



SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Planning for Our Region's Future

Bethany Branford East Haven Guilford Hamden Madison Meriden Milford
New Haven North Branford North Haven Orange Wallingford West Haven Woodbridge

Carl J. Amento, Executive Director

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTICE & AGENDA
Wednesday, January 24, 2024 – 9:00 A.M.

**Location: 127 Washington Avenue, 4th Floor West
North Haven, CT 06473**

This is a hybrid meeting with in-person attendance at the SCRCOG Office and remote access via Zoom.

Office Location: 127 Washington Avenue, 4th Floor West, North Haven, CT 06473

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84119028074>

Meeting ID: 841 1902 8074

Full agenda materials can be found at our website – www.scrco.org

1. Call to order – *First Selectman Jim Zeoli, Chair*
2. Adopt Minutes of November 15, 2023, Executive Committee Meeting Pages 2,3
First Selectman Paula Cofrancesco, Secretary
3. Approval of Salary Adjustment for New Hire: Transportation Planner/GIS & Data Manager (motion) Pages 4-6
4. Discussion and Action on Transition Plan after Recent Staff Departures
5. Regional Cooperation/Other Business
6. Adjournment

The agenda and attachments for this meeting are available on our website at www.scrco.org. Please contact SCRCOG for copy of agenda in a language other than English. Auxiliary aids/services and limited English proficiency translators will be provided with two week's notice.

“Necesidades especiales: a las personas con discapacidad auditiva se les proveerá con medios auditivos y/o intérpretes de signos. Igualmente intérpretes para personas que hablan poco inglés, pero será preciso avisar con dos semanas de antelación. Se puede solicitar la agenda en otro idioma que no sea inglés comunicándose con SCRCOG”.



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Carl J. Amento, Executive Director

TO: **SCRCOG Executive Committee Members**
FROM: **First Selectwoman Peggy Lyons, Secretary**
DATE: **November 21, 2023**
SUBJECT: **SCRCOG Executive Committee Meeting Minutes of November 15, 2023**

Present

Bethany First Selectman Paula Cofrancesco, *Vice Chair*
Guilford First Selectman Matthew Hoey, *Immediate Past Chair*
Hamden Mayor Lauren Garrett, *Treasurer*
Madison First Selectman Peggy Lyons, *Secretary*
New Haven Joseline Tlacomulco, *proxy for Mayor Justin Elicker*
Orange First Selectman James Zeoli, *Chair*

SCRCOG Staff Carl Amento, Laura Francis, Christopher Rappa, Baishampayan Sarkar,

Guest: Natalie Hayworth, Guest of First Selectman Hoey

NOTE: The November SCRCOG Executive Committee meeting was a hybrid meeting.

1. Call to order

Chairman Zeoli called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. First Selectman Hoey introduces guest, Natalie Haywood, a senior at Coginchaug High School.

2. Adopt Minutes of October 25, 2023, Executive Committee Meeting

Chairman Zeoli presented the Minutes of the SCRCOG Executive Committee meeting of October 25, 2023, which were included in the agenda packet on pages 2-3. First Selectwoman Cofrancesco moved for their approval. First Selectman Lyons seconded the motion, which passed with all in favor.

3. Review and Accept Audit Report for FY 2022-23 – Brian Borgerson, CPA of Bailey, Moore, Glazer, Schaefer & Proto LLP

Brian Borgerson advised the audit went very well as in the past. He referred to page 22 of the attached audit report noting the year had a loss of \$26,222. There was a loss projected in the budget this year due to the use of consultants for the Transportation match. He noted the loss was significantly less than projected due to the direct cost rate and interest income of approximately \$30K. The year ended with an indirect cost rate of 1.4321% which is higher than in the past. There is a cap on this at 1.5%. He noted on page 23 the committed fund balance of \$270K. Payables were low due to the receivables. Brian acknowledged Finance Director Rappa’s work which made the audit go very smooth. Chairman Zeoli asked if there were any red flags of concerns that the council should be made aware of to make improvements on. Brian explained the offset is not a red flag and is being used as intended and acknowledged the work of Finance Director Rappa. Mayor Garrett asked how the internal controls are. Brian explained the controls are very good. First Selectman Hoey made a motion and First Selectman Cofrancesco seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

4. SCRCOG Budget Revision #4 FY 23

Chairman Zeoli refers to pages 4-6 in the attached. Finance Director Rappa explained this was a promised budget revision from last month. The Highway Safety Grant was accepted, and we also added an indirect expense so the agency can have a cyber security services.

