



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, August 28, 2019

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: Jeremy DeCarli *
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 Knapp, Westbrook Planner
Marilyn Ozols, Westbrook Planning Commission
Abe Hilding-Salorio, Sustainable CT
Kate Cannie, Public Agency Retirement Services
Josh Hughes, Capitol Consulting
Bill Neale, Westbrook P&Z
Anne Galbraith, AGS Consultants
John Attella, The Kennedy Center
Laurie McElwee, The Kennedy Center
Carol Conklin, Regional Election Monitor

RiverCOG

Staff Present:

Sam Gold
Robert Haramut
Eliza LoPresti
Janice Ehle/Meyer

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

Chairman Anthony Salvatore called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. at RiverCOG, 145 Dennison Road, Essex, CT.

Roll was called by Sam Gold, Executive Director.

2. Public Speaking:

Abe Hilding-Salorio, Community Outreach Manager with SustainableCT, discussed their new community matching fund. The program will be rolled out on September 6, 2019, and seeks to expand the support offered to towns by offering a 50% match program for projects that align broadly with SustainableCT. Up to \$25,000 is offered to groups in towns registered with Sustainable CT and is available to non-profits, community groups, public schools, community groups and private citizens. The match is made through crowd-funding platform ioby.

Pat Bandzes, Eversource, stated that annual emergency response plan sessions will be taking place in September throughout the state for CEOs, first responders and dispatch.

Josh Hughes of Capitol Consulting introduced Kate Cannie of Public Agency Retirement Services, who explained that her firm helps municipalities plan for retiree healthcare costs. She discussed pre-funding OPEB liabilities with a multiple employer trust and diversifying investments. She offered a future lunch and learn session should member towns be interested.

Carol Conklin, Regional Election Monitor, has been ensuring that registrars have certified trained moderators for elections. Registrars must also be certified; there are more trainers in the state now and classes have become more accessible. Peggy Reeve, head of the state elections division, has retired and Ted Bromley will be moved to that position. The state is very focused on cyber security for the upcoming presidential election, they are not focusing as much on municipal elections.

3. LCRVMPO Business

- a. Approval of Minutes of the July 24, 2019 LCRVCOG & MPO Meeting

Upon motion of Mr. Bishop, seconded by Mr. Fortuna, it was unanimously voted to approve the July 24, 2019 Minutes of the LCRVCOG & MPO Meeting.

- b. New Haven TAP Project Review & Prioritization

TAP projects will be federally funded in the new transportation bill. There was discussion on the projects originally received for prioritization, which were ranked in the following order: Old Saybrook, Clinton, Westbrook, Old Lyme and Essex. The Essex project will happen through LOTCIP and the Old Lyme project will be submitted in the next round of LOTCIP. The Old Saybrook job has no independent utility (meaning that it is a portion of a much larger project) and will most likely be rejected for funding. Discussion ensued on which project will lead in discussions with SCCOG and the consensus was that the Westbrook project will be ranked first, though the Clinton job will also be submitted. The projects are similar in scope, but Westbrook has not received TAP or LOTCIP funding yet, whereas Clinton has already done two LOTCIP funded projects.

Ms. Bransfield moved to rank Westbrook first for the New Haven TMA TAP review. Second made by Mr. Bailey. Vote was unanimous in favor.

Discussion: This was determined because Clinton has received other funding through another program and the board will support Clinton in that application. Both Clinton and Westbrook will be submitted, though Westbrook is prioritized.

- c. Clinton LOTCIP (East Main Sidewalks) cost increase

Mr. Samolis moved to approve the Clinton LOTCIP cost increase; second by Mr. McDonald. Vote was unanimous in favor.

- d. Transit District Roles and Responsibilities (reauthorization of UPWP Appendix as an agreement with Estuary Transit District and Middletown Transit District)

The FTA recently requested to see the agreement between the transit district(s) and the MPO. There was not a specific agreement, though the UPWP Appendix specifying roles and responsibilities is acceptable as one. This has already been approved by the COG, but now is required to be signed.

