



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL
Regular Meeting Minutes - DRAFT
March 3, 2026**

1. Call to Order

Chair **Andréa Comer** called the meeting to order at **10:03 a.m.** and welcomed Council members, state officials, and members of the public.

2. Roll Call

The following members were present:

- Kyle Abercrombie
- Tina Beamon
- Andréa Comer
- Greg Davis
- Avery Gaddis
- Andréa Hawkins
- Michael Jefferson
- Brittany LaMarr (Daniel Karpowitz designee)
- Melvin Medina
- Ojala Naeem
- Edwin Shirley
- Shirley Skyers-Thomas
- Charles Santiago
- Kevin Walton

Absent:

- Councilperson Corrie Betts
- A quorum was established.
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3. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion: Michael Jefferson

Second: Ojala Naeem

The Council voted to approve the **February 3, 2026 meeting minutes**.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. Chair's Opening Remarks

Chair Comer informed the Council of proposed cannabis legislation (House Bill 5109) currently under development. Members were encouraged to coordinate with staff regarding stakeholder inquiries to ensure transparency and consistency.

5. Executive Director Report – Brandon McGee

a. Organizational Update

Executive Director **Brandon McGee** reiterated the Council's mission:

To promote equitable economic prosperity by supporting social equity entrepreneurs and reinvesting in communities disproportionately impacted by the war on drugs.

He noted the agency has transitioned from building infrastructure to operating at scale.

b. Financial Overview

- **FY2026 Operating Budget:** \$17.57 million
- **February 2026 Expenditures:** \$122,195
- **Encumbered/Approved Funds (FY2026):** Over \$38 million
 - Includes ~\$36 million in grant manager contracts
 - \$2 million in MOUs with state agencies

Mr. McGee emphasized that funds are being strategically obligated and managed responsibly.

c. Revolving Loan Fund Update

- **Authorized Bonds:** \$50 million
- **Drawn Down:** \$10 million
- **Deployed:** ~\$1.9 million (5 loans)
- **Pending Loans:** 3 (~\$500,000 each)
- **Current Balance:** ~\$8 million
- **Defaults/Delinquencies:** None

Discussion included loan risk expectations and fund utilization. It was confirmed that unused funds will not revert to the General Fund.

d. Revenue Update

- **February Cannabis Excise Tax Revenue:** \$2,006,858
- **Loan Interest Revenue:** ~\$8,400
- **Total February Revenue:** \$2,015,258

Revenue continues to grow, strengthening long-term sustainability.

e. Reimagine & Revitalize (R2) Program

- Program is fully operational
- Engagement sessions to be held in all R2 Regions
- To date, over 80 community-based organizations have engaged

Grant Structure:

- Three-year contracts (no upfront lump-sum payments)
- Payments contingent on compliance and reporting

A **Grant Managers Training** is scheduled for **March 31, 2026 (9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.)**.

f. Interagency Coordination

The Council is collaborating with housing and corrections agencies to support reentry populations, recognizing housing as critical to long-term stability.

g. Legislative Updates

Key proposals discussed:

- **Modification of 7-year to 3-year ownership restriction** for equity joint ventures
- **Transition from THC-based tax to flat tax (10.75%)**, which may reduce SEC revenue

Council discussed balancing protections for social equity entrepreneurs with business flexibility.

h. Stakeholder Engagement

- Ongoing **virtual roundtables** with social equity entrepreneurs
 - Feedback informs legislative and programmatic decisions
 - Additional roundtable scheduled for the same week
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6. Communications Update – Maria Miranda

Maria Miranda, CEO of Miranda Creative, presented updates:

2025 Highlights:

- Established consistent branding and messaging
- Increased social media engagement (18,000+ organic views)
- Website updates and improved public access to information

- Successful events and media outreach
- Publication of first annual report

2026 Priorities:

- Focus on R2 program communications
 - Website redesign for improved accessibility
 - Increased use of paid media
 - Development of instructional and educational content
 - Transition of responsibilities to internal SEC staff
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7. Additional Business

No additional matters were raised.

8. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: Avery Gaddis

Second: Michael Jefferson

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent.

