

**Southeast Area Transit District Board of Directors Meeting  
9:30 AM, January 15, 2025**

**The meeting will be held **in person** at  
SCCOG, 5 Connecticut Avenue, Norwich CT**

**AGENDA**

1. Roll Call
2. Public Comment:
3. Meeting Minutes: December 18, 2024, Meeting
4. Communications: None
5. Reports:
  - a) Management Report: Accept and File
  - b) Financial Report: Accept and File
6. Old Business:
  - a) Non-Member Town Bus Stops and Shelter Update
  - b) Non-Member Town Update
  - c) Management Contract; review and approval
  - d) 2025 Meeting Calendar - Revised
7. New Business:
  - a) 2025 Fuel Bid
  - b) Items from Board Members and SCCOG Staff
8. Adjournment
9. Next meeting: February 19, 2025

**Member Municipalities**

East Lyme Griswold Groton Lisbon Montville  
New London Norwich Stonington Waterford

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**Minutes of January 15, 2025**  
**Meeting of the Southeast Area Transit District Board of Directors**

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Board Members Present: Mark Oefinger (Groton), Robert Boris (Groton), Michael Passero (New London), Cary Redd (New London), Michael Schefers (Stonington), Robert Brule (Waterford)

SEAT Staff: Michael Carroll (General Manager), Cherise Simpson

SCCOG: Amanda Kennedy, Kate Ratan

Other Attendees: Sandra Childs (ATU Local 1209 President)

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1. **Roll Call:** Called to order at 9:50 am by Vice Chairman Oefinger; it was noted that a quorum was present.
2. **Public Comment:** Ms. Childs expressed concerns about racial issues at SEAT and stated their had been no improvements. She cited cases of a black male driver was retrained after being out for an extended period however when a white senior driver was not. She also cited the case of a passenger was denied boarding on another bus at a transfer location but was not told why he was denied boarding. Worried about her safety, she questioned why he was being kicked off, and stated the GM came on the radio stating that if she does not transport the passenger, that she could be looking at insubordination. She also cited alleged cases of disparate treatment for speeding with a black operator disciplined while a white operator was not.
3. **Minutes of December 18, 2024:** Motion to approve: Brule / Passero Unanimous with no abstentions.
4. **Communications:** None
5. **Reports:**
  - a. **Manager's Report:** Mr. Carroll stated that ridership is up in the month of December, about 90,000 boardings on all services. There is a 9% increase year to date on fixed route services and paratransit has been stable. Stonington HOP has a 35% increase over the last year. This is partly due to Saturday services. SmartRide is up 2% year to date over last year. There is a slow but steady increase for Groton HOP and there were a couple of rides on the Waterford HOP last month as well. SEAT will continue to work on marketing with Waterford and Groton to let people know about the services. There was a list of safety events that occurred in the month of December. There were minor collisions involving mirror taps between buses and other vehicles. There were a couple of passengers injured but most of those did not require transport with only one

requiring transport. There were three verbal assaults of operators by customers. SEAT continues to work with Thought Partners, a DEI initiative. They have been surveying the workforce. The response rate was below what was hoped so they will redouble efforts for employee feedback. The survey is anonymous, and so leadership will not know who said what. Regarding capital projects, SEAT is installing charging stations for the micro transit buses. Their operating range in has decreased during the cold weather. Mr. Carroll has ordered a gasoline-powered version of this vehicle under the contract utilizing grant funds. The delivery date has not yet been provided by the vendor. SEAT has updated the validators for Token Transit. SEAT met with CTDOT and their design consultants for the new facility in Preston. There will be some minor changes, and they are trying to eliminate the need for an elevator with a mezzanine for storage. SEAT staff are pleased with the site plans. Staff also expect the final design to be done this calendar year with ground breaking in 2026. SEAT staff have been working on a transition to a new payroll system. SEAT has received a formal notice from the Federal Transit Administration of its triennial review, checking compliance with the federal programs which consumes staff time in document preparation. Mr. Carroll stated that the implementation of some new services is being pushed back due to the challenges of hiring new operators. We hired one operator but lost an operator who was here for seven years. SEAT currently has a high absenteeism rate, with several operators out on long- and short-term leave. Discussions ensued regarding the EV chargers. Ms. Ratan noted CTDOT has asked for fifteen possible shelter locations for the State's Bus Stop Enhancement program. Discussions ensued regarding considering adding Stop and Shop in Waterford to the SmartRide service. Discussions also ensued surrounding the DEI initiative. Board members would like to be briefed on the outcome of the initiative.

Motion to file and accept: Brule / Schefers. Unanimous with no abstentions.

- b. **Financial Report:** Mr. Carroll stated that the financial report will be sent out under separate cover as Mrs. Clark was under a deadline for the NTD report.

## 6. **Old Business:**

- a. **Non-Member Town Bus Stops and Shelter Update:** Mr. Carroll stated that if the Board was comfortable with the boarding information provided he would submit the proposed shelter list to CTDOT. He also sought guidance on shelter design. The Board consensus was the flat roof option with anodized finish. Discussions ensued surrounding which shelters should be included in the fifteen.
- b. **Management Contract Review & Approval:** Motion approved: Brule, Passero. Unanimous with no abstentions.

- c. **Non-Member Town Update:** Mr. Carroll stated that services were discontinued for Franklin and Ledyard. He reported incidents of passengers boarding in a member town, but requesting a drop-off in a non-member town, such as the Orthopedic Center in Franklin. Currently, operators are instructed to let the passenger off and inform them that they will not be picked up. Discussions ensued surrounding this issue. The Board approved this practice and suggested referring passengers to the non-member First Selectman. Mr. Carroll was also asked to send a letter to the Norwich Orthopedic office suggesting payment of the Franklin local match.
- d. **2025 Meeting Calendar Revised:** Included in the packet

7. **New Business:**

- a. **2025 Fuel Bid:** Mr. Carroll stated that SEAT has about two months left of diesel fuel at the current fixed price. SEAT collaborates with CT DOT who have secured three approved vendors. Once the prices are disclosed, SEAT has twenty-four hours to lock in the price. That price will be for the remainder of 2025. Mr. Carroll is asking Board authorization as the price could exceed \$100,000. Motion to approve. Passero / Brule Unanimous with no abstentions.
- b. **Items from Board Members and SCCOG Staff:** Board members would like to discuss the issues surrounding discrimination at the next Board meeting.
- c. **Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn at 11:17 am; Motion to adjourn Redd / Schefers. Unanimous with no abstentions.

8. **Next Meeting:** February 19, 2025

**Southeast Area Transit District Board of Directors Meeting  
9:30 AM, February 19, 2025**

**The meeting will be held **in person** at  
SCCOG, 5 Connecticut Avenue, Norwich CT**

**AGENDA**

1. Roll Call
2. Public Comment:
3. Meeting Minutes: January 15, 2025, Meeting
4. Communications: J. Caskey Email
5. Reports:
  - a) Management Report: Accept and File
  - b) Financial Report: Accept and File
6. Old Business:
  - a) Bus Stops and Shelter Update
7. New Business:
  - a) Federal Transit Administration Authorizing Resolution
  - b) Items from Board Members and SCCOG Staff
8. Adjournment
9. Next meeting: March 19, 2025

Member Municipalities  
East Lyme Griswold Groton Lisbon Montville  
New London Norwich Stonington Waterford

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**Minutes of February 19, 2025**  
**Meeting of the Southeast Area Transit District Board of Directors**

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Board Members Present: Tina Falck (Griswold), Thomas Sparkman (Lisbon), Mark Oefinger (Groton), Robert Boris (Groton), Michael Passero (New London), Cary Redd (New London), Robert Brule (Waterford)

