



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

May 25, 2022

RiverCOG Members;

Chester: Charlene Janecek *
Clinton: Karl Kilduff *
Cromwell: Anthony Salvatore *
Deep River: Angus McDonald *
Durham: Laura Francis * (9:45)
East Haddam: Irene Haines *
East Hampton: David Cox
Essex: Norm Needleman
Haddam: Bob McGarry
Killingworth: Nancy Gorski *
Lyme: Steve Mattson *
Middlefield: Jim Irish *
Middletown: Ben Florsheim * (9:20)
Old Lyme: Tim Griswold *
Old Saybrook: Carl Fortuna *
Portland: Ryan Curley *
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
Grayson Wright, CT DOT
Brianna DeVivo, Sen. Murphy's Office
Rep. Christine Palm
Nicole Velardi, DEMHS
Sara Mendillo, Middlesex Chamber of Commerce
TJ Magnoli, Eversource
Cathy Lezon, Eversource

Staff Present:

Sam Gold
Eliza LoPresti
Robert Haramut

RiverCOG

Kevin Armstrong
Janice Ehle/Meyer
Margot Burns
Torrance Downes
Ben Lovejoy
Megan Joufflas
Paula Fernald

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, Introductions

Mr. Gold called the meeting to order at 9:02 A.M. The meeting was held via Zoom teleconference.

Please note that these agenda items are written in the order of the agenda but were not presented in this order during the meeting/on the recording.

2. Public Speaking

Brianna DeVivo of Sen. Murphy's office stated that requests for earmarks are now being reviewed; these include requests from RiverCOG and some of the region's towns. The projects that will be funded will be disclosed on his website in June. Ms. DeVivo thanked Ms. Janecek for hosting the Senator in Chester the other day.

Representative Palm asked for a bulleted list of major news items from the COG meeting that could be sent out to her constituents.

3. LCRVMPO Business

a. Approval of Minutes of Aril 27, 2022 LCRVCOG & LCRVMPO Meeting

Mr. Fortuna moved to approve the minutes of the April 27, 2022 meeting; second by Mr. Hall. Vote was unanimous in favor.

b. Bike/Ped Plan Adoption) <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:4e540ce5-0fc0-49b6-ae46-02f68a2372fb>

Mr. Fortuna moved to adopt the RiverCOG Region Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, seconded by Mr. Hall. Vote was unanimous in favor.

c. 2021 TIP Amendment #16

I. Middletown, 0082-0316, NHPP, CC, Reconfigure RT 17 on ramp to RT 9 NB, AC Entry, CON, FY22, \$0, New project

II. Middletown, 0082-0316, NHPP, CC, Reconfigure RT 17 on ramp to RT 9 NB, AC Conv, CON FY22, \$33,750,000, New project

III. Middletown, 0082-0316, NHPP, CC, Reconfigure RT 17 on ramp to RT 9 NB, AC Conv, CON FY23, \$16,350,000, New project

Mr. Fortuna moved to approve TIP Amendment #16, Project 0082-0316. Second by Ms. Janecek. Unanimous vote in favor.

IV. Durham, 0037-0103, STPR, X6, Replace bridge 02442 on RT 68 Over Saw Mill Brook, CON, 2023, \$2,500,000, Move to FY23 and increase estimate from \$1,200,000

Mr. Fortuna moved to approve TIP Amendment #16, Project 0037-0103. Second by Mr. Hall. Unanimous vote in favor.

V. Dist. 1, 0171-0484, BRFP, X6, UHPC bridge end repairs on various bridges, AC Entry, CON, FY22, \$0, New project

VI. Dist. 1, 0171-0484, BRFP, X6, UHPC bridge end repairs on various bridges, AC Conv, CON FY22, \$32,600,000, New project

Mr. Fortuna moved to approve TIP Amendment #16, Project 0171-0484. Second by Mr. McDonald. Unanimous vote in favor.

VII. Greenwich-Stonington, 0170-5031, BRFP, X6, I-95 bridges concrete sealing, AC Entry, CON, FY22, \$0, New project

VIII. Greenwich-Stonington, 0170-5031, BRFP, X6, I-95 bridges concrete sealing, AC Conv, CON, FY22, \$7,000,000, New project

Mr. Hall moved to approve TIP Amendment #16, Project 0170-5031. Second by Mr. McDonald. Vote was unanimous in favor.