5. RSG Spending Plan Revision #3

Chairman Zeoli referred to pages 7-9 of the attached. Finance Director Rappa explained NOVUS gave an incorrect number for cyber security licenses. This does not affect the SCRCOG budget. First Selectman Cofrancesco made a motion and Mayor Garrett seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

First Selectman Hoey asked if the Municipal Services Coordinator position was still open. Executive Director Amento advise it will be posted within the week and hire for January.

6. Discussion and Recommendation of Preliminary Dues for FY 2024-25

Chairman Zeoli refers to pages 10-11 of the attached. Deputy Director Francis explained the two options. Option 1 is no increase to the dues. Last year's increase was designed to cover the match the federal dollars coming in for that year. Option 2 is an incremental increase instead of a larger percentage in one increase. This would be less impactful year over year. The one cent increase could yield about \$6K which could be used for an unforeseen challenge. First Selectman Hoey stated he is in favor of an incremental increase even though it is a drop in fund balance. First Selectman Cofrancesco made motion and Mayor Garrett seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

- **Motion to add additional business**

- Motion made by Deputy Director Francis to discuss personnel vacancy and seconded by First Selectman Cofrancesco. Motion approved.

- **Personnel Vacancy Discussion**

- Deputy Director Francis advised of the resignation of Rebecca Andreucci, Senior Transportation Planner/Finance Manager who has accepted a position with Connecticut DOT in the Resiliency and Sustainability Unit as a Planner 2. Deputy Director Francis offered several scenarios of how to adjust the job description.

7. Regional Cooperation/Other Business

None

8. Adjournment

First Selectman Cofrancesco moved to adjourn. First Selectman Lyone seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:47am.

Respectfully submitted,
First Selectwoman Peggy Lyons, *Secretary*



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Carl J. Amento, Executive Director

TO: SCRCOG Executive Committee and Board members
FROM: Carl Amento, Executive Director
RE: Transition Plan After Recent Staff Departure
DATE: January 17, 2024

BACKGROUND-

SCRCOG's Director of Regional Planning and Municipal Services, Benjamin Lovejoy, has announced that he will be departing SCRCOG as of January 26, 2024 to accept a position with the CT Department of Housing. Ben worked at SCRCOG for 14 months beginning in December 2022. SCRCOG's Regional Planner Stephanie Camp, who is staying on at SCRCOG, joined SCRCOG in March of 2023. Ben and Stephanie comprised SCRCOG's entire Regional (Non-transportation) Planning Team until now.

During Ben's time with SCRCOG, he has been the Project Manager for the federal Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) \$1 million Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG), which was awarded to the New Haven-Milford Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) which included all of SCRCOG's 15 towns and 12 of the 19 towns within the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG). Stephanie served as the Deputy Project Manager with regard to the many complexities involved in achieving the tasks required by the EPA grant. Ben and Stephanie were assisted in their work on CPRG by the UMass Graduate Regional Planning Program, from which both Ben and Stephanie graduated with Masters in Regional Planning degrees. The CPRG is a 4-year grant.

The EPA has been informed that, upon Ben's departure Stephanie is becoming the Project Manager for the CPRG project to ensure continuity.

Ben and Stephanie have also worked together to continue to advance the SCRCOG Regional Affordable Housing Initiative along with consultant, David Fink, as well as advancing the Community Conversations Program featuring consultant Ben Fink. Ben and Stephanie also oversee the Regional Planning Commission, are liaisons to Sustainable CT, and Stephanie produces the monthly SCRCOG Newsletter, as a few examples among their major responsibilities.