SEAT Staff: Michael Carroll (General Manager), Cherise Simpson

SCCOG: Amanda Kennedy, Kate Ratan

Other Attendees: Sandra Childs, Dulcie Harris, ATU Local 1209

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1. **Roll Call:** Called to order at 9:41 am by Chairman Sparkman; a quorum was present.
2. **Public Comment:** Ms. Childs, ATU Local 1209 President, addressed the Board stating she emailed them some items per their request. Ms. Childs shared a SEAT memo requiring radio conversations be in English unless an employee is assisting in translating for a passenger with violations subject to discipline. Ms. Childs stated that the memo should include "necessary business operations." She stated "failure to speak English may result in discipline" is against the law. Ms. Childs goes on to say that employees who speak Spanish and Haitian Creole who were offended by the memo. Ms. Childs states that employees know how to speak and read English as they were hired by SEAT. She stated that they will help each other out when necessary and translate as well. Ms. Childs stated the memo was poorly written, offending employees. Ms. Childs also stated a new hire reported to her the Operations Manager told her to not join the union because they change dues every year and this action was illegal. Ms. Childs described an event with a SEAT operator who is Haitian and received a police warning for speeding (54 mph in a 35-mph zone) in Waterford. She stated that the area does not have posted speed limit signs. Ms. Childs argued this operator was discriminated against because the discipline he received was not consistent as SEAT failed to discipline a white operator who was tracked speeding via the AVL system because the District failed to meet contractual time limits to issue discipline. Ms. Childs stated that management is causing a hostile work environment.
3. **Minutes of December 18, 2024:** Motion to approve: Brule / Oefinger Unanimous with no abstentions.
4. **Communications:** Mr. Carroll shared an email from J. Caskey asking about updates and implementation of the COA study. Mr. Carroll also provided a copy of his response to Mr. Caskey.

**5. Reports:**

- a. **Manager's Report:** Mr. Carroll stated SEAT staff continue to work on recruiting operators. Of the 2 operators in training, 1 subsequently resigned citing weekend and night work, even though this is clearly stated in the advertisement, interviews and on-boarding process. SEAT staff are conducting multiple classes of customer service and de-escalation training for all operators. Preston requested Mr. Sparkman and Mr. Carroll attend an upcoming Board meeting to discuss the request to join the District. Mr. Carroll drafted a letter to Norwich Orthopedics explaining why SEAT is no longer serving that location in Franklin. Once Mr. Carroll receives comments back from Board members, he will send out the letter. Mr. Carroll reported ridership was a little under 90,000 in the month of January, with small increases on some Micro Transit (HOP) services: Groton, had 72 boardings in January with steady growth each month. Waterford HOP had 3 boardings. Mr. Carroll met with the Waterford Social Service Director to discuss marketing efforts. SEAT continues with the Employee Engagement program (formerly DEI) with Thought Partners of New London. An online employee survey had only a 40% response rate. Additional one-on-one interviews and focus groups will be scheduled with employees. SEAT is working with CTDOT on several projects, including new facility design. The consultants sent modified plans for staff review which were acceptable to SEAT. SEAT received final CTDOT approval to finalize installation of the 3 chargers for the 4 Ford Transit EV vans, used for Micro Transit. CTDOT also advised SEAT it will receive a one-time grant for marketing. Staff is preparing a request for qualifications (RFQ) to secure services under this grant. Motion to file and accept: Oefinger / Brule. Unanimous with no abstentions.

**Financial Report:** Mr. Carroll provided the December reports and noted the January report is still in progress. Mr. Carroll reminded the Board SEAT is nearing the end of Federal COVID money with an unobligated balance of \$350,000 . These grants fund the New London Smart Ride program. SEAT has not been able to secure funding for Smart Ride in FY26. Motion to file and accept: Brule / Passero. Unanimous with no abstentions.

**6. Old Business:**

- a. **Bus Stops and Shelter Updates:** Mr. Carroll reported staff is compiling the list of shelter locations based upon boarding counts for CTDOT along with the Board's preferred shelter design. SEAT staff decided to continue the bus stop installation

program independently of the River Valley Transit bid option. This process should go out to bid within the next 30-45 days.

7. **New Business:**

- a. **Federal Transit Administration Authorizing Resolution:** Mr. Carroll provided a standard resolution required by Federal Transit Administration authorizing the General Manager to execute and receive Federal grants. Move to adopt the Federal Transit Administration Authorizing Resolution: Passero / Oefinger unanimous with no abstentions.
- b. **Items from Board Members and SECOG Staff:** Ms. Rattan reported on 3 required actions through SECOGs TMA certification. The last one was updated SECOGs MOU with SEAT to reflect the process and planning activities. Ms. Rattan stated that she will be reaching out to Mr. Carroll to update that language.
- c. **Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn at 10:03 am; Motion to adjourn Brule / Passero. Unanimous with no abstentions.

8. **Next Meeting:** March 19, 2025

**Southeast Area Transit District Board of Directors Meeting  
9:30 AM, March 19, 2025**

**The meeting will be held **in person** at  
SCCOG, 5 Connecticut Avenue, Norwich CT**

**AGENDA**

1. Roll Call
2. Public Comment:
3. Meeting Minutes: February 19, 2025, Meeting
4. Communications: None
5. Reports:
  - a) Management Report: Accept and File
  - b) Financial Report: Accept and File
6. Old Business:
  - a) Bus Stops and Shelter Update
  - b) CTDOT Bus Shelter Agreement: Review and Approve
  - c) EEO Report
  - d) Executive Session – Review/Discussion of Discrimination Complaints by Union
7. New Business:
  - a) Swiftly CAD/AVL/APC Update Procurement Authorization: Review and Approve
  - b) FY26 Operating Budget: Review and Approve
  - c) FY26-FY30 Capital Plan: Review and Approve
  - d) Items from Board Members and SCCOG Staff
8. Adjournment
9. Next meeting: April 16, 2025

Member Municipalities  
East Lyme Griswold Groton Lisbon Montville  
New London Norwich Stonington Waterford

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**Minutes of March 19, 2025**  
**Meeting of the Southeast Area Transit District Board of Directors**

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Board Members Present: Thomas Sparkman (Lisbon/Chairman), Mark Oefinger (Vice-Chairman/Groton), John Salomone (Norwich/Treasurer); Dan Cunningham (East Lyme), Michael Passero (New London), Carey Redd, II (New London), John Salomone (Norwich) (Treasurer), Michael Schefers (Stonington)

SEAT Staff: Michael Carroll (General Manager), Bobbi Jo Clapproad (HR / Payroll Manager)

SCCOG: Amanda Kennedy, Kate Ratan

Other Attendees:

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1. **Roll Call:** Called to order at 9:45 am; a quorum was present.
2. **Public Comment:** No public comment.
3. **Minutes of February 19, 2025:** Motion to approve: Oefinger/Redd; Unanimous with no abstentions.
4. **Communications:** No Communications
5. **Reports:**
  - a. **Manager's Report:** Mr. Carroll introduced Bobbi Jo Clapproad to the Board as she was filling in for Ms. Clark (EEO Manager) and had been taking the lead in the employee engagement program. Mr. Carroll reported ridership was down for the month of February due to the weather and fewer service days. SEAT continues to struggle with filling drivers' positions resulting in continuing delays in implementing some service expansions. Mr. Carroll is cautiously optimistic that SEAT may be able to roll out the late-night New London SmartRide with the next bid in May. SEAT has been conducting a round of customer service and de-escalation training for operators. Mr. Carroll attended the meeting a Board of Selectman meeting in Preston to discuss SEAT membership. Mr. Carroll did not get a definitive answer. Based on the questions asked, surmised that public transit did not make sense to Preston given the density of the population and he does not think Preston will become a member of SEAT. They did indicate that if the Riverwalk development comes to fruition, they may want to reconsider at that time. Mr. Carroll provided some responses to the issues raised by the Union at the last Board meeting. The responses are in the packet for review. SEAT is a series of events for Transit Employee Appreciation week. Mr. Carroll has been

collaborating with DOT on several capital projects and the facility updates. FTA Region I office has been impacted by the Federal layoffs, but Mr. Carroll does not know how this will affect the working relationship at FTA. SEAT is in a “wait and see” mode regarding any federal funding program and its impact on capital programs. Mr. Carroll noted he expects federal funding will be reduced in future. Motion to file and accept: Oefinger/Cunningham; Unanimous with no abstentions.

