



# 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

April 27, 2022

#### RiverCOG Members;

Chester: Charlene Janecek  
Clinton: Karl Kilduff  
Cromwell: Anthony Salvatore \*  
Deep River: Angus McDonald  
Durham: Laura Francis  
East Haddam: Irene Haines \* (until 10:30)  
East Hampton: David Cox \*  
Essex: Norm Needleman  
Haddam: Bob McGarry \*  
Killingworth: Nancy Gorski \*  
Lyme: Steve Mattson \*  
Middlefield: Jim Irish \*  
Middletown: Joe Samolis \* (until 10:00)  
Old Lyme: Tim Griswold \*  
Old Saybrook: Carl Fortuna \* (until 9:30)  
Portland: Ryan Curley \* (until 10:55)  
Westbrook: John Hall

#### MPO Members:

Middlesex Chamber of Commerce: Darlene Briggs \*  
Estuary & Middletown Area Transit Districts: Joe Comerford \*

\*present

#### Others Present:

Cynthia Clegg, Middlesex Community Foundation  
Carey Duques, Essex  
Erik Shortell, FHWA  
Ellen Graham, Senator Blumenthal's Office  
Grayson Wright, CT DOT  
Carol Conklin, Regional Election Monitor  
Rory Jacobson, FHI Studio  
Ken Livingston, FHI Studio

#### Staff Present:

Sam Gold  
Eliza LoPresti  
Robert Haramut  
Kevin Armstrong

# RiverCOG

Janice Ehle/Meyer  
Margot Burns  
Torrance Downes  
Ben Lovejoy

**1. Call to Order, Roll Call, Introductions**

Chairman Salvatore called the meeting to order at 9:03 A.M. The meeting was held via Zoom teleconference.

*Mr. Cox moved to add approval of the auditors for FY2022 to the agenda as item 5b. Second by Mr. Fortuna. Vote was unanimous in favor.*

**2. Public Speaking**

Mr. Fortuna spoke about MIRA at this time as he needed to leave the meeting early. He noted that the facility will probably be done as of August 1 because they cannot meet the required tonnage from the towns that have not dropped out. CWPM will be transferring garbage out of Essex to Preston, most likely, unless they don't have capacity that day and they send it out of state. He would like to see a regional RFP through the COG for disposal and transportation out of the Essex station. It was recommended to the Gov. that there will need to be a public/private option. DEEP is exploring putting out an RFP to see what they get back as far as options.

Regional Election Monitor, Carol Conklin, reported that HB 5379 concerning elections needs support in the Senate. It proposes common sense changes and removes outdated language. It also allows registrars to use a town website as a record of legal notification of voter registration and special sessions tied to the election process. Additionally, registrars will be able to hire certain poll workers from out of town, which is important with the shortage of people.

Ellen Graham from Sen. Blumenthal's office reported that the deadline for the next cycle of earmarks was last week. They are still working forward for a path on the build back better bill. There may be federal funding coming for PFAS situations. Chairman Salvatore asked about federal funding for local roads; Ms. Graham will check into this.

Rep. Haines reported that they are done with session the following Wednesday. They are now looking at mandate relief, a police accreditation bill through POST, and study of legal notice posting via websites (vs. newspapers) to save money. Some unfunded mandates are still awaiting action like HVAC within schools and fair rent commission establishment. She also discussed studies for traumatic injuries and cancer in fire fighters.

Mr. Fortuna stated that he believes the fire fighter cancer presumption bill has been successfully removed from worker's comp. Mr. Griswold noted that newspapers will fight tooth and nail on the legal notices, though it's a preposterous expense for towns.

**3. Presentation – Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan – Rory Jacobson & Ken Livingston, FHI Studio**

Ms. Jacobson presented the draft plan. CEOs asked for another month to comment before approving.

**a. Endorse LCRV Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan 2022:**

*Mr. Cox moved to table approval of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, second by Ms. Haines. Motion was approved unanimously.*

**4. LCRVMPO Business**

**a. Approval of Minutes of March 23, 2022 LCRVCOG & LCRVMPO Meeting**

*Mr. Cox moved to approve the minutes of the March 23, 2022 meeting; second by Mr. McGarry. Vote was unanimous in favor.*

**b. Proposed Revised Meeting Schedule to Include In-Person Meetings**

The consensus was to meet during lunch for the in-person meetings. Therefore the in-person meetings will start at 11:30 and RiverCOG will provide lunch.

