

MINUTES OF THE 6/16/10 MEETING OF THE  
SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
AT SCCOG OFFICE, NORWICH, CT

PRESENT: Council Representatives: Gregg Schuster, Colchester; Paul Formica, East Lyme; Richard Matters, Franklin; James Streeter, Town of Groton; Fred Allyn, Ledyard; Thomas Sparkman, Lisbon; Joseph Jaskiewicz, Montville; Nicholas Mullane, North Stonington; Robert Congdon, Preston; Kevin Lyden, Salem; Cathy Osten, Sprague; Donald Maranell, Borough of Stonington; Daniel Steward, Waterford. Council Alternates: Mark Oefinger, Town of Groton; Martin Berliner, New London; Alan Bergren, Norwich. Tribal Military Liaison: Captain Mark Denno, US Naval SUBASE. Staff: James Butler, Richard Guggenheim. Other: Jenny Contois, Congressman Courtney's office; Jeff Nelson, Governor's Eastern Office; John Markowicz, seCTer; Deborah Monahan, TVCCA; Robert Yust, US Naval SUBASE; Merrill Gerber; Virginia Mason, Nancy Buckley, Dina Sears-Graves, United Way of SE CT; two reporters.

1. Call to Order: The Chairman called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.
2. Roll Call: A quorum was present.
3. Pledge of Allegiance: Mr. Matters led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Act on Minutes 5/20/10:

MOTION: To approve the minutes of 5/20/10 (Maranell, Osten). So voted unanimously.

5. Treasurer's Report:

MOTION: To approve the June Treasurer's Report (Sparkman, Jaskiewicz) So voted unanimously.

6. Public Comment:

None.

7. Communications:

The Executive Director said that a letter from Senator Williams in response to the letter from the SCCOG regarding the legislator's failure to approve of bills extending the conveyance tax and increasing the hotel room tax had been placed at each member's seat at the table.

8. Guest Speakers: Virginia Mason, Nancy Buckley, Dina Sears-Graves

Ms. Buckley, a member of the United Way board, introduced Virginia Mason, the new President and CEO of United Way. Ms. Mason said she was deeply committed to this

United Way and to assisting the people in southeastern Connecticut. Ms. Sears-Groves, Vice President of Operations, spoke about the agency's funding allocation.

## 9. Committee and Liaison Reports

### A. Executive Committee

#### 1. FY 2010 Budget Amendments

The Executive Director reviewed several modifications to the SCCOG FY 2010 budget requiring amendment. He said that the proposed amendments reflect that at the end of the fiscal year, surplus revenue will be returned to the Reserve account, as opposed to Reserve funds being applied to the budget as was originally contemplated. He noted that the Executive Committee recommended in favor of these budget amendments.

MOTION: To approve of the amended FY 2010 budget as presented (Jaskiewicz, Congdon). So voted unanimously.

#### 2. FY 2010 STP-Urban Funding Update

The Executive Director reported on his meeting yesterday with CONNDOT and City of Norwich officials regarding the Sherman Street Bridges project, which the SCCOG had approved for the application of FY 2010 STP-Urban funding for the PE portion of the project. Since the SCCOG's action approving these STP-U funds, CONNDOT has informed SCCOG staff that FHWA guidelines will not allow for funding to be applied to the PE portion of the project, without a commitment from the region and the municipality that the project will receive the funding needed for its construction in the future. CONNDOT has informed the SCCOG that it will need to approve of a TIP/STIP amendment for the construction of the Sherman Street bridges, in addition to the PE. He noted that he had distributed at each member's seat a draft TIP/STIP amendment which shows the PE for this project now at a total of \$500,000 for which the 80% federal share from FY 2010 STP-U funds is \$400,000, and the construction cost at a total of \$3,560,000 with the 80% federal share at \$2,848,000 in STP-U funds in year 2013. He stated that he had discussed with CONNDOT the possibility of phasing this job, because the federal share of the construction cost exceeds what SCCOG now is allocated in STP-U funding in any one year. He said that CONNDOT has indicated it will allow the project funding to be phased over two years. The total estimated project cost is now \$4,060,000, with \$3,248,000 scheduled to come out of federal STP-U funding.

MOTION: To approve of the SCCOG-initiated TIP/STIP amendment for the Sherman Street Bridge project in Norwich using STP-U funding in the amount of \$400,000 federal for the PE phase in year 2010 and \$2,848,000 for the construction phase in year 2013, with each phase to be matched by 10% in local and 10% in state funding for a total project cost of \$4,060,000 (Maranell, Sparkman).