SCRCOG Salaries - Revision #2

Proposed - January 17, 2024

	<u>Original Budget</u>		<u>Revised</u>	
	<i>Hr Rate</i>	<i>Salary</i>	<i>Hr Rate</i>	<i>Salary</i>
<i>Executive Director</i>	75.72	137,807	75.72	137,807
<i>Finance Director</i>	51.99	94,618	51.99	94,618
<i>Deputy Director/Director of Transportation</i>	59.13	107,625	59.13	107,625
<i>Principal Transportation Planner</i>	48.90	89,000	48.90	89,000
<i>Director of Regional Planning and Municipal Services</i>	43.96	80,000	43.96	80,000
<i>Transportation Planner/Financial Manager</i>	41.21	75,000	41.21	75,000
<i>Senior Regional Planner (formerly Regional Planner)</i>	33.79	61,500	37.36	68,000 ***
<i>Transportation Planner - GIS/Data Manager</i>	33.52	61,000	35.71	65,000 **
<i>Transportation Planner - Project Manager</i>	33.52	61,000	35.71	65,000 *
<i>Municipal Services Coordinator</i>	32.97	60,000	32.97	60,000
<i>Part Time Staff</i>	18.00		18.00	

*adjusted on October 25, 2023 via SCRCOG Board motion

**adjusted on December 27, 2023 via verbal approval from SCRCOG Chair

***proposed to be effective as of January 29, 2024

ACTION ITEMS-

The Transition Plan developed for continuity of operations in the Regional Planning area of responsibility is as follows:

- MOTION-** I recommend that the position held by Ben Lovejoy, Director of Regional Planning and Municipal Services, be split into two separate sets of responsibilities. A job posting will begin immediately upon Board approval for the Director of Regional Planning aka Director of Regional Land Use and Environmental Planning. There has been an open vacancy for a Municipal Services Coordinator position since the fall of 2022. I would request permission to separate these two functions, removing Municipal Services from being combined with Regional Planning. A job posting will begin immediately upon Board approval for a Municipal Services Coordinator.

The rationale behind this recommendation is two-fold:

- The responsibilities and programs under Regional Planning and under Municipal Services have both grown in number, complexity, and in dollar value. Combining those responsibilities under one position has now proven to be too much responsibility for one position.
- Since I became Executive Director in 2010, but more so since 2017, I have been creating the programs and overseeing them in the Municipal Services area. It is unusual for a COG Executive Director to take on a front-line responsibility such as this, but given my 6 years as Mayor of Hamden, 4 years as a part-time Town Attorney in Hamden, and 4 years as Deputy Corporation Counsel in New Haven, plus my 14 years as Executive Director of SCRCOG, it just made sense to tap into my knowledge and experience in municipal operations and services. Through no fault on his part, Ben has had to focus his attention on the CPRG, given its complexity, and in addition has performed excellent work on the Regional Housing program and other responsibilities inherent in the Director of Planning position. Also, the Regional Services Grant funding for SCRCOG increased by 40% this year.

The Municipal Services Programs have grown more complex as they continue to evolve after being offered for many years.

2. **MOTION-** I recommend that Stephanie Camp, currently holding the title Regional Planner, be promoted to Senior Regional Planner with a commensurate increase in salary to \$68,000. Stephanie has been with SCRCOG for just short of one year, in which she has excelled in every aspect of her work. She has a master's degree in Regional Planning, and has two years of experience, one at Lincoln Land Institute and one here at SCRCOG. Her current salary is \$61,500. Since she was hired and her salary was set, two new staff members with similar experience have been hired at a higher salary. Stephanie will be our only non-transportation planner until the vacancy created by Ben Lovejoy's departure is filled. From past experience, it has taken at least 2 months to fill a SCRCOG position vacancy. Filling the two new Transportation positions authorized by the SCRCOG Board for this fiscal year took six months to complete. We could provide Stephanie with a higher interim salary and an interim title while she takes on sole responsibility for regional planning projects after Ben's departure. However, given the equity situation vis-a vis other more recent hires, and the unfairness of returning her to her prior salary and title, I believe a promotion and higher salary now is the better alternative, and is deserved given Stephanie's work.
3. **INFORMATIONAL-**SCRCOG is engaging as a Planning Consultant, Brian Miller, AICP, for up to \$5,000 of assistance and advice to Stephanie Camp and to me during the period in which the Director of Regional Planning position remains vacant. The engagement of Brian Miller is an allowable non-competitive administrative selection process given the total compensation will be \$5,000 or less. If there becomes a need to engage Brian Miller beyond the initial period, approval will be sought from the Board at a subsequent meeting.