



# 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, October 23, 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  
Carol Conklin, Regional Election Monitor  
Emily Boushee, Senator Chris Murphy's Office  
Judi Rand, Middlefield  
Kristen Brown, Waste Zero  
Ellen Graham, Senator Blumenthal's Office  
Eric Shortell, Federal Highway Administration  
Kurt Salmoighari, Federal Highway Administration  
Kelsey Wentling, Connecticut River Conservancy  
Chris Holden, Middletown's Public Works Director  
Frank DeFelice, RiverRPC

**RiverCOG**

**Staff Present:**

Torrance Downes  
Robert Haramut  
Eliza LoPresti  
Paula Fernald

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

Chairman Anthony Salvatore called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. at Lyman Orchards Clubhouse, 70 Lyman Road, Middlefield, CT.

Roll was called by Torrance Downes, Deputy Director.

No public speaking occurred.

**2. Regional Election Monitor Report**

Carol Conklin reported that the election will be November 5. There is a state portal that will report results that evening. October 29 will be an extended day for all registrars; they are required to be open from 9:00 – 8:00 as that is the last day for voter registration. The statewide system will also be undertaking a database stress test that day. Ms. Conklin noted that she is on call on election day but can only enter a polling place with a letter from the state.

**3. Regional and Statewide Solid Waste Solutions – Kristen Brown, Waste Zero (on behalf of DEEP)**

The purpose of Ms. Brown’s presentation was to gauge interest in a regional approach to waste solutions. She is proposing a “pay as you throw” model. This approach can be integrated into any kind of current situation, as different towns have varied methods for waste removal. The program would work by purchase of specific sized bags, the cost of which covers the disposal of the waste that fits inside that bag. Theoretically, haulers would then reduce their tipping fees, resulting in a lower charge for customers as well as changed behavior around waste.

Ms. Bransfield asked for details of how the system would actually work. Ms. Brown stated that there would be no regional agreement with the haulers, but they would reduce their fees voluntarily. Ms. Bransfield asked about how this would impact towns that already have a pay as you throw fee at their transfer station; Ms. Brown noted that if the towns are interested, there would be an in-depth look at all of these towns/situations to figure out all the details. Mr. Bailey spoke to how contracts work with MIRA, and the fact that towns are going to have to pay for recycling soon once current contracts run out.

Ms. Francis asked if there is a way to start this as a voluntary program, with it then morphing into a compulsory program once the voluntary portion of the program is shown to be a success. Ms. Brown noted that some places have done it on a trial basis, but it has not been tried on a volunteer basis per household within a town, though she is open to thinking that option through. Ms. Iino asked about the idea of giving away a bag per week or something along those lines to entice people; Ms. Brown stated that this has been successfully done.

There was further discussion on the haulers voluntarily reducing their own prices. Ms. Brown noted that she is in discussion with haulers, and that they do reduce their fees as this is a very public process and reducing their tip fee is reducing risk for the haulers in general.

Chairman Salvatore noted that Ms. Brown should be invited back for further in-depth discussion on this topic after the election, as new CEOs would most likely be interested in learning about this program.

#### 4. LCRVMPO Business

##### a. Approval of Minutes of the September 25, 2019 LCRVCOG & MPO Meeting

*Upon motion of Mr. Bishop, seconded by Mr. Bailey, it was unanimously voted to approve the September 25, 2019 minutes of the LCRVCOG & MPO meeting.*

##### b. Transportation Updates

- i. FY 21 Draft TIP Update – this is moving along on schedule. The draft list of projects is together; the next step is air quality, which decides which projects will be modeled. Those projects are then modeled and a draft report will come out probably in early April for board approval in May or June.
- ii. LOTCIP Update – Mr. Haramut distributed a high-level overview of the current LOTCIP program.
- iii. Corridor/Bus Study Update – The Rt. 81 study in Clinton is pretty much complete. There may be further meetings with the consultants and the developers of the old Morgan School site.

Route 66 – an advisory committee meeting was held the week prior. Revised alternatives were presented. A public information meeting will be held on Nov. 21 at the East Hampton Public Library.

Bus Study – Last month, public pop up events were held. The consultants are looking at available sites for a maintenance facility.

##### c. Bus Company Updates

Ms. Seymour stated that MAT officially paid off its credit line, and now has a functioning board. They have a small general fund for the first time in 11 years. A trolley project is now underway for the next year and a half. ETD is lending their trolley to MAT for December's Holiday on Main program.

