

**Motor Carrier Advisory Council**  
**Microsoft Teams Meeting**  
**February 6, 2025**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**Attendees:** Chief Matthew Galante, Sandra Bianco, Commissioner Tony Guerrero, Jeannine Holmes, Gene Catania, Michelle Givens, Tiffany Hardwick, Cindy Zuerblis, Kelly O’Connell, Christopher Herb, Jean Cronin, James Polites, Lt. Evelyn Stender, Adam Grippo, Donald Braman, Paul Farrell, Eric Johnson, David Hiscox, Paul Kritzler, Sgt. John Acampora, John Getsie, Audrey Hall, Ronnell Higgins, Peter Gacek, Aaron Swanson, Mike Romeo, Chris Woods, Janice Corps

- I. **Call to Order** – Motor Carrier Advisory Council (MCAC) Commissioner Guerrero introduced the new Chairman, Matthew Galante. Chairman Galante called the meeting to order at 1:16 pm and informed participants the meeting was being recorded.
- II. **Approval of the May 30, 2024, Minutes** – Chairman Galante asked if there were any changes to be made to the minutes from the last meeting. There weren’t any requests for changes. Chairman Galante asked for a motion to accept the minutes from May Motor Carrier Meeting Cindy Zuerblis motioned to approve the minutes, and Paul Farrell seconded the motion.

**Review of the Legislative Session of the General Assembly and DMV Legislative Review – Jim Polites -** Just a quick update. We're a month into the session, probably a little bit too early to pinpoint headlines or what the session may prove to come up with in June. The Governor unveiled his budget yesterday with the usual good deal of support for the DMV as he has done in past years. Focus on transportation committee activities particularly, they have held 2 meetings so far. Safety will be something that the new House Chair and the returning Senate Chair and Senate Leadership also committee leadership are going to focus on. Concerning the DMV there is a lot of energy and interest regarding towing, the towing industry, and towing regulations. I’m sure we will be hearing more about this as there are several bills and proposals that have come up. Also, we have submitted our annual agency bill that is undergoing some fine tuning, typically technical changes. With the Agency bill we always are trying to improve the process for our customers and their interactions with us. Jim stated he is looking forward to working with everyone on these processes.

**Dept. of Economic and Community Development – No Attendee**

**Dept. of Emergency Services and Public Protection – No Attendee**

**Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection- Paul Farrell**

- Nothing to report from the legislative or regulatory front. On the Grant front, towards the end of December DEEP and Green Bank joined forces and went out with a joint RFI / RFP looking to

identify school bus operators who were awarded federal money but needed some gap filling. The goal being to ensure the fifty plus million dollars in EPA clean school bus awards for electric school buses in Connecticut were realized and that there weren't, and federal dollars returned unnecessarily. To that end, DEEP made available six million dollars of bond commission funding that we were awarded a couple of sessions ago and Green Bank made available about fourteen million dollars in a combination of low interest financing as well. This is the first time in the country that this has been done. We can potentially fund somewhere approaching 200 electric school buses and associated charging infrastructure. Still working through the applications from school bus operators and we hope to be making conditional awards very soon and hopefully getting that project underway. There is an underlying assumption that the federal funds will be there, even though there is some degree of uncertainty. DEEP is proceeding as if this money is available because it has been awarded to the sources and were moving ahead.

- The other federal grant that we've been working on is under the Climate Pollution Reduction grant. This is a multi-state grant that New Jersey is leading, and it includes Delaware, Maryland, and Connecticut. This grant is intended to establish Medium Heavy Duty (MHD) Electric vehicle corridor charging up and down the I 95 corridors. Connecticut's portion of this award is about fifty-six million dollars, we'll be looking to establish anywhere from four to six (MHD) electric vehicle charging stations in Connecticut. These could be very large-scale charging infrastructure potentially up to one MW in size which is a very big energy draw, so we are waiting for a study, by National Grid that is due out this August. The study is looking to identify optimal locations to site MHD EV charger by identifying locations of excess grid capacity that could be tapped into relatively inexpensively.