*Ms. Haines moved to approve the revised meeting schedule to include three in-person meetings with the meetings in East Hampton on June 22, 2022 and in Portland on Sept. 28, 2022 to begin at 11:30 a.m., seconded by Mr. McGarry.*

*Discussion – Mr. Griswold suggested we make the Old Lyme meeting 11:30 as well.*

*Motion amended by Ms. Haines and Mr. McGarry that all three in-person meetings will begin at 11:30. Vote passed unanimously.*

*Discussion – Meetings can be hybrid dependent on the available technology. In East Hampton, a hybrid meeting format can be supported, but during the Portland meeting it will not be. We will advertise the meetings as such when the time comes.*

**c. 2021 TIP Amendment #15**

**i. CT Transit, 0400-XXXX, 5339O, X6, Bus/bus facility discretionary FY21 CT zero emission bus program, ACQ, \$14,308,000, 2022, New project**

*Mr. Cox moved to approve 2021 TIP Amendment #15, i. Second by Mr. Griswold. Vote was unanimous in favor.*

**ii. Various, 0400-XXXX, 5339P, X6, Statewide bus replacement FY19 FY20 FY21, ACQ, \$30,000,000, 2022, New project**

*Mr. Cox moved to approve 2021 TIP Amendment #15, ii. Second by Mr. McGarry. Vote was unanimous in favor.*

**iii. CT Transit, 040-XXXX, 5339P, X6, Systemwide admin capital/misc support/facility improvements, OTH, \$1,538,000, 2022, New project**

*Mr. Cox moved to approve 2021 TIP Amendment #15, iii. Second by Mr. McGarry. Vote was unanimous in favor.*

**iv. Statewide, 0170-3625, CMAQ, X6, Statewide TDM (NY/NJ/CT moderate), OTH, \$2,465,000, 2022, New project**

*Mr. Cox moved to approve 2021 TIP Amendment #15, iv. Second by Mr. McGarry. Vote was unanimous in favor.*

**v. Statewide, 0170-3626, CMAQ, X6, Statewide TDM (Greater CT moderate), OTH, \$1,576,000, 2022, New project**

*Mr. Cox moved to approve 2021 TIP Amendment #15, v. Second by Mr. Griswold. Vote was unanimous in favor.*

**vi. Estuary TD, 0478-XXXX, 5311P, X6, ETD 5311 capital FY21, OTH, \$390,000, 2022, Move to FY22, increase fed carryover from \$76,000 to \$312,000**

*Mr. Cox moved to approve 2021 TIP Amendment #15, vi. Second by Mr. Griswold. Vote was unanimous in favor.*

- vii. Estuary TD, 0478-XXXX, 5311P, X6, ETD 5311 on call operating, FY21, OTH, \$484,000, 2022, Move to FY22, increase fed carryover from \$41,000 to \$242,000**

*Mr. Cox moved to approve 2021 TIP Amendment #15, vii. Second by Mr. Griswold. Vote was unanimous in favor.*

- viii. Various, 0170-XXXX 5311P, X6, Program adjustment to actual apportionment, admin and RTAP program FY21, OTH, \$937,000, Move to FY22, increase fed carryover from \$500,000 to \$937,000**

*Mr. Cox moved to approve 2021 TIP Amendment #15, viii. Second by Mr. McGarry. Vote was unanimous in favor.*

**d. IJJA Federal Infrastructure Law Process**

Mr. Gold suggested a special meeting with town public works officials and/or engineers in which the towns bring to the COG their projects that could potentially have funding under the IJJA. The projects will then be endorsed at the state level and the state will assist with grant writing and submission. CCM will also likely be supporting, they are meeting with the COG directors next week about this. The COGs will be asking for multi-regional applications and coordination. The notice of funding for the IJJA will be released next month.

**e. Other Transportation Updates (MTP, TIP, ALT Study, Etc.)**

Mr. Gold reported that an earmark request has been submitted for a corridor study for the Air Line Trail connection in East Hampton to eventually meet up with Middletown.

Mr. Haramut reported that the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) will need to be updated for April of 2023. There shouldn't be any major changes but work will need to begin on that soon. The TIP is being updated concurrently. That will also need to be approved next spring.

**f. Update from Transit District**

Mr. Comerford updated that as of July 1 all employees will be moved over to ETD. The scope of the fare study is being finalized with the vendor now; this should take about a year and a half to complete. They have selected a firm to conduct the marketing study and an RFP has been issued for an app for a common vehicle locating system. There also needs to be a study of the Middletown terminal as it cannot fit the buses.