- b. **Financial Report:** Mr. Carroll stated that the February report is incomplete and will be sent later. January's report was provided. SEAT is tracking under budget in revenue and expenses mostly due to the delay in implementing the service expansions. Mr. Carroll stated that overtime is up, which is tied staffing levels. Mr. Carroll reminded the Board that the SmartRide program is funded by federal COVID monies which will run out at the end of the fiscal year. SEAT has a state grant to continue to transition Smart Ride to night service from 8 pm to 1 am, Monday through Saturdays and Sundays from 5 pm to 10 pm. Mr. Carroll projects the late-night service will start May 2025.

Motion to file and accept: Passero/Schefers; Unanimous with no abstentions.

## 6. **Old Business:**

- a. **Bus Stop Shelter Update:** Mr. Carroll stated the proposed shelter locations were based upon boarding counts, but some were not practical due to lack of public right-of-way or they are on private property. CTDOT has indicated the first route of shelter installation will be limited to public right-of-way and will consider expanding to private locations later in the program. Mr. Carroll drew the Board's attention to the draft agreement on shelters from CTDOT, which requires a town in which a shelter is located to sign off. Mr. Carroll asked for feedback, and offered a possible option for consideration would be SEAT signs as the District and creates a separate agreement between the town and the District making the town responsible for the routine maintenance and upkeep of the shelter. After much discussion, the Board agreed that SEAT should execute the agreement with CTDOT and separate agreements between the District and applicable town for shelter maintenance.

Motion to approve the agreement: Salomone/Oefinger; Unanimous with no abstention.

- b. **EEO Report:** Mr. Carroll provided an overview of SEAT's EEO policy and impact analysis in response to the Union's allegations of discrimination in the application of discipline. The data from 2024 suggested SEAT is evenly balanced in the application of discipline and the only area of challenge is the hiring

practices with some underrepresentation of certain groups. SEAT is working to ensure a race neutral approach regarding hiring and other practices.

- c. **Executive Session:** Motion to modify the agenda to move the discussion of discrimination to the end of the meeting: Redd/Oefinger; Unanimous with no abstentions.

#### 7. **New Business:**

- a. **CAD AVL APC Update:** Mr. Carroll requested Board approval to spend \$430,000 in federal and state capital dollars to update SEATs automatic vehicle location system, public address system and automatic passenger counting system. The proposal is an add-on to the Swiftly system currently used to track the buses. Motion to approve: Oefinger/Salomone; Unanimous with no abstention.
- b. **2026 Operating Budget:** Mr. Carroll reported on the proposed FY26 budget, which breaks out costs for fixed route service, ADA paratransit, HOP, the New London SmartRide costs and administrative expenses as well as the new Micro Transit pilot programs (Groton, Waterford, Stonington Saturdays and night Smart Ride) and the Governor Services Initiatives (GSI) for fixed route expansions. The new services were entirely funded with State grants; the core service would require a 5% increase in local funding. New London has reported they would not be able to make the 5% increase and will not be able to match the current FY25 budget. Mr. Carroll stated that he is waiting for a final number from New London and will offer service options supported by the reduced funding for Board consideration.  
Motion to approve the Operating budget: Schefer/Cunningham: Unanimous with no abstentions.
- c. **2026 Capital Plan:** Mr. Carroll provided an overview of the plan which runs to FY30. He noted the data are placeholders and are not final until SEAT and CTDOT develop the final Transportation Improvement Plan and submit capital grant applications to FTA. Adjustments can be made throughout the planning horizon. The document serves as a general planning perspective on what SEAT hopes to accomplish over the next 4 – 5 years. Some key points are replacement cutaway buses, software upgrades, the current maintenance facility renovations, a Groton transfer center and charging station, replacement heavy duty buses with electric buses, preventative maintenance, and administrative capital costs.  
Motion to approve the capital plan: Redd/Schefers; Unanimous with no abstentions.
- d. **Items from Board Members or SECOGG Staff: SCCOG** staff asked about the status of the proposed transit development/comprehensive operational analysis plan (TDP/COA), scope and timing noting they are starting to work on their

regional plan and for the next 18 months. Mr. Carroll responded that it is very much in the infancy phase and would collaborate closely with staff on developing the scope of the study.

- e. **Executive Session:** Motion to go into executive session at 10:20 to review and discuss the discrimination complaints by the union. Schefers/Cunningham; Unanimous with no abstentions. No action taken; Session adjourned at 10:40.
- f. **Adjournment:** By consensus at 10:40.
- g. **Next Meeting:** April 16, 2025

**Southeast Area Transit District Board of Directors Meeting  
9:30 AM, April 16, 2025**

**The meeting will be held **in person** at  
SCCOG, 5 Connecticut Avenue, Norwich CT**

**AGENDA**

1. Roll Call
2. Public Comment:
3. Meeting Minutes: March 19, 2025, Meeting
4. Communications: None
5. Reports:
  - a) Management Report: Accept and File
  - b) Financial Report: Accept and File
6. Old Business:
  - a) Bus Stops and Shelter Update
7. New Business:
  - a) Disadvantage Business Enterprise (DBE) Program Update
8. Adjournment
9. Next meeting: May 14, 2025

Member Municipalities  
East Lyme Griswold Groton Lisbon Montville  
New London Norwich Stonington Waterford

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**Minutes of the April 16, 2025  
Meeting of the Southeast Area Transit District Board of Directors**

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Board Members Present: Thomas Sparkman (Lisbon) (Chairman), Michael Passero (New London), Carey Redd, II (New London), Michael Schefers (Stonington), Robert Brule (Secretary), Tina Falk (Griswold); Dan Cunningham (East Lyme)

SEAT Staff: Michael Carroll (General Manager), Bobbi Jo Clapproad (HR / Payroll Manager)

SCCOG: Amanda Kennedy, Kate Ratan

Other Attendees:

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1. **Roll Call:** Called to order at 9:30 am; there was no quorum. Informational meeting
2. **Public Comment:** No public comment.
3. **Minutes of March 19, 2025:** Tabled
4. **Communications:** No Communications
5. **Reports:**
  - a. **Manager's Report:** Mr. Carroll reported an increase in ridership in the month of March with nearly 95,000 boardings on all services. SEAT continues efforts to fill operator vacancies which impacts the implementation of new service. SEAT hopes to start some new service in May and/or June. Services include:
    - i. New fixed route service in Groton, Monday through Friday from the Subbase to Eastern Point which will be Route 627.
    - ii. Sunday Service which will be covered by overtime which will include Routes 1, 7, 108, 982. As more operators are hired, Mr. Carroll would like to add local services on Sundays as well.
    - iii. Late night Smart Ride Service in New London which will run up to 12:30 / 1 am, Monday through Saturday and Sunday from 5pm to 10 pm.

Mr. Carroll continues to work closely with CTDOT and the design team, Baker, regarding the new facility design. Mr. Carroll sent out copies of the design to Board members. Mr. Carroll stated office label names do not entirely match the current organizational chart but do increase the number of offices. An archeological team has been on site to ensure there are no artifacts of concern before construction starts. SEAT continues to work with NorthStar Impact Coaching formally known as Thought Partners. They have held rounds of focus groups with employees. Mr. Carroll has requested the consulting team to

provide a debrief of the study for the Board. Discussions ensued surrounding the new Groton Route 627 and modifications to local New London Route 13 to serve the new Recreation Center.