##### d. Other

Mr. Haramut noted that on Nov. 15 he will meet with the STP Urban Unit at CT DOT. If any towns have large scale projects for the CT DOT please let him know so he can get it on their radar. He will send out an email solicitation about this.

## 5. LCRVCOG Business

### a. Regional Plan of Conservation & Development Consultant Selection

Frank DeFelice, Chairman of the Regional Planning Committee, explained the process of consultant selection and revealed that Fitzgerald & Halliday has been chosen to help finish the plan. He noted that a letter will be sent to each CEO naming a date for a meeting with that town's land use commissions, the purpose of which is for towns to weigh in on the plan.

Ms. Gister asked about the timeline for completion, which is 12 months. Ms. Goupil noted that it should be made clear in the letter that the COG is the body that ultimately votes on the plan. Ms. Francis asked about RPC attendance; Ms. LoPresti will send emails to the towns that have not been represented.

### b. Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan Update – Town Representatives and Match

Mr. Downes distributed a written update regarding the Regional Haz-Mit Plan. The award letter has been received and signed. At this point we are working on obtaining a representative from each municipality for the working group. The following CEOs volunteered at this time to be their town's representative: Sue Bransfield, Laura Francis, Lauren Gister and Ed Bailey.

### c. RiverCOG Representative to the Lower CT River Land Trust

The Executive Committee recommended appointment of Margot Burns as the RiverCOG representative to the LCRLT.

*Ms. Bransfield moved to ratify the decision of the Executive Committee to appoint Ms. Burns as the RiverCOG representative to the LCRLT; second by Mr. Bailey. Vote was unanimous in favor.*

### d. HHW Update

The HHW season has ended after 12 collections. 2018-2019 was the third of a five-year contract with Clean Harbors. The last two years of the contract are optional; Ms. Ehle/Meyer suggests we continue with them for the last two years of the contract. Adding the new collection in Cromwell seemed to aid in reducing traffic in the Middletown collection, she asks that the board consider keeping that collection in the budget. Next season's budget will be presented at an upcoming COG meeting. Multiple CEOs noted at this time that the program is running well and that Ms. Ehle/Meyer does a fantastic job running it.

### e. FY 19 Audit and Financial Report

Ms. Fernald stated that we are on track for this fiscal year. The audit was completed last month, the draft will be ready mid-November for the Executive Committee and will be presented at the December COG meeting.

f. DEMHS Update

Mr. Downes reported that the 2019 Homeland Security grant just went into effect on Oct. 1. The grants from 2017 – 2019 are all overlapping at this time, and for the first time all available funds appear to be allocated to projects. Another grant that is running concurrently with the three Homeland Security grants is the one-year EMPG.

g. RSG FY19 Annual Report

Ms. LoPresti distributed the report that was sent to the General Assembly, OPM, specific committees and the State & Legislative Libraries on RSG funds.

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

Chairman Salvatore presented certificates to and thanked the CEOs that are not running for reelection: Christine Goupil of Clinton, Lizz Milardo of Haddam, Emmett Lyman of East Haddam and Dan Drew of Middletown.

Mr. Downes reported that Mr. Gold will be participating in CCM's commission on property tax reform.

## 7. Other Business

The next COG meeting has been moved to December 11 because of the CCM conference.

Ms. Iino discussed a procedure regarding keeping fingerprints on file, which is relevant to towns with a resident state trooper program. Mr. McDonald noted that he and others in his town were sent letters that they are required to attend a class on fingerprinting.

Ms. Goupil urged the COG to address the appointment process of ZEOs at the state level.

## 8. Executive Session – RiverCOG Personnel/Administrative Policies Amendment

*Ms. Goupil moved to enter into executive session and invite Ms. Fernald and Mr. Downes into the session at 10:19 a.m.. Second by Mr. Bailey; vote was unanimous in favor.*

Executive session ended at 10:41 a.m.

*Upon motion of Mr. Bailey and second of Ms. Francis, the language change proposed by the Executive Director for the amendment to the personnel/administrative policy was approved unanimously.*

## 9. Adjournment

*Upon motion of Mr. Bailey and second of Ms. Milardo, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:45 a.m.*

Respectfully submitted, Eliza LoPresti, Recording Secretary