IX. Statewide, 0170-3551, NHPPBRX, X6, Minor rehab NHS NBI bridges with pin and hanger assemblies, AC Entry, CON, FY22, \$0, New project

X. Statewide, 0170-3551, NHPPBRX, X6, Minor rehab NHS NBI bridges with pin and hanger assemblies, AC Conv, CON, FY22, \$9,100,000, New project

Mr. Hall moved to approve TIP Amendment #16, Project 0170-3551. Second by Mr. McDonald. Vote was unanimous in favor.

XI. Old Saybrook, 0478-XXXX, 5307C, X6, Estuary TD admin capital/misc. support FY22, OTH, FY22, \$250,000, Increase estimate from \$56,000

XII. Old Saybrook, 0478-XXXX, 5307C, X6, Estuary TD replace small buses FY22, ACQ, FY22, \$120,000, Decrease estimate from \$240,000

XIII. Old Saybrook, 0478-XXXX, 5307C, X6, Estuary TD facility improvements/repairs 91 N Main FY22, CON, FY22, \$200,000, New project

XIV. Old Saybrook, 0478-XXXX, 5307C, X6, Estuary TD replace 30' buses FY22, ACQ, FY22, \$3,000,000, New project

Mr. Kilduff moved to approve TIP Amendment #16, Project 0478-XXXX. Second by Mr. McDonald. Vote was unanimous in favor

d. Ozone and PM2.5 Air Quality Conformity Determination of the 2019 MTPs and 2021 TIPs as amended (February 2022) Public Session <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DOT/documents/dTDAQM/ConformityDeterminationReportFeb2022-final.pdf>

The Air Quality Conformity Determination is now open for public comment through June 11. Mr. Haramut will ask for plan endorsement at the June meeting. There were no comments made on the plan during the meeting.

e. Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program

This is a new grant program under the transportation bill. Project submissions are due September 15 at the grants.gov website. The first year will award mostly planning grants for action plans. The MPOs have asked if the Regional Metropolitan Transportation Plans constitute an action plan and are awaiting response. There will be webinars available in June on how to apply. Mr. Gold suggested that towns can go in together under the umbrella of the COG to make their applications more competitive and successful. If we are found to be deficient in an action plan we can apply for funding to create a plan that we can submit to include identified projects.

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

Mr. Haramut reported that we are at the very beginning of updating the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). He will forward information to the towns and will be asking for project wish lists shortly.

g. Update from Transit District

Mr. Comerford reported that ETD and MAT will officially be one district as of July 1. All MAT debt to CT DOT will be forgiven. Grants are being moved and consolidated to the new entity. The park connect routes will begin again for the summer. They are working with some towns on expansion of services for senior citizens. A new naming and branding study is coming, all will be asked to give some input.

Mr. Gold reported that a transit planner has verbally accepted a job offer. This person will implement the merger work at ETD and is on loan to them but will be an employee of the COG.

4. LCRVCOG Business

a. RiverCOG FY23 Budget

Mr. Gold and Ms. Fernald reviewed the draft budget. Mr. Gold noted that the Executive Committee will be taking up the issue of creating a fund balance policy.

Mr. Griswold moved to approve the FY23 Budget; seconded by Mr. Fortuna. Vote was unanimous in favor.

b. Document Digitization Project Update

Mr. Armstrong stated that five towns have begun the process of having their documents assessed for digitization. He urged all towns to take advantage of the program, as the consultation is free and there is no obligation to proceed after it is complete. The consultation will provide the towns with an idea of their volume of paper.

c. Small Business and Non-Profit Grants and Loans Through ARPA Funds

There was discussion on fee structure for the Community Foundation and MCRC to administer the grants. Ms. Clegg of CFMC asked that two people from each town be appointed to work with them during the process. The town can provide any specific guidelines. The CFMC will charge an hourly rate for services, most likely \$40.

d. HHW Update

Two collections have taken place, there was good attendance at both. There will be two paper shredding events in June. We are working on revising our existing signs so they give

information on where the collections will be held. Ms. Ehle/Meyer is looking into pricing to get the Essex facility appraised.

i. Approval of Contractor to Conduct Phase 1 at Essex Facility

There has been no decision on contractor by the HHW subcommittee yet. Ms. Ehle/Meyer asked for a motion that would authorize RiverCOG to engage with a vendor of the subcommittee's choosing.

Ms. Francis moved for the subcommittee to recommend the vendor to be chosen for the Phase 1 review of the Essex facility; second by Mr. McDonald. Vote was unanimous in favor.

