



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
JANUARY 6, 2026, 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. and welcomed council members, state officials, stakeholders, and members of the public. She opened the meeting with New Year's greetings and a reflection on intentional leadership, emphasizing the Council's shared clarity of purpose.

**Council Members' Present:**

Andrea Comer  
Kyle Abercrombie  
Corrie Betts  
Greg Davis  
Andrea Comer  
Tina Beamon  
Avery Gaddis  
Andrea Hawkins  
Michael Jefferson  
Edwin Shirley  
Kelli-Marie Vallieres  
Ojala Naeem  
Charles Santiago Venator

**Council Members' Absent:**

Fanita Borges  
Daniel Karpowitz  
Melvin Medina  
Shirley Skyers-Thomas

Executive Director: Brandon McGee

With quorum confirmed, the meeting proceeded.

**2) Approval of the December 2, 2025, Regular Meeting minutes.**

Motion – by Michael Jefferson

Second – by Ojala Naeem  
In Favor – All  
Opposed – None  
Abstentions – None

Motion passed unanimously.

### 3) **Vote on Justice-Impacted Investment Initiative Funding**

Chair Comer introduced the proposal to approve \$2 million in Justice-Impacted Investment Initiative funding, thanking the SEC staff, the SET team, and Finance Committee Chair Avery Gaddis for their due diligence. She summarized the purpose of the investment, which is to provide gap funding for five reentry welcome centers, supporting housing vouchers, short-term housing stabilization, and wrap-around services for justice-impacted individuals.

Chair Comer cited Department of Correction data showing significant housing instability among individuals released from incarceration and explained that the proposed funding would complement—not replace—existing legislative investments.

Executive Director Brandon McGee provided clarification, explaining that the funding would be executed through Memorandums of Agreement (MOUs) with the Department of Housing and the Department of Correction, ensuring housing vouchers are available to remove barriers to employment and reentry services.

Motion: Approval of \$2 million to enter into MOUs with the Departments of Housing and Correction to support justice-impacted individuals.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson  
Second – by Ojala Naeem  
In Favor – All  
Opposed – None  
Abstentions – None

Discussion:

Michael Jefferson asked detailed questions regarding the source of the funds, the relationship to the Council’s three-year \$36 million reinvestment commitment, and whether existing funds were sufficient.

Brandon McGee clarified that the \$2 million would not come from the reinvestment allocation, confirmed that the funds were already available, and explained the timing and mechanics of executing the MOUs.

#### 4) Updates from the Connecticut SEC

Executive Director Brandon McGee delivered an extensive agency update covering financial status, program execution, workforce development, and strategic direction for 2026.

##### **Financial Overview:**

- FY 2026 total operating budget: \$17.57 million, including \$12 million for community reinvestment.
- Year-to-date expenditures as of December 31, 2025: approximately \$844,000, reflecting deliberate pacing tied to program readiness.
- The SEC Innovation Account holds approximately \$72 million, with \$36 million encumbered for the three-year reinvestment commitment, as clarified by Jennifer Stevens.

##### **Council Discussion:**

- Michael Jefferson asked multiple questions regarding the SEC Innovation Account, access controls, revenue projections, and whether reinvestment funding could increase after the initial three-year commitment.
- Brandon McGee confirmed the account is exclusively controlled by the SEC, that projected revenues will flow into the same account, and that reinvestment funding could increase based on future financial performance.
- Chair Comer and Avery Gaddis emphasized the importance of clearly distinguishing encumbered versus unencumbered funds in future financial reports.

##### **Programmatic Updates:**

Progress on R2 grant manager contracts and issuance of community-based organization NOFOs.

Expansion of cannabis workforce training through Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, including remote certificate programs and scholarships for DIA residents.

Updates on the Cannabis Revolving Loan Fund, including bond allocations and loan disbursements.

## 5) Good of the Order

Brandon McGee announced the return of staff member Jessie following maternity leave and shared that Mariedy Collazo Cruz has transitioned into the role of Chief Program Officer and General Counsel.

Additional housekeeping announcements included a transition of committee meetings to Zoom and clarification of virtual meeting protocols.

Chair Comer congratulated staff on the updates and acknowledged council members who joined late for the record.

## 6) Adjourn

Motion – by Avery Gaddis

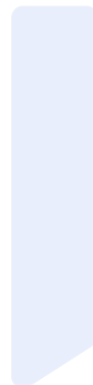
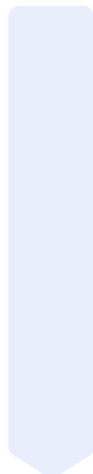
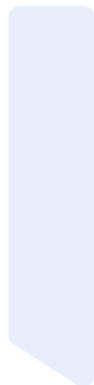
Second – by Ojala Naeem

In Favor – All

Opposed – None

Abstentions – None

Motion passed unanimously.





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**Date: January 6, 2026**

**RE: Minutes: January 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**