



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 SPECIAL MEETING

August 23, 2023 – 9:00 am

RiverCOG Members;

Chester: Charlene Janecek
Clinton: Karl Kilduff * (9:30)
Cromwell: Anthony Salvatore *
Deep River: Angus McDonald *
Durham: John Board *
East Haddam: Irene Haines *
East Hampton: David Cox *
Essex: Carey Duques
Haddam: Bob McGarry *
Killingworth: Nancy Gorski *
Lyme: David Lahm *
Middlefield: Bob Yamartino (9:25)
Middletown: Ben Florsheim *
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:

Grayson Wright, CT DOT
Joel Severance, Citizen Corps
Erin McBride, Senator Murphy's Office
Julia McGrath, Congressman Courtney's Office
Erik Shortell, FHWA
Katherine Russell, Deep River

Staff Present:

Sam Gold
Eliza LoPresti
Robert Haramut
Kevin Armstrong
Megan Jouflas
Susie Beckman & Margot Burns

RiverCOG

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

Chairman Salvatore called the meeting to order at 9:01 A.M. The meeting was conducted via Zoom.

2. **Public Speaking**

Erin McBride of Senator Murphy's office stated that the Sen. introduced the National Strategy for Social Connection Act which would create an office of social connection policy in the white house. Additionally, he and Sen. Blumenthal introduced legislation to fully fund the special education IDEA fund, which has not been funded to its full potential.

Julia McGrath of Congressman Courtney's office stated the Representative is a co-sponsor on HR59, capital funds for schools. There is a pending request to the USDA for disaster declaration for the recent flooding for all of CT. There has been an expansion of some free school meal programs for some CT towns due to ARPA funds. There is a new grant application for HUD, pro-housing, to which MPOs may apply, that will close at the end of October in the amount of \$1 - \$10 million.

Joe Comerford of River Valley Transit stated they are expanding service significantly due to funding in the biennium budget, adding nights and Sundays. The state may also be fully funding the micro transit projects they submitted earlier in the year.

3. **LCRVMPO Business**

a. **Approval of Minutes of July 26, 2023 LCRVCOG & LCRVMPO Special Meeting**

Mr. Cox moved to table approval the minutes of the July 26, 2023 special meeting; second by Ms. Haines. Vote was unanimous in favor.

b. **FY 21 TIP Amendment #30**

i. **Westbrook, 0154-0128, STPA-BRX, X7, Replace bridge 00232 over I-95 and intersection improvements, FYI, ROW, \$50,000, 80/20/0, Move phase from FY 24 to FYI no change to cost**

ii. **Westbrook, 0154-0128, STPA-BRX, X7, Replace bridge 00232 over I-95 and intersection improvements, FYI, FD, \$924,000, 80/20/0, Move from phase FY 24 to FYI no change to cost**

Mr. Hall moved to table FY21 TIP Amendment #30; second by Mr. McGarry. Vote was unanimous in favor.

c. **MPO Merger Study**

Mr. Gold reported that ACIR has an act to study MPO mergers in the state and to make recommendations. They will hold a hearing and invite speakers, only one of which will be a CEO from an MPO. A letter was sent from Chairman Salvatore asking to be that CEO and for former members Cathy Iino and Susan Bransfield to speak as well. For now we are waiting to hear if Chairman Salvatore will be invited to speaker. There are vacancies on ACIR from COST; Chairman Salvatore and Ms. Haines have been nominated. There was discussion on how a vote to change MPOs in CT would occur.

4. LCRVCOG Business

a. Authorization of RSG Resolution (motion)

Ms. Haines moved to authorize the RSG resolution; second by Mr. Cox. Vote was unanimous in favor.

b. Regional Waste Authority Grant

The grant application was submitted to DEEP in March. RiverCOG is looking for funds to study the future of the MIRA site in Essex. DEEP sent additional questions that are due at the end of the week, Mr. Gold has completed and will submit these. He asked for a re-endorsement of the original vote of March 29, 2023. Middletown is also resubmitting their application for expansion of ECRA; Mayor Florsheim spoke to that.

Ms. Haines moved to reaffirm the March 29, 2023 vote in support of the RWA grant application and to endorse the ECRA proposal for expansion at their current facility. Second by Mr. Cox. Vote was unanimous in favor.

c. WRDA

WRDA is the federal Water Research and Development Act. Ms. Burns is proposing a letter from the COG to Senators Murphy and Blumenthal asking for the Connecticut River basin to be included in the 2024 act.

Mr. Cox moved to support the letter, with the inclusion of the fact that the LCRVCOG has voted to support and is requesting that the CT River basin be included in the biennial funding of the WRDA. Second by Mr. McDonald. Vote was unanimously approved.

5. Chairman & Executive Director's Reports

Chairman Salvatore commended RiverCOG staff on Mr. Downes' retirement party in July. The COG wishes him well.

6. Adjournment

Ms. Haines moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:44 am; seconded by Mr. Fortuna. Vote was unanimous in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Eliza LoPresti