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Osten asked if it was the SCCOG's intent to move the projects previously submitted and deemed not ready for FY 2010 STP-U funding into its FY 2011 list of projects to be submitted to CONNDOT.

Mr. Congdon said that counter to that line of thought, he would suggest that all projects including new ones, should be on the table and that projects that address the most important traffic needs of the region should be the ones submitted by the SCCOG for this funding.

Mr. Oefinger suggested that staff ready and send out the next fiscal year funding solicitation as soon as possible, and then invite CONNDOT staff to another work session where towns can ask questions about this funding program and its requirements and criteria.

Mr. Lyden said he agreed with Mr. Oefinger, and said that Mr. Borden of CONNDOT had informed him that FY 2011 was CONNDOT's target for funding the Salem project that had been previously submitted.

The Chairman then called for a vote on the motion and the motion was so voted unanimously.

### 3. Economic Development Districts/CEDS Regions

The Executive Director referenced a memo and a letter received from DECD Commissioner McDonald which was contained in the agenda packet. He said that these have created quite a stir at some of the state's RPOs, especially DECD's pronouncement that EDDs must now have twenty municipalities. He said he discussed this with the SCCOG's Executive Committee along with the requirement that towns may not be in two CEDS regions, and the fact that previously the Town of Sprague was in both our CEDS region and in the WINCOG/NECCOG CEDS region. He said he attended a meeting to discuss the DECD policy at DECD last Thursday, and that DECD has agreed to a 90-day time-out period to allow the state's RPOs and Economic Development Organizations to come up with their own suggested regional EDD/CEDS boundaries.

### 4. Tri-State Sustainable Communities Initiative

The Executive Director reported that he had been approached by a planning consultant working for South Central COG, to see if the SCCOG would be interested in joining the effort of several COGs along the coast to make a joint application for Sustainable Communities funding. The effort will be led by the Regional Plan Association of New York. The Executive Director reported that he had previously discussed a similar collaboration with the Executive Director of WINCOG. He said

he asked the consultant to see if South Central COG intends to formally invite us to join their grant effort but has not yet heard back. The Executive Committee asked staff to keep tracking this and to keep them informed

#### 5. Request for GIS Data

The Executive Committee, in response to a request from a mapping company for SCCOG digital GIS data, has asked SCCOG staff that the SCCOG offer to all SCCOG towns the option of providing it on behalf of its towns, applying the SCCOG's GIS cost recovery policy.

#### 6. Request by Commissioner Farrell to Meet with SCCOG

At his request, the Executive Committee invited Commissioner Farrell to meet with the SCCOG at the July meeting in his capacity as Liquor Control Commission Chair.

#### 7. RITC Study Update

The Executive Director reported that now that the RITC study is completed, CONNDOT would like specifics as to what it would take for them to operate and manage the train station. He said that SCCOG's consultant, TranSystems, will begin this work this month and will be paid for using un-expended funds from the SCCOG's original study grant.

#### 8. Update on Possible SCCOG Code Enforcement Officials

Towns attended a meeting on this subject at the SCCOG office on June 3. Towns interested have shared with SCCOG the number of hours they might use for the positions of Building Official, Zoning Official, and Wetlands Officer. Mr. Matters said that interested towns will now be asked to determine and provide a level of activity for each position, so that it can be determined how much work might be generated if SCCOG were to agree to retain staff for this work.

#### 9. Update on Possible SCCOG Shared Revaluation

The Executive Director reported that a number of SCCOG towns attend a meeting at the SCCOG office on June 3 to discuss this. It was agreed by those attending that meeting that the earliest SCCOG could move to coordinate a regional reval would be for the FY 2012 grand list. The Executive Committee directed staff to continue to work with interested towns on this possibility.

#### B. Legislative Committee

Mr. Maranell reported on a meeting yesterday and noted that the Legislative Committee's written report had been placed at each member's seat. He said that the Legislative Committee makes several recommendations to the SCCOG including:

that the SCCOG should reconstitute the Legislative Committee with a specific number of members; that the SCCOG should hold a retreat this summer where SCCOG members would review and update the Long-Range Objectives of the SCCOG; that the SCCOG should review any vetoed legislation of interest to its members with an eye toward requesting legislative override of the veto; and that the re-constituted Legislative Committee meet with the legislative delegation and others to voice SCCOG's dissatisfaction with the recent accomplishments of the General Assembly or lack thereof and to inform them how this fiscal crisis negatively impacts cities and towns. He said that he would recommend that the SCCOG authorize its Chairman write a letter to the Governor and legislative leadership voicing our disappointment over needed legislation that fell through the cracks.