- b. **Financial Report:** Mr. Carroll stated that March financials have not been completed but February's financial report was completed and is attached. SEAT is tracking under budget because not all new services have been implemented. Overtime has increased due to on-going operator shortages, but the budget is balanced at this point. Mr. Carroll reminded Board members the FTA COVID money will be exhausted by the end of this fiscal year which means that New London Smart Ride is unfunded and will be discontinued July 1, 2025. Mr. Redd asked if any funds had been secured to continue Smart Ride, and Mr. Carroll reported that no funds were made available other than the new grant for late night Smart Ride. Mr. Carroll also mentioned preliminary staff discussions to offer Sunday Smart Ride service in lieu of fixed route Sunday service when SEAT was able to hire additional operators, but that would require CTDOT approval as well as converting New London night Route 15 to Smart Ride. In response to a question about the State's Governor's Service Initiative (funding fixed route expansions) and the Micro Transit Pilot grants (late night Smart Ride, Saturday Stonington HOP, Groton and Waterford HOP), Mr. Carroll stated he did not have a firm answer, but thought the GSI would be rolled into the regular annual grant program; but the Micro Transit Pilot grant was a two-year program. He cautioned that all transit funding was dependent upon the financial solvency of the State's Transportation Trust Fund, which was a concern prior to COVID. Discussions ensued about the ending of Smart Ride service, impacts on customers, Conn College, service overlaps with fixed route and capacity constraints on Smart Ride. In response to a question about non-member towns, Mr. Carroll stated he was still waiting for responses from North Stonington and Preston.

6. **Old Business:**

- a. **Bus Stop Shelter Update:** Mr. Carroll stated the list of recommended shelter locations based upon boarding counts. Some locations are probably not physically practical due to constrained right of way or they are on private property like shopping centers. CTDOT is unwilling in the first tranche of shelters to install on private property but may consider in subsequent rounds. Mr. Carroll drew the attention of the Board to the draft agreement from CTDOT which requires each town with a shelter to sign off on this agreement. Mr. Carroll shared it with the Board for feedback and is concerned that towns may not wish to enter into this agreement. A possible option for consideration would

be that SEAT signs on behalf of the district but in doing so, Mr. Carroll strongly recommends that SEAT has a separate agreement with the town making them routine maintenance and upkeep of the shelter. Mr. Carroll asked if Board members would like SEAT to sign on behalf of town members that have shelters and SEAT work out an agreement with each town that has a shelter.

Discussions ensued surrounding said discussion.

- b. **Items from Board Members or SECOGG Staff:** Ms. Rattan stated that Mr. Carroll shared CTDOT's meeting notice for the new bus garage and administration building. Ms. Rattan stated the meeting required pre-registration for comment. Ms. Rattan was notified that CTTransit as part of their biennial service evaluation, is doing a Comprehensive Operational Analysis for the state-wide express bus service as well as examining post pandemic ridership trends and possibly establishing an express route between Hartford and Norwich.
- c. **Next Meeting:** June 18, 2025.

**Southeast Area Transit District Board of Directors Meeting  
9:30 AM, June 18, 2025**

**The meeting will be held **in person** at  
SECOG, 5 Connecticut Avenue, Norwich CT**

**AGENDA**

1. Roll Call
2. Public Comment:
3. Meeting Minutes: April 16, 2025, Meeting
4. Communications: None
5. Reports:
  - a) Management Report: Accept and File
  - b) Financial Report: Accept and File
6. Old Business:
  - a) Bus Stops and Shelter Update
  - b) Non-Member Town Update
  - c) New London Smart Ride Update
7. New Business:
  - a) Title VI Program Update – review and approve
  - b) MPO (SECOG)-SEAT Agreement Update – review and approve
  - c) CTDOT Contract – review and approve
8. Adjournment
9. Next meeting: TBD

Member Municipalities  
East Lyme Griswold Groton Lisbon Montville  
New London Norwich Stonington Waterford

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**Minutes of June 18, 2025**  
**Meeting of the Southeast Area Transit District Board of Directors**

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Board Members Present:	Thomas Sparkman (Lisbon/Chairman), Mark Oefinger (Vice-Chairman/Groton), Dan Cunningham (East Lyme), Michael Passero (New London), Carey Redd, II (New London), Robert J Brule (Waterford/Secretary), Tina Falck (Griswold)
SEAT Staff:	Michael Carroll (General Manager), Cherise Simpson
SCCOG:	Amanda Kennedy, Kate Ratan
Other Attendees:	Sendra Childs, Curtis Austin, Rashad Umrani

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1. **Roll Call:** Called to order at 9:59 am; a quorum was present.
2. **Public Comment:** Ms. Childs stated that the Union is having some trouble with management reporting the two maintenance managers are a couple. She stated one arrives early and leaves to pick up the other, and both depart around 1 PM resulting in no maintenance supervision with unsupervised visitors at night. Maintenance workers have come to Ms. Childs with their issues, and she will go back and handle the situation(s). Ms. Childs charged maintenance management with nepotism and claims there have been threats against other employees, stating some Servicers are afraid to come to work. She claims the same allegations of threatening behaviors are happening among other managers as well. Ms. Childs stated her first goal is safety and said senior management needs to control this situation. Ms. Childs stated that she is sad that the Board could not find the funds for SmartRide.
3. **Minutes of April 16, 2025:** Motion to approve: Brule, Cunningham; Unanimous with no abstentions.
4. **Communications:** Mr. Carroll received some correspondence from Connecticut College pertaining to the ending of SmartRide.
5. **Reports:**
  - a. **Manager's Report:** Mr. Carroll stated Sunday service will begin June 29, 2025 as part of the Governor's Service Initiative (GSI) The service includes routes 1, 7, 9, 11, 108 and 982. Service will run from 8 am to 5 pm. In addition, Sunday SmartRide night will run from 5 pm to 10 pm as part of the CTDOT Micro Transit pilot program. Mr. Carroll reported the current Smart Ride program is slated to end after June 30, as the Federal COVID relief monies used to fund the service have been exhausted. Mr. Carroll also reported beginning Monday, June 30, 2025, night SmartRide will start operating from 8 pm to 12:30 am, Monday

through Saturday. This program was also funded by the State's Micro Transit pilot program. There is one more route in the Governor's Service Initiative which is still on hold due to staffing limitations: Route 627 in Groton. SEAT staff have been spending a lot of time on Federal Transit's Triennial Review which examines 23 different areas for compliance. The preliminary report was completed this past week. Mr. Carroll will share the final report when it is issued. Mr. Carroll reported on various capital projects, including the new facility and renovations for the current building. Motion to file and accept: Brule/Oefinger; Unanimous with no abstentions.

- b. **Financial Report:** Mr. Carroll stated that the financial report is for the month of April. The budget is balanced but not all programmed services had been implemented.

Motion to file and accept: Brule / Oefinger; Unanimous with no abstentions.