Upon motion of Mr. Bailey and second of Ms. Reemsnyder it was unanimously approved that the UPWP Appendix be reauthorized as an agreement outlining roles and responsibilities between the Transit Districts and the MPO.

- e. Other Transportation

- i. Safety Performance Measures – These will be on the agenda for approval in September. The resolution is being sent to FHWA for approval prior to the MPO’s approval.
- ii. Update on Corridor & Bus Studies – The Route 66 corridor study has held an alternatives meeting with the advisory committee; a public involvement meeting will be held in the fall. Route 81 corridor study is ready for a final meeting/presentation to the Board of Selectmen.

Presentation – Anne Galbraith – on the Lower CT River Valley Transit Study: Ms. Galbraith is the project manager for this study. She presented on the project as a whole, including timeline, goals, methods, etc. A website for the study will be live shortly.

4. LCRVCOG Business

- a. FY2020 Regional Services Grant Agreement

Upon motion of Ms. Bransfield and second by Ms. Reemsndyer, this item was tabled by a unanimous vote.

OPM didn't send the agreement in time for the meeting.

- b. COG County Equivalency Update

A letter was distributed from OPM to the Director of the US Census Bureau requesting that planning regions be recognized as county equivalents. This will result in more useful data sets and possibly more opportunities. This led to a discussion on flood insurance and the fact that DEEP will be coming to a COG meeting in the fall to discuss possibly regionalization of community flood rankings. It was noted that if the COGs are to be recognized as county equivalents this has no effect on COG function or state statutes.

- c. Staffing Update

After Labor Day, a solicitation will go out for a new Regional Planner.

- d. New Website Update

The web designer previously approved to update the RiverCOG website will also be working on the transit study site, which will go live at the end of this week. All future project sites will have a permanent home at RiverCOG.org. That website will be updated shortly.

5. Chairman's and Executive Director's Reports

Chairman Salvatore discussed the state's family leave act and effect on unions and non-bargaining members. Right now if it's not negotiated with any unions you are not required to participate. He urged others to check with their labor attorneys on this issue. Mr. Bailey noted that there is an open question about this in reference to regional school districts.

Also discussed was the proposal to shift a portion of the income tax to payroll tax, which could be a detriment to those in the public sector. Chair Salvatore is asking Mr. Gold, CCM and COST to follow this issue.

Mr. Gold stated that the auditors are coming next week; RiverCOG computers have been updated and/or replaced where needed and we are still waiting on RSG work plan approval.

6. Other Business

Ms. Iino explained that two towns are currently looking for a part time Building Official and she was wondering about the creation of a regional position. She also asked about a regional census complete count committee as Killingworth does not have enough

volunteers to create one. Mr. Gold believes that it can be done regionally. Mr. Fortuna explained what Old Saybrook did for establishing their committee and believes that a representative from the US Census would come to a COG meeting to discuss.

Discussion moved back to Building Officials, the shortage of them and the use of MOUs with other towns when a BO may be out or absent. Mr. Gold will ask the COG's attorney about this as there is language in the current budget bill that he believes would allow for the creation of a regional BO position.

Mr. Gold noted that at meetings of the Advisory Committee for Intergovernmental Relations there have been discussions on IT projects in the state, and the state seems focused on getting some things automated, especially as they expect a high number of retirements. He is also working with OPM on streamlining Assessors' functions.

Ms. Iino noted that in Killingworth, Haddam, and Chester mosquitos with the eastern equine encephalitis have been found.

Household Hazardous Waste Update: A compost bin/rain barrel sale is happening now through September 28. A repair café will take place in Middletown on September 21. The shredding event on August 17 in Middlefield saw the most participants of any shredding event.

Agriculture update: the RAC is working on updating zoning regulations for livestock.

Carl Fortuna has been appointed to Lizz Milardo's seat on MIRA due to her resignation.

7. Adjournment

Upon motion of Mr. Bishop and second of Ms. Reemsnyder, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Eliza LoPresti, Recording Secretary