Mr. Berliner said he would welcome the support of the SCCOG in requesting the General Assembly's override of the Governor's veto of HB 5236, concerning OTB facilities at three locations including one in New London.

Mr. Mullane cited his town's experience with the traffic and other impacts generated by gaming facilities, and he cannot support any legislation that allows the expansion of gambling activity.

Mr. Allyn said that he agreed with Mr. Mullane's position, and cited an incident yesterday which resulted in arrests yesterday in Ledyard suggesting the people arrested were attracted to the region because of gambling.

Mr. Berliner explained that this type of facility can be opened tomorrow and take bets, but the bill will allow simulcast of the races at the three sites. He said that he felt that the proliferation of gambling has already happened in the state, and municipalities like his are hard-pressed to find other sources of revenue.

Mr. Congdon said that while he agreed with Mr. Mullane and Mr. Allyn, he still would support a letter asking for override of the Governor's veto because he too feels municipalities need to be given additional ways to raise revenue.

Mr. Matters asked if the SCCOG membership would agree to allow him to write a letter requesting legislative override of Governor Rell's veto of this bill without putting the question to the vote of the COG. It was the consensus to put the matter to a vote.

**MOTION:** To authorize the Chairman to write a letter to the leadership of the General Assembly asking for override of the Governor's veto of HB 5236, concerning OTB in three locations including one in New London (Maranell, Streeter). Twelve members voted in favor, with 3 opposed (Allyn, Lyden, Mullane). Motion carried.

The Chairman then discussed the Legislative Committee's discussion of their dissatisfaction with the General Assembly's recent actions in terms of addressing the

need of municipalities, and the negative impact that the State's ongoing fiscal crisis is having on cities and towns.

MOTION: To authorize the Chairman to write a letter to the Governor and legislative leadership expressing the SCCOG's dissatisfaction with the General Assembly's recent actions in terms of addressing the need of municipalities, and the negative impact that the State's ongoing fiscal crisis is having on cities and towns (Maranell, Sparkman). So voted unanimously.

Mr. Maranell noted that the Legislative Committee has directed staff to collect budget data for both general government and education over the past ten years from all SCCOG towns.

Mr. Allyn stated that Ledyard's financial analysts have warned that continued flat funded municipal budgets are unrealistic and will have a negative impact on bond ratings.

Mr. Oefinger suggested that in addition to the request for budget expenditure data, staff should request the source of municipal revenue over that ten year period.

Mr. Congdon stated that the only place for local taxpayers to voice their opposition to the ever increasing cost of government is at the local level.

#### C. Tribal Liaison Representatives

No report.

#### D. Military Command Representative:

Captain Denno.

#### E. Office of Congressman Courtney

Mr. Haberek, on behalf of Ms. Contois who had to leave, said that FEMA had received 2000 additional claims from the state concerning the May flooding. Discussion took place. The Executive Director said he was recently contacted by FEMA regarding the five-year update to the region's Hazard Mitigation Plan. He is looking into what this will entail in terms of SCCOG resources.

#### F. seCTer

Mr. Markowicz reported that EDA has accepted seCTer's proposal for the CEDS update and that they hope to begin work on July 1; the General Assembly approved of legislation creating Economic Development Districts; and seCTer staff visited site consultants in New York City to begin planning a visit this fall to southeastern Connecticut by site consultants.

G. Eastern CT Tourism District

Mr. Dombroskas said the Tourism District remains concerned about the second year of no State funding; and reported on June 1 they will be launching a new website which is the result of a public and private partnership.

H. SEAT

No report.

I. Governor's Eastern Office

Mr. Nelson said that the Governor has signed the budget agreement.

10. Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director stated that we have received the State Grant-In-Aid form OPM, but that it is in the amount of \$10,000 which is less than the \$66,000 the region has been receiving and for which he budgeted.

11. Old Business

A. Regional Emergency Planning Team

Mr. Sparkman reported that the REPT will meet on May 26<sup>th</sup> to act on the proposed FY 2009 spending plan.

B. Regional Water

The Executive Director reported that the SCCOG Regional Water Committee will meet after the COG meeting.

12. New Business

Mr. Formica expressed his disappointment with the Governor and the leadership of the General Assembly for painting a rosy picture on the budget agreement that was reached. Mr. Allyn and Mr. Mullane agreed, and said that the State needs to be addressing next year's budget issues now. Discussion of the State's budget problems took place.

13. Next Meeting: June 16, 2010.

14. Adjournment:

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 10:29 a.m. (Lyden, Berliner). So voted unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul Formica, Secretary