#### 6. **Old Business:**

- a. **Bus Stop Shelter Update:** Mr. Carroll stated that staff are finalizing the bid proposals for bus stop sign installation and should be finished by month's end. Mr. Carroll hopes to wrap this project up by the end of the calendar year. Mr. Oefinger requested a list of bus stop and shelter locations.
- b. **Non-Member Town Update:** Mr. Carroll reported SEAT received confirmation from North Stonington and Preston that they will not join the District in FY26 due to budget constraints. Therefore, per prior Board action, SEAT buses will not stop in North Stonington and Preston as of July 1<sup>st</sup>. Services to Franklin and Ledyard stopped as of January 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. Discussions ensued surrounding services in the non-member towns and the ending of their services moving forward and the impact of local funding on SEAT.
- c. **New London SmartRide Update:** Mr. Carroll stated that SEAT would like to continue the service, but due to lack of funding it ends after June 30. Mr. Carroll stated to continue to run the service would put SEAT in a deficit situation. Mr. Carroll stated he knows Mayor Passero has been working hard to find new funding for the program. SEAT has put in several requests to CTDOT which have not been approved due to funding constraints and the fact that Smart Ride operates at the same times and areas as the fixed route service. At CTDOT's request a meeting was held with the Board Executive Committee to discuss this matter. Mr. Carroll reported that CTDOT staff made the same argument, of not having funds to continue the service and the duplicative nature of the two service modes. Mr. Carroll stated CTDOT indicated if a study and public hearings supported a change in service from fixed route to Smart Ride, they might support shifting funds from the current fixed route service in New London to

Smart Ride. Mr. Passero stated that New London has been let down by SEAT. He stated that New London staff have put a lot of effort into this project. He believed there were ways to save Smart Ride that he was not aware of which were all controlled by FTA & CTDOT. Mr. Passero stated that the hearings and studies referenced by CTDOT should have been done over the past few months rather than reporting to the Board that the funding is running out and abandon the people who make nearly 4,000 trips a month who have come to depend on SmartRide. Mr. Passero stated his disappointment with the current situation. The initial request to start SmartRide was driven by New London's opinion that the current fixed route service did not adequately serve the City. That remains the case but has been relieved by the overlay of SmartRide. Mr. Passero believes SEAT should have been going through a re-evaluation process of the fixed route system while SmartRide was functioning with the goal of redirecting the funds to SmartRide. Mr. Passero stated CTDOT has been building Micro Transit in other municipalities while ignoring the sustainability of the SmartRide in New London. Mr. Passero would like the support of the Board to continue the service while looking to replace the fixed route system in New London, claiming the buses are frequently empty. Mr. Passero stated CTDOT Commissioner was adamant that the State's budget is too tight and does not have money for SmartRide. Mr. Passero stated part of the problem is that they are not sure how much SmartRide costs. He stated that he believes the Smart Ride funds were spent more quickly by using CDL drivers at overtime rates rather than using non-CDL drivers who only need the "F" endorsement. Mr. Passero would like SECOG to study the fixed route system to see what needs to be done. Ms. Kennedy stated that it is not clear just looking at the existing system that converting to SmartRide would work. She informed the Board that CTDOT is launching a four-year state-wide service analysis. Discussions ensued surrounding SmartRide. A workshop is planned for Tuesday, June 24, 2025, to discuss the SmartRide service and budget.

Motion to extend SmartRide through July and delay night Smart Ride service: Brule / Cunningham; Unanimous with no abstention.

7. **New Business:**

- a. **Title VI Program Update:** The Title VI Program has been updated. Motion to approve: Brule, Oefinger: Unanimous with no abstentions.
- b. **MPO (SECOG) – SEAT Agreement Update:** As a result of the recent recommendations from CTDOT, FTA and FHWA, SECOG have updated the agreement with SEAT, which is an FTA requirement. The document addresses several Federally mandated reporting elements, including the STIP,

Transportation Asset Management Program and the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan.

Motion to approve: Brule / Oefinger: Unanimous with no abstentions.

- c. **CTDOT Contract:** The annual operating grant agreement between CTDOT and SEAT is attached to the packet. The agreement funds current SEAT fixed route services, ADA Paratransit services and Stonington HOP (Weekday) services at current fare levels. The Master Agreement stipulates that major service and/or fare change requires written approval from CTDOT.
- d. **Items from Board Members or SECOGG Staff: SCCOG** : None
- e. **Adjournment:** 11:33 am; Motion approved by: Brule / Oefinger, Unanimous with no abstention.
- f. **Next Meeting:** July 17, 2025, at 8:30 am (due to the SECCOG Meeting being held at the Submarine Base with a tour immediately afterwards on July 16)

**Southeast Area Transit District Board of Directors Meeting  
8:30 AM, July 17, 2025**

**The meeting will be held **in person** at  
SECOG, 5 Connecticut Avenue, Norwich CT**

**Note the Day and Time Change to Thursday, July 17!**

**AGENDA**

1. Roll Call
2. Public Comment:
3. Meeting Minutes: March 19, 2025, and June 18, 2025, Meetings
4. Communications: None
5. Reports:
  - a) Management Report: Accept and File
  - b) Financial Report: Accept and File
6. Old Business:
  - a) Bus Stops and Shelter Update
  - b) New London Smart Ride Update
7. New Business:
  - a) Items from SECOG
  - b) Items from Board Members
8. Adjournment
9. Next meeting: August 20, 2025

**Member Municipalities**

East Lyme Griswold Groton Lisbon Montville  
New London Norwich Stonington Waterford

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**Minutes of July 17, 2025**  
**Meeting of the Southeast Area Transit District Board of Directors**

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Board Members Present: Thomas Sparkman (Lisbon) (Chairman), Mark Oefinger (Groton) (Vice Chairman), Michael Passero (New London), Carey Redd, II (New London), Michael Schefers (Stonington), Tina Falck (Griswold), Dan Cunningham (East Lyme); Tina Falk (Griswold)

SEAT Staff: Michael Carroll (General Manager), Cherise Simpson

SCCOG: Amanda Kennedy, Kate Ratan

Other Attendees:

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1. **Roll Call:** Called to order at 8:40 am.
2. **Public Comment:** No public comment.
3. **Minutes of March 19, 2025 & June 18, 2025:** Motion to accept and file minutes with no abstentions: Schefers / Cunningham
4. **Communications:** No Communications
5. **Reports:**
  - a. **Manager's Report:** Mr. Carroll commended the New London police department for a job well done working with SEAT regarding the transfer point on Broad Street near Williams Memorial Park during the Celebrate New London festival. Previously the buses congregated at the Burlington Coat Factory parking lot. Mr. Carroll stated that ridership declined a little in the month of June. There were 439 boardings for the Electric Boat shuttle for the month of June. Boardings seem to fluctuate as May had more boardings than in the month of June. At the request of EB, the EB stop will be moved. The Stonington HOP service ridership increased over the year with the addition of Saturday service and is up 17%. Groton HOP dropped a little last month but year-to-date, ridership is at 635. Waterford HOP had an increase of 5 boardings last month. Mr. Carroll stated that SEAT shares Micro Transit fleets among adjacent services: Waterford with New London and Groton with Stonington. Mr. Carroll stated he is trying to get clarification from the State regarding the micro transit pilot projects. All of the micro transit pilot projects are due to run out in April 2026. The pilot projects are Saturday Stonington HOP, Groton HOP, Waterford HOP and the late night SmartRide in New London. Due to the services not starting on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, he has sought clarification if the services can be extended past April 2026 for the full two years' funding, with no clear answer as time. The grant agreement does

include language of the state's ability to extend the services on a year-to-year basis depending on new funding.

Motion to accept and file with no abstentions: Oefinger / Schefers

- b. **Financial Report:** Mr. Carroll provided the May report and noted the June report is still in progress. Mr. Carroll stated that he believes the budget will balance at the end of the year with reliance on Federal COVID relief monies; but those funds are now exhausted. For FY26, SEAT will rely on traditional funding sources for the operating expenses, primarily state funding, local funding and the farebox revenue. Motion to accept and file with no abstentions: Cunningham / Falk.

