HHW Update

Sustainable CT Memorandum of Agreement

This MOA with Sustainable CT is to provide protection for the COG as we host their summer fellows. The MOA has been reviewed by Mr. Gold.

Mr. Bailey moved to authorize Executive Director Gold to sign the MOA with Sustainable CT. Second by Ms. Reemsnyder. Vote was unanimous in favor.

4c. Legislative Update

A written update was presented as a follow up to the bills that were discussed earlier in the session. This document will be emailed.

Mr. Gold briefly discussed HB 7192, instructing COGs to provide back office support to Assessor's offices. He is leaving this COG meeting early to head up to Hartford to have a meeting about this bill.

Bill 7408, an act that would allow municipalities to assess a service fee on non-profits was commented on from the viewpoint of the Land Trust. The comment speculated that if the land trusts go under (due to fees) the state or the towns would have to take over the conservation land.

Also commented on was HB 6637, for a user-fee-based approach to help fund efforts to thwart invasive species on the CT River and other water bodies.

4d. RiverCOG Website

Thirteen proposals were received for the RFP to build our new website ranging from

\$10,000 to \$40,000. Mr. Gold selected aW Marketing. The reasons for rejecting the other proposals were discussed. Mr. Gold previously received authorization to enter into this agreement.

5. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Gold gave a brief financial report; we are currently spending within the confines of the budget. Jon Curtis will be going out on disability again and next steps are being worked on.

6c. Household Hazardous Waste Update

Mr. Gold requested that if CEOs know of shredding events in their town they should let Janice know so we don't duplicate efforts.

2. Citizen Corps Report and Boat Pumpout Program Report – Joel Severance

Mr. Severance presented statistics from the boat pumpout program that takes place on seven towns on the CT River.

Mr. Severance then discussed the volunteer CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) program. Throughout RiverCOG there are sixteen different CERT Teams, though they do go outside their respective towns and the region as needed.

He also briefly discussed the DART (Durham Animal Response Team). Representatives from DART were not available to come to this meeting as they were receiving a distinguished service award from the CT Veterinary Association. This regional team can work in conjunction with CERT, and rescues animals as needed.

3. LCRVMPO Business

a. Approval of Minutes of the March 27, 2019 LCRVCOG & MPO Meeting

Upon motion of Ms. Milardo, seconded by Ms. Reemsnyder, it was unanimously voted to approve the March 27, 2019 Minutes of the LCRVCOG & MPO Meeting.

b. TIP Amendment

i. 2018 TIP Amendment #28 – Statewide Transportation Demand Management, project # 01700-3528

This TIP Amendment deals with CT Rides.

Upon motion of Ms. Reemsnyder, seconded by Mr. Salvatore, it was unanimously voted to approve TIP Amendment #28.

c. Other Transportation Updates

i. Review and Prioritize Transportation Alternative Program Projects – this will be discussed further during the May meeting. One project was received in Middletown for the Hartford TMA. The New Haven TMA had five projects: Old Saybrook, Clinton, Old Lyme, Essex, and Westbrook. Most are sidewalk or trail projects. These will need to be discussed and one chosen to be submitted. The Essex project is already submitted under LOTCIP funding, thus eliminating it from the TAP.

ii. Unified Planning Work Program – The draft UPWP, which is a list of transportation planning tasks for the next two-year period, has not received any comments from the state or federal agencies. The next steps are a 30 day public comment period and endorsement at the May COG meeting.

iii. Metropolitan Transportation Plan – The plan has been completed and forwarded to State and Federal authorities. Since this plan is on a four year cycle, the next update will begin in about three years.

iv. 5310 Grant Program – Applications will be reviewed and prioritized at the May COG meeting. These are TMA based; the Hartford TMA has one application for Cromwell, the New Haven TMA has one for Chester and one for ETD for the taxi voucher program. The projects will be coordinated with SCROG and one prioritized list sent to CT DOT.

v. Corridor Studies (Routes 66 & 81) – The Route 81 study is nearly complete; next is a town meeting for approval. The Route 66 study will hold an advisory committee meeting the first week of May and a public information session the second week of that month.

vi. Regional Bus Study – There have been bi-weekly meetings occurring with the consultant, who is currently in the data collection process.

vii. BUILD Grant – This is the former TIGER grant; a US DOT discretionary grant. Mr. Haramut believes that the two planners in Haddam and East Haddam may re-submit the application for sidewalks on the swing bridge. Last round there was only one project approved in the state.

4. LCRVCOG Business

a. Appointment of RiverCOG FY 19 Audit Team

Ms. Iino moved to approve Henry, Raymond, and Thompson as the auditors for fiscal year 20. This was seconded by Ms. Francis and unanimously approved.

b. Upcoming Executive Committee Vacancy

Ms. Iino nominated Ed Bailey for the Executive Committee (position to be determined). The nomination was seconded by Ms. Bransfield and approved unanimously.

It was noted that Vice Chairman Salvatore will be moving up to Chairman upon Chairman Maniscalco's departure.

5. Chairman's Report

Chairman Maniscalco had nothing to report.

6. Other Business

a. Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan Committee

Ms. Burns asked that the COG think about putting together a sixteen member steering committee for the regional plan update (one member from each town joining the regional plan, with an additional subset for consultant selection). A funding update should be coming in May. She asked members to have someone in mind for the steering committee by the May COG meeting.

b. DEMHS Report

Ms. Francis asked that if you are one of the towns that has not signed the MOA for the Homeland Security grant(s) to please do so as it is one of the deliverables needed to get the funds. The 2016 grant is being closed out now (by June 30th).

c. Other

A discussion started with those that participated in some CCM community forums and the difference in leadership this year in CCM, COST, and particularly the state government and legislature than in past years. This led to a discussion on legislators that are antagonistic toward municipalities in general and also to particular municipalities in our region. The disconnect between legislators and municipalities was discussed, along with ideas on getting the legislators to attend COG meetings to bridge the gap.

There was the idea to write an open letter from all the municipalities about this topic and about open communication between municipal constituents and the legislators. It was noted that the towns now feel they need to lobby legislators even though they represent our municipalities. It was also suggested that the bill tracking that the COG has started be kept up with and the legislators held accountable for their votes during a meeting that we invite them to at the end of the session.

It was noted that highlighting common ground and how municipalities and the Governor agree is a good strategy for the letter. Giving examples of how well, frequently, and organically the COG (and other COGs in the state) collaborate so well together, and move past politics. The goal is to let people know that the municipalities are working together and integrating, and are a model for how it can be done. Perhaps the Governor can send a message to the legislators that they need to stay connected by attending COG meetings.

Mr. Gold will be asked to put together a letter highlighting the concerns discussed, copying CCM, COST, the Governor's office, and running it in the Hartford Courant.

7. Adjournment

Upon motion of Mr. Salvatore and second of Ms. Reemsnyder, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eliza LoPresti
Recording Secretary