**5. LCRVCOG Business**

**a. Document Digitization Update**

Mr. Armstrong asked that participating towns think of who the point person will be for the chosen company to come do the initial site assessment. He recommended that towns that have not yet decided whether to participate still obtain a site assessment (for no cost) so that they can know their volume of scannable documents for the future.

The program will consist of the scanning, with the second part being multi-COG in scope. The second part will include a Laserfiche document management software solution with discounted licenses. We can also utilize the work that MetroCOG has already done on online permitting system, if needed.

- i. **Recommendation of a Regional Approach and Vendor:**  
ScanOptics is recommended by the RFP interview team.

*Mr. Cox moved to move forward with ScanOptics based on the recommendation of the Document Digitization interview committee for the regional approach of scanning, if so desired by member towns. Second by Mr. McGarry. Vote was unanimous in favor.*

- b. **Approval of Auditors for Fiscal Year 2022 (motion)**

*Mr. Cox moved to appoint Henry, Raymond and Thompson, LLC as the auditing firm for FY 2022. Second by Mr. Griswold. Vote was unanimous in favor.*

- c. **Update on ARPA Regional Projects**

- i. **15% County Share Set-Aside:** Besides the document digitization project addressed above, another project being discussed is the small business and non-profit grants/loans administered through the Middlesex County Revitalization Commission and the Community Foundation of Middlesex County. Both have agreed that we can use their existing loan/grant structures and will include Lyme and Old Lyme. The criteria that the CFMC and MCRC use to evaluate the grants and loans will be used by them in this process as well.

- d. **HHW Update**

Ms. Ehle/Meyer reported that the first household hazardous waste collection took place in Clinton the weekend before. The next will be May 14 in East Hampton. She suggested a subcommittee meeting to discuss the Phase 1 of the building in Essex and the vendor agreement.

- e. **Regional Agricultural Council Updates**

Ms. Ehle/Meyer discussed the access to agricultural electronic screens that have been installed in some busses. The transplanter that the RAC ordered on the Ag grant has arrived and they are developing a program for its use. There will be a demonstration day, hopefully in June. There will be collection and analyzation of the soil before and after using the no-till equipment, with cooperation of Vinal Tech. The land trusts will be met with for help in finding land that hasn't yet been farmed that may be good for the no-till program.

- f. **Legislative Update**

Mr. Lovejoy gave an update on the current state of bills in the legislature. This was also distributed to the CEOs prior to the meeting.

- g. **Update on Regional Housing Plan**

The municipal annexes for the participating towns are currently being worked on. Ms. Jouflas and Mr. Gold will be talking to a reporter from the CT Mirror about the plan.

- h. **Lower CT River Land Trust Update**

Ms. Burns reported that the LCRLT is setting up a region-wide trail adventure challenge. They will be speaking to the LTE about it at a joint meeting on May 18. The meeting is also a special meeting to elect Jim Irish to the board and to discuss the RAC's ongoing project.

**i. Aquatic Invasive Species Update**

Ms. Burns reported that they are still asking for appropriations for the Army Corps of Engineers to continue their research on hydrilla in the CT River. There will begin a pilot program next summer.

**j. Resilient CT 2.0/Hazard Mitigation Update**

All towns are meeting with Ms. Burns and CIRCA, nine towns have been visited so far. The visits serve two purposes; a required review of the hazard mitigation plans, and CIRCA getting a comprehensive view of the hazard mitigation needs of our region and creation of resiliency corridors.

**k. DEMHS Update**

Mr. Downes reported that Region 2 REPT is in the budgeting process for the FY22 3-year grant. There has been a delay in the purchase of a new hazmat trailer, with no guarantee that it will be delivered on the delivery date and the manufacturer has added a \$2,300 surcharge. There is no guarantee that there will not be another surcharge, which is concerning.

**6. Chairman & Executive Director's Reports**

Mr. Gold gave a financial report stating that we are within budget for the year, though we will go over due to travel for conferences attended and donations. The checking account has \$15,190 and the STIF account has \$1,167,789. He also reported that he, Mr. Comerford, and Mr. Haramut have been interviewing Transit Planners and that Mr. Lovejoy has received an offer of full-time employment.

Chairman Salvatore thanked the COG staff for doing an outstanding job.

**7. Other Business**

None

**8. Adjournment**

*Mr. McGarry moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:04 A.M., second by Mr. Griswold. Vote was unanimous in favor.*

Respectfully submitted,  
Eliza LoPresti