#### 6. **Old Business:**

- a. **Bus Stops and Shelter Update:** Mr. Carroll reported SEAT staff are still working on the bid, and it should be released by the end of the month. Mr. Carroll stated that he has not had further communications from the Department of Transportation on the shelter program.
- b. **New London Smart Ride Update:** Mr. Carroll sent out information regarding Smart Ride to provide options for the Board's consideration. Mr. Carroll stated that the Board directed him to continue running Smart Ride through the month of July even though funding has been exhausted and he was not aware of any new funding source for Smart Ride. Discussions ensued about options to continue Smart Ride from the Board work session. A conference call is scheduled with CTDOT on August 4, 2025, and he recommended continuing Smart Ride, through the first week of August pending additional information from CTDOT on funding options. Mr. Carroll reported on a member suggestion to modify the scope of the late-night Smart Ride service to reduce the time and extend funding to daytime service. Mr. Carroll reported that CTDOT staff received a request from the New London legislative delegation to shift the evening Smart Ride to operate a couple of hours earlier. CTDOT agreed to review a proposal from SEAT to do so. CTDOT also suggested consideration of reducing the Smart Ride service area through geo-fencing key locations within New London. Mr. Passero stated that the legislative delegation called a meeting with the Commissioner and his staff, Mr. Redd, and himself. They went over everything in that meeting, and it was stated that there is not going to be any other funding. The delegation is trying to consider options for special session to include new funding for Smart Ride. Mr. Passero stated that the Commissioner was encouraging about getting money from other sources for Smart Ride. Mr. Passero stated that planning should have been in the works months prior to prevent the end of Smart Ride. CTDOT expressed concern about the duplication of service and the impact on

ADA paratransit service. If something is done with the fixed routes, then it will affect ADA paratransit. Discussion continued surrounding Smart Ride, go-fencing and changing the night pilot language and ADA paratransit service. There were also talks about doing a study in New London. Mr. Passero requested another thirty-day extension for the month of August for Smart Ride. There were also discussions about raising the fare for Smart Ride. It was suggested to raise the new pilot Smart Ride fare to \$2.25. Motion to raise the price to \$2.25 for the new pilot Smart Ride, redesign the system including consideration of geo-fencing and service span. Accepted with no abstentions: Redd/ Cunningham.

Motion to extend Smart Ride to the end of August. Motion accepted with no abstentions: Redd / Cunningham

- c. **Items from SECOG:** Ms. Rattan stated that they received some sample service studies CTDOT. She is still working through them and will have conversations with Mr. Carroll to determine what the scope of work would look like for the smaller study for New London only. Ms. Rattan states that they do not have the PL funding to do a full study for the District, and it would not be possible to get it done in a timely fashion. Ms. Rattan stated she could work with CTDOT staff who have done this type of work, but this will take some cooperation with staff and cautioned it would be four to five months before they can get started and submit a direct charge request to utilize the PL funds with approval by FHWA and FTA staff. After that SECOG can release a RFP. It takes a minimum of twenty-eight days for bidding, and another month to initiate work on the project.
- d. **Items from Board Members or SECOGG Staff:** None
- e. **Next Meeting:** August 20, 2025

**Southeast Area Transit District Board of Directors Meeting**  
**8:30 AM, August 20, 2025**  
**The meeting will be via Zoom**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89059779702?pwd=ienQBNdy3WC5qXvqbimD8wewovXzG.1&from=addon>

Meeting ID: 890 5977 9702

Passcode: 569681

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,89059779702#,,,\*569681# US (Washington DC)  
+13052241968,,89059779702#,,,\*569681# US

Join instructions

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meetings/89059779702/invitations?signature=amqpCxoNu-vki84EA17rOLMnwSjHzCbStK9F99XYT8U>

## **AGENDA**

1. Roll Call
2. Public Comment:
3. Meeting Minutes: July 17, 2025
4. Communications: None
5. Reports:
  - a) Management Report: Accept and File
  - b) Financial Report: Accept and File
6. Old Business:
  - a) Bus Stops and Shelter Update
  - b) New London Smart Ride Update
7. New Business:
  - a) NEORide Resolution
  - b) FTA Triennial Review Final Report
  - c) Items from SECOG
  - d) Items from Board Members
8. Adjournment
9. Next meeting: September 17, 2025

Member Municipalities

East Lyme Griswold Groton Lisbon Montville  
New London Norwich Stonington Waterford

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**Minutes of August 20, 2025**  
**Meeting (Virtual) of the Southeast Area Transit District Board of Directors**

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Board Members Present: Thomas Sparkman (Lisbon) (Chairman), Mark Oefinger (Groton) (Vice Chairman), Michael Passero (New London), Carey Redd, II (New London), Leonard Bunnell (Montville), John Salomone (Norwich)(Treasurer).

SEAT Staff: Michael Carroll (General Manager), Cherise Simpson (Program Manager)

SCCOG: Amanda Kennedy, Kate Ratan

Other Attendees: John Penny, New London Day Reporter

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1. **Roll Call:** Called to order at 8:40 am. A quorum was present.
2. **Public Comment:** No public comment.
3. **Minutes of July 17, 2025:** Motion to accept and file minutes with no abstentions: Oefinger/Passero; unanimous.
4. **Communications:** No Communications
5. **Reports:**
  - a. **Manager's Report:** Mr. Carroll reported on new Governor's Service Initiatives (GSI) that started on June 29 with Sunday services on Lines 1, 7, 9, 11, 108 and 982. He noted additional services in New London and Norwich, along with the new Groton 627 will start when additional operators are hired and trained. He reminded members the Micro Transit projects in Groton, Saturday Stonington, Waterford and night Smart Ride are funded with a special State Micro Transit pilot grants and those funds will expire in the Spring of 2026. He reported on a recent CONNOSH compliant filed by an employee about exhaust fumes on a bus due to a failure of the exhaust system; the bus was replaced and has been repaired, and at this time, no further action by CONNOSH is anticipated. He reported that fixed route ridership increased over last month, and is up slightly compared to last year. ADA and Stonington HOP rides increased slightly, and noticed a small decline in Smart Ride rides. He did note that peak vehicles for Smart Ride have decreased due to operator shortages related to a high absenteeism rate. Groton HOP ridership increased slightly, and no rides were reported within Waterford on the HOP service, although the Waterford HOP does assist in New London. Motion to accept and file with no abstentions: Oefinger / Passero

b. **Financial Report:** Mr. Carroll provided the June report and noted the July report is still in progress. Mr. Carroll stated that he believes the budget will balance at the end of the year with reliance on Federal COVID relief monies; but those funds are now exhausted. For FY26, SEAT will rely on traditional funding sources for the operating expenses, primarily state funding, local funding and the farebox revenue. Motion to accept and file with no abstentions: Bunnell/Oefinger.

6. **Old Business:**

- a. **Bus Stops and Shelter Update:** Mr. Carroll reported SEAT is awaiting bid responses to its proposal requests for sign installation throughout the service area. He also reported on the State's maintenance requirements for bus shelters under the State's bus shelter enhancement program and noted that at least one member town indicated it could not maintain nor budget for shelter maintenance. Mr. Carroll noted this issue would need further discussion by the Board later.
- b. **New London Smart Ride Update:** Mr. Carroll provided information on modifications to the Smart Ride to address CTDOT's concerns primarily about "duplication" of services between Smart Ride and fixed route. CTDOT suggested consideration of reducing the Smart Ride service area through geo-fencing key locations within New London. Mr. Carroll noted that Smart Ride is continuing into September, pending further discussions with CTDOT and supplemental funding from New London.