Discussion: Mr. Fortuna asked if it was so urgent that we can't wait to get the full board's vote on the recommendation. Ms. Ehle/Meyer replied that it wasn't but that it will take a while to schedule the Phase 1 and she would like it to be done this summer. Mr. Fortuna agreed it should be done but that the motion is too broad or vague. Ms. Ehle/Meyer noted the decision to be made is on which vendor to choose. The subcommittee consists of Mr. McDonald, Ms. Francis, Mr. Cox, and Mr. Griswold.

e. MIRA Update

Mr. Fortuna reported that MIRA will be closed by Sept. 1. The subsidy amount for towns per ton has increased as the actual tonnage has decreased because there are only 20 or 21 towns now. The towns will get the subsidy for FY 23, and even with that expenditure MIRA will have reserves. He is not sure if the board will support subsidies in FY 24.

He suggested that the COG towns create a group RFP and do it very soon as the whole thing could end up being a lengthy process. Mr. Gold will email the towns to see who is interested in participating.

f. Legislative Update

Mr. Lovejoy gave an update on the end of the legislative session. This was also distributed to the CEOs prior to the meeting.

g. Regional Agricultural Council Update

Ms. Ehle/Meyer reported that the transplanter is here and has been assembled. The farmers are modifying it now for easy transport. The drill and roller-crimper will come in June. CCM is reviewing the farmers' application for use and they are working on publicity about the no-till program. Chairman Salvatore asked for photos of the new equipment.

The Know Your Farmers website is in the process of being updated with funds from the Dept of Ag grant. Ms. Ehle/Meyer asked which towns have farm markets this summer. The towns that do include Chester, Cromwell, Deep River, Durham, Essex (Ivoryton), Lyme, Middletown, Old Saybrook, Haddam and East Haddam.

h. Update on Regional Housing Plan

Ms. Joufflas reported that the 8-30j plans are in the process of being adopted, five towns have already done so. The regional recommendations will come next and the plan will be posted for

comment at the end of June or beginning of July. It will be brought before the board for approval after that process.

i. Lower Connecticut River Land Trust Update

Jim Irish of Middlefield has been elected to serve on the LCRLT board. The new website is live, Ms. Burns will send out a link. The LCRLT is planning a trail adventure project throughout the region in order to raise funds for a land stewardship fund. Participants will hike one trail in each town.

j. Aquatic Invasive Species Update

Ms. Burns reported that she is working on federal appropriations with Sen. Blumenthal's office again this year, with more Senators from New England signed on. This is to fund a Connecticut River Hydrilla abatement program through the appropriations subcommittee on energy and water resources.

Rep. Palm announced that a bill was passed to appropriate \$300,000 to create an office of invasive species, primarily dealing with hydrilla and other aquatic invasives. It will be housed the CT Ag Experiment Station in New Haven. The office will coordinate remediation efforts around the state to avoid duplication and competition. There will be an upcoming press conference, to which all are invited.

k. Resilient CT 2.0/Hazard Mitigation Update

All town meetings are complete and all town resources are on our website; these should be forwarded to town staff. These resources include a map of resiliency corridors in the towns. CIRCA is working on a draft report of the planning process they went through with the towns and the climate change vulnerability mapping tool and will give the COG an update later this summer.

l. DEMHS Update

Mr. Downes reported that oldest of the grants has been extended so now they are overseeing five different federal grant programs. A budget will be forthcoming. Mr. Lovejoy discussed the hurricane prep program and the fact that the equipment being purchased through the grants are susceptible to price increases; he encouraged padding to be built in for budgeting with the EMDs. Mr. Downes reported that a lot of regional equipment was recently used in a hostage situation in Guilford and all the responders are very thankful.

m. Sustainable CT Fellow and High School Capstone Intern

We will be hosting one Sustainable CT fellow for the summer, Liam Rimas will begin on June 2. We will also be hosting a high school intern from Valley who will be doing her capstone project on the COG.

5. Chairman & Executive Director's Reports

Chairman Salvatore held a moment of silence for the victims of the latest school shooting, this time in Uvalde, TX.

Mr. Gold welcomed Mr. Lovejoy as a full-time, permanent planner.

6. Other Business

None

7. Adjournment

Ms. Haines moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:48 A.M., second by Ms. Francis. Vote was unanimous in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Eliza LoPresti