



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
DECEMBER 2, 2025, Meeting 10:00 A.M.  
ZOOM

1) Call to Order, Welcome and Attendance

Chair Andrea Comer called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m., welcoming council members, state officials, and the public. She thanked attendees of the inaugural annual meeting.

Fanita Borges  
Greg Davis  
Andrea Comer  
Tina Beamon  
Avery Gaddis  
Andrea Hawkins  
Michael Jefferson  
Edwin Shirley  
Shirley Skyers-Thomas  
Ojala Naeem  
Grace Suh  
Charles Santiago Venator

Executive Director: Brandon McGee

With quorum confirmed, the meeting proceeded.

2) Approval of the November 6, 2025, Regular Meeting minutes.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson  
Second – by Andrea Hawkins  
In Favor – All  
Opposed – None  
Abstentions – None

Motion passed unanimously.

3) Vote on Grant Managers' Contracts

Chair Comer thanked the Reinvestment Committee and highlighted Caesar Valentin's work in building a transparent evaluation process. She then turned the floor to Brandon McGee.

Brandon McGee, thanked committee members, staff, and attendees of the annual meeting. He recognized the Community Reinvestment & Workforce Development Committee and requested Committee Chair Ojala Naeem to provide remarks.

Ojala Naeem praised the structure and rigor of the review process, noting multiple strong applicants across regions. She emphasized transparency, thorough evaluation, and the importance of communicating opportunities to communities.

### **Presentation of Grant Manager Process**

Mariedy Collazo described the overall R-2 program structure involving SEC, grant managers, and CBOs.

Explained CBO funding ranges (\$25k-\$100k annually, three-year terms), the use of standardized rubrics, and the oversight cycle.

Caesar Valentin detailed the evaluation methodology:

23 eligible proposals across 10 regions

Conflict-of-interest recusals

Scoring rubric (experience, compliance, staffing, audited statements, admin cost caps)

Selected Grant Managers (read by Valentin):

Bridgeport – Community Foundation for Greater New Haven

Danbury – United Way of Coastal & Western CT

Hartford/East Hartford – United Way Inc.

Meriden – Community Foundation for Greater New Britain

New Britain – Community Foundation for Greater New Britain

New Haven/East Haven/West Haven – United Way of Greater New Haven

New London/Norwich/Windham – United Way of Southeastern CT

Norwalk – United Way of Coastal & Western CT

Stamford – United Way of Coastal & Western CT

Waterbury – United Way of Greater Waterbury

Motion – by Avery Gaddis

Second – by Ojala Naeem

In Favor – All

Opposed – None

Abstentions – Michael Jefferson

4) Updates from the Connecticut SEC

Mr. McGee provided a comprehensive update on SEC operations, financial performance, industry data, and strategic initiatives. He reported that as of November 2025, SEC expenditures totaled \$127,494, inclusive of personnel costs and operational expenses. He noted that unspent funds from the 2023–2024 Community Reinvestment Pilot Program were returned and will be redistributed to community-based organizations.

Mr. McGee stated that the SEC is statutorily responsible for distributing \$36 million over three years to support Community Reinvestment efforts and that the Revolving Loan Fund continues to drive small-business economic mobility, with \$2.18 million in loans disbursed and \$65,747 in collected interest.

He further reported that Connecticut cannabis sales have exceeded \$807 million since January 2023 and that the SEC receives 60% of cannabis tax revenue as outlined by statute. Licensing updates included 112 final licenses issued and 19 provisional licenses active statewide.

Mr. McGee confirmed that the SEC successfully met all Q4 benchmarks under the Year 1 Strategic Roadmap and recognized staff, council members, and community partners for their efforts.

He invited members to the December 17 Council Market Outlook Meeting, highlighting reports from the Marketplace Subcommittee, Municipal Relations Subcommittee, and the Youth Champions group. He also acknowledged Council Member Kevin Walton for his leadership in youth engagement.

Council Member Avery Gaddis requested confirmation that the earlier-approved motion empowered SEC staff to execute contracts with selected Grant Managers. Mr. McGee confirmed the authority.

Mr. McGee concluded by announcing that the Reinvestment and Workforce Development Committee meeting scheduled for December 17 would be canceled, with other committees continuing as planned.

5) Ethics Training

Ms. Diamond informed members that, in accordance with legislation passed during the previous session, SEC council members and staff are required to complete annual ethics

training tailored to their roles within the cannabis industry and Disproportionately Impacted Areas. She explained that a cannabis-specific ethics course is under development, but in the interim, the Office of State Ethics would provide a 20-minute introductory session. She welcomed Peter Lewandowski and Sarah Clark of the Office of State Ethics.

**Office of State Ethics — Peter Lewandowski, Executive Director; Sarah Clark, Ethics Attorney**

Mr. Lewandowski opened by emphasizing that the Office of State Ethics serves as a resource for all public officials and state employees. He encouraged members to contact the office with any questions regarding compliance.

Ms. Clark delivered an overview of the Code of Ethics applicable to council members and staff. Her presentation covered:

**1. Use of Office**

Members may not use their state positions for personal financial gain or for the gain of family members or associated businesses. She stressed the importance of maintaining clear boundaries between personal and state activities.

**2. Gifts and Restricted Donors**

Ms. Clark defined a gift and outlined restrictions related to lobbyists, entities regulated by the SEC, and pre-qualified vendors. She reviewed permissible items, including de minimis tokens under \$10, limited food and beverage exceptions, and ceremonial awards up to \$100.

**3. Conferences and Travel**

She explained circumstances under which third parties may pay for travel, lodging, and meals. Honoraria and entertainment are prohibited, and disclosure may be required for out-of-state travel.

**4. Handling Prohibited Gifts**

Members must address prohibited gifts within 30 days through return, reimbursement, conversion to a state gift, or charitable donation.

**5. Conflicts of Interest**

Ms. Clark distinguished between direct financial conflicts and situations that create an appearance of impropriety. Members were advised to avoid decision-making when personal or financial interests are implicated.

Scenario-based examples were provided throughout the presentation to illustrate proper handling of ethical dilemmas.

6) For the Good of the order

None

7) Adjourn

Motion – by Avery Gaddis

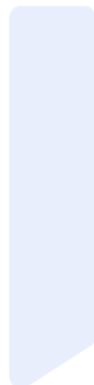
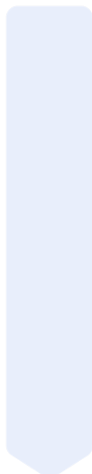
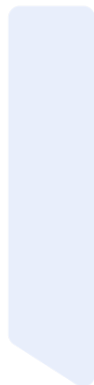
Second – by Kevin Walton

In Favor – All

Opposed – None

Abstentions – None

Motion passed unanimously.





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**Date: December 2, 2025**

**RE: Minutes: December SEC Council Meeting Minutes**

**Please be advised that the above-referenced typewritten minutes are a true and accurate description of the proceedings obtained from the recorded conversations to the extent that the audio could be clearly heard/understood. Portions that could not be heard/understood have been notated with a (an “inaudible” or “?...”).**

**Sincerely,**

**I certify that this document is a true and accurate description of the proceedings obtained from the recorded conversations contained in the listed audio file.**

*Boden Truitt*

**Boden Truitt,  
Transcriber**