7. **New Business:**

- a. **NEORide:** Mr. Carroll provided background on an Ohio-based transit consortium, NEORide, that offers collaborative grant-making, training and cooperative procurements. He provided a draft resolution to join NEORide, contingent upon legal review by SEAT's counsel. Motion to approve contingent resolution: Oefinger/Bunnell; unanimously approved.
- b. **FTA Triennial Review:** Mr. Carroll reported on the final report on the Federal Transit Administration's Triennial Review that examined twenty-three areas of SEAT's compliance with FTA requirement and noted there were three (3) deficiencies in Procurement, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. He noted that most of the issues were related to documentation, and a corrective action plan is in progress and the deficiencies will be addressed by staff and resolved to FTA's satisfaction.
- c. **Items from SECOGG Staff:** None
- d. **Items from Board Members:** None

8. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned by consensus at 9:22 AM.
9. **Next Meeting:** September 17, 2025

**Southeast Area Transit District Board of Directors Meeting**  
**9:30 AM, September 17, 2025**  
The meeting will be IN PERSON at  
SECCOG, 5 Connecticut Avenue, Norwich CT

**AGENDA**

1. Roll Call
2. Public Comment:
3. Meeting Minutes: August 20, 2025
4. Communications: None
5. Reports:
  - a) Management Report: Accept and File
  - b) Financial Report: Accept and File
6. Old Business:
  - a) Bus Stops and Shelter Update
  - b) New London Smart Ride Update
7. New Business:
  - a) Items from SECCOG
  - b) Items from Board Members
8. Adjournment
9. Next meeting: October 15, 2025

Member Municipalities  
East Lyme Griswold Groton Lisbon Montville  
New London Norwich Stonington Waterford

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**Minutes of September 17, 2025**  
**Meeting (Virtual) of the Southeast Area Transit District Board of Directors**

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Board Members Present: Mark Oefinger (Groton/Vice Chairman), Robert Boris (Groton), Michael Passero (New London), Carey Redd, II (New London), Leonard Bunnell (Montville), Dan Cunningham (East Lyme), Michael Schefers (Stonington), Robert Brule (Waterford/Secretary)

SEAT Staff: Michael Carroll (General Manager),

SCCOG: Amanda Kennedy, Kate Ratan, Dominic Anziano

CTDOT: Jennifer Pacacha

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1. **Roll Call:** Called to order at 9:40 am. A quorum was present.
2. **Public Comment:** No public comment.
3. **Minutes August 20, 2025:** Motion to accept and file minutes with no abstentions: Passero/Bunnell; unanimous with one abstention (Cunningham).
4. **Communications:** No Communications
5. **Reports:**
  - a. **Manager's Report:** Mr. Carroll reported overall ridership had returned to pre-COVID levels with 100,000 boardings in August. He also reminded everyone that Sunday service had returned in July, with 2,600 Sunday boardings in August. He noted that when additional operators are hired and trained, additional local Sunday service in New London and Norwich. He discussed the on-going challenges in hiring and training new operators, along with SEAT's high absenteeism rates impacting service delivery at times with missed or late trips. There were questions about absenteeism and whether SEAT's experience was comparable to other Districts. He also mentioned SEAT's Finance Manager had resigned and that until a new person is hired and trained, Cynthia Schillke (AGM/Procurement Manager) and he would cover those duties. He reminded the Board that the State's Micro Transit Pilot program, which funds Groton, Waterford, Saturday Stonington HOP along with night New London Smart Ride Micro Transit services would expire at the end of FY26. He also reported on the new facility project and noted final design was at 30% and moving towards 60%. In response to a question about the stability of Federal funding with the new Administration, FTA had indicated that this project's funds had been obligated,

and it would be highly unlikely that they would be clawed back. Finally, he reported on a bus fire that had just occurred resulting in no injuries but the total loss of the vehicle. He noted it was a 2018 diesel unit. There was discussion about battery electric buses versus hybrids and the impact of a switch to hybrid would impact the new facility. Mr. Carroll suggested the new facility could accommodate both bus types and reminded everyone that under current State directive, all replacement heavy duty buses in CT must be battery electric if purchased with State funds. Motion to accept and file with no abstentions: Brule/ Cunningham; unanimous.

- b. **Financial Report:** Mr. Carroll provided the July report and noted the August report is still in progress. Mr. Carroll stated that COVID relief monies had been fully expended and FY26 operating expenses would rely on traditional state funding, local funding and the farebox revenue. Motion to accept and file with no abstentions: Bunnell/Passero; unanimous.

## 6. **Old Business:**

- a. **Bus Stops and Shelter Update:** Mr. Carroll reported received two (2) bids for bus stop sign installation; the initial staff review recommended award to the low-cost proposal of \$286,000, fully grant funded. Mr. Carroll noted we would seek Board approval via an electronic vote later in the month. Regarding the State's bus shelter program, Mr. Carroll stated he delayed signing the agreement on behalf of the District rather than having individual towns execute an agreement with State based upon prior Board discussions on the issue. Mr. Carroll stated his delay in executing the agreement was based upon further discussions with other Transit Districts and review of the State's conditions. He expressed concerns about the reliance on local funds for shelter maintenance as well as the strict conditions the State had attached thereto. He also reported that Groton had indicated they had no staff or local funds to support shelter maintenance and Mr. Carroll suggested that the issue of local involvement in shelter maintenance would have to be addressed at later meeting. area. He also reported on the State's maintenance requirements for bus shelters under the State's bus shelter enhancement program and noted that at least one member town indicated it could not maintain nor budget for shelter maintenance. Questions ensured about the number of current and proposed shelters by town along with any cost estimated for maintenance and the impact on local contributions by member towns to SEAT; it was later suggested that costs associated with shelter maintenance could be incorporated into additional State funding requests as well. Mr. Carroll did note that a dedicated staff member for

shelter maintenance would cost about \$100,000 per year for wages and benefits. Mr. Carroll noted this issue would need further discussion by the Board later.

- b. **New London Smart Ride Update:** Mr. Carroll reported on a discussion with Lisa Rivers of CTDOT about funding the daytime Smart Ride service, that CTDOT was willing to allow flexing grant funds for the night Smart Ride service to cover both day and night service with the following conditions: 1. Reduce the peak daytime vehicles from three (3) to two (2) or one (1); 2. implement “geofencing” to eliminate Smart Ride trips that could be served by the current fixed route system; 3. Increase Smart Ride fares from the current \$1.75 and \$0.85 for Senior/Disabled to a flat \$2.25 fare. It was asked if Smart Ride zones could be implemented via “geo-fencing” to consolidate pick-up/drop off locations. Mr. Carroll noted that some special zones had already been created for Conn College, L&M Hospital, shopping centers, and larger apartment complexes. There were also questions about transitioning to new fares and how it would impact agencies that had purchased passes based upon the old fare; Mr. Carroll responded that prior purchases would be treated as credit against the purchase of new fare media. It was noted that this arrangement only would last through the current fiscal year, and any new funding continuing the pilot Micro Transit programs and Smart Ride would need new State funding. Board members recommended Micro Transit costs should be incorporated into the FY27 operating budget with a 2-3 projection for Micro Transit services and shelter maintenance.

7. **New Business:**

- a. **Items from SECOGG Staff:** None
- b. **Items from Board Members:** None

8. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned by consensus at 10:35 AM.

9. **Next Meeting:** October 15, 2025

**Southeast Area Transit District Board of Directors Meeting**  
**9:30 AM, October 15, 2025**  
The meeting will be IN PERSON at  
SECCOG, 5 Connecticut Avenue, Norwich CT

**AGENDA**

1. Roll Call
2. Public Comment:
3. Meeting Minutes: September 17, 2025
4. Communications: None
5. Reports:
  - a) Management Report: Accept and File
  - b) Financial Report: Accept and File
6. Old Business:
  - a) Bus Stops and Shelter Update
    - i) Award to Bus Stop Sign Installer
    - ii) CTDOT Bus Shelter Program
  - b) New London Smart Ride Update
7. New Business:
  - a) Items from SECOG
  - b) Items from Board Members
  - c) Board Officers for 2026
  - d) Meeting Dates for 2026
8. Adjournment
9. Next meeting: November 19, 2025

Member Municipalities  
East Lyme Griswold Groton Lisbon Montville  
New London Norwich Stonington Waterford

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**Southeast Area Transit District Board of Directors Meeting**  
**9:30 AM, November 19, 2025**  
The meeting will be IN PERSON at  
SECCOG, 5 Connecticut Avenue, Norwich CT

**AGENDA**

1. Roll Call
2. Public Comment:
3. Meeting Minutes: September 17, 2025
4. Communications: None
5. Reports:
  - a) Management Report: Accept and File
  - b) Financial Report: Accept and File
6. Old Business:
  - a) Bus Stops and Shelter Update
    - i) Award to Bus Stop Sign Installer
    - ii) CTDOT Bus Shelter Program
  - b) New London Smart Ride Update
7. New Business:
  - a) Items from SECOG
  - b) Items from Board Members
  - c) Board Officers for 2026
  - d) Meeting Dates for 2026
8. Adjournment
9. Next meeting: December 17, 2025

Member Municipalities  
East Lyme Griswold Groton Lisbon Montville  
New London Norwich Stonington Waterford

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**Minutes of November 19, 2025**  
**Meeting of the Southeast Area Transit District Board of Directors**

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Board Members Present: Thomas Sparkman, Chairman (Lisbon); Mark Oefinger, Vice Chairman (Groton), Michael Passero (New London), Carey Redd, II (New London), John Salomone, Treasurer (Norwich), Michael Schefers (Stonington), Robert Brule, Secretary (Waterford), Dan Cunningham (East Lyme); Lenoard Bunnell (Montville)

SEAT Staff: Michael Carroll (General Manager), Cherise Simpson

SCCOG: Amanda Kennedy, Kate Ratan

Other Attendees:

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1. **Roll Call:** Called to order at 9:50 am; it was noted that a quorum was present.
2. **Public Comment:** No public comment.
3. **Minutes of October 15, 2025:** Motion to approve: Salomone/Brule; Unanimous
4. **Communications:** No Communications
5. **Reports:**
  - a. **Manager's Report:** Mr. Carroll stated the shortage of bus operators continues and is currently short five to six positions, filled by overtime. One candidate successfully completed the State CDL program. He is training with SEAT staff on services, procedures, etc. In addition, SEAT has been challenged by the departure of the Finance Manager in September. The position has been filled by Ms. Jennifer Griffis, but she will require training to get up to speed on SEAT procedures and software programs. Ms. Schilke has been working hard doing two jobs and will also train Ms. Griffis. Mr. Potter has accepted the Maintenance Foreman position. Due to the on-going operator shortages, SEAT has not been able to start two fixed-route expansions: 627, which would run between the Subbase and Eastern Point and additional Sunday service in New London and Norwich. Sunday ridership jumped up to 2,100 boardings in October. The Micro Transit service continues. Mr. Carroll stated that the pilot programs, which are Saturday Stonington HOP, Groton HOP, Waterford HOP and the New London SmartRide, will expire at the end of the current fiscal year, June 30, 2026. Mr. Carroll has been in discussions with CTDOT, and at this time, funding has not been secured to continue the pilot programs. Due to the low ridership for the Waterford HOP, CTDOT advised Mr. Carroll they could no longer fund the service, and this service will end at the end of the current calendar year. Mr.

Carroll also stated CTDOT has indicated funding for the traditional programs is tight for FY2007. Discussions ensued surrounding funding and services. Mr. Carroll stated fixed route ridership was up 97,000 boardings in the month of October and the EB shuttle had 352 boardings. Stonington ridership bumped up a little, SmartRide declined and Groton HOP had 89 riders which is a slight increase from the prior month. Mr. Carroll stated that there were no major accidents in the month of October. There were a couple of minor collisions, one was preventable. There were no reported incidents between drivers and passengers however, this is still a concern, as post pandemic, customers seem as though they have pretty high expectations at times and when operators are trying to enforce rules such as fare collection and open beverages on buses, things escalate into a verbal altercation. The three Operations Supervisors have done a particularly good job de-escalating situations and sometimes transporting customers after confrontations with the bus operator. Mr. Carroll stated that CTDOT will provide two heavy-duty battery - electric buses replacing two aging units in the fleet. Mr. Carroll does not have a timeline but said that it would be at least a year before SEAT receives the two buses. Total cost for the buses, chargers and training will be \$2.5M. Windham and River Valley have received electric buses as well and SEAT staff will arrange visits to discuss best practices. Questions and discussions ensued surrounding hybrid buses, electric buses, and the renovations for the old building.

Motion to file and accept: Oefinger/Brule. Unanimous with no abstentions.

- b. **Financial Report:** Mr. Carroll stated there is no financial report at this time. Ms. Schilke and Mr. Carroll are working to get the September and October reports which also have impact on reporting to the State. Mr. Carroll hopes that he will have financial reports for September, October, and November at the December meeting.

## 6. **Old Business:**

- a. **Bus Stop Shelter Update:** Mr. Carroll reported the award for bus stop sign installation to K5 Corporation, based in Massachusetts. K5 will be reaching out to member towns and CTDOT for permitting. The signs are in production. Mr. Carroll stated we should see signs installed after the first of the year. Mr. Carroll stated that he met with his colleagues from throughout the state who raised several concerns regarding the proposed agreement about CTDOT's bus shelter enhancement plan. The agreement stated that an agency could not use grant funds to maintain shelters and had to be funded entirely by local funds. Further, the agreement stated that CTDOT had complete control over specifying frequency of maintenance, and how quickly agency responded to repairs. Mr.

Carroll stated that he and his colleagues felt that this was too restrictive and requested CTDOT revise the agreement for transit districts. Should the CTDOT program not be acceptable to a district, they could continue to use grant funds to acquire, install and maintain bus shelters to lessen the financial impact for local towns. Discussions ensued surrounding the bus shelter program and bus stops.

- b. **New London SmartRide Update:** Mr. Carroll stated that the DOT has agreed to fund SmartRide. A public meeting needs to be held at which Mr. Carroll will be collaborating closely with Mayor Passero's staff to set a date and time in New London. As a condition of funding, CTDOT requires geofencing to reduced "cannibalization" of fixed-route riders and \$2.25 fare instead of the current \$1.75. Mayor Passaro would like to redesign the bus routes in New London. Ms. Rattan submitted a Direct Charge request for this study to CTDOT which was rejected and she will apply for Corridor Study program and submit another Direct Charge request. Ms. Rattan stated this process is taking longer than she anticipated. Discussions ensued surrounding the application process, the collapse of the SmartRide funding, and public meetings. Mr. Carroll was asked to draft a letter to the local legislature regarding the loss of funding for the MicroTransit services and send it out to Board members for review.

7. **New Business:**

- a. **Items from SECOG:** No report.
- b. **Items from Board Members:** None

**Board Members for 2026:** Current officers remain the same for 2026. Motion to nominate the current Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer: Passero / Oefinger. Unanimous with no abstentions.

- c. **Meeting Dates for 2026:** Motion to approve meeting dates Passero / Oefinger
8. **Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn: Passero / Salomone
9. **Next Meeting:** December 17, 2025

# **Southeast Area Transit District Board of Directors Meeting**

**9:30 AM, December 17, 2025**

**The meeting will be IN PERSON at  
Flanders Fish Market, 22 Chesterfield Road, East Lyme CT**

## **AGENDA**

1. Roll Call
2. Public Comment:
3. Meeting Minutes: November 19, 2025
4. Communications: None
5. Reports:
  - a) Management Report: Accept and File
  - b) Financial Report: Accept and File
6. Old Business:
  - a) Bus Stops and Shelter Update
  - b) New London Smart Ride Update
7. New Business:
  - a) Updated Drug and Alcohol Policy: Review and Approve
  - b) FY27 Operating Budget: Review
  - c) Items from SECOG
  - d) Items from Board Members
8. Adjournment
9. Next meeting: January 21, 2026

### **Member Municipalities**

East Lyme   Griswold   Groton   Lisbon   Montville  
New London   Norwich   Stonington   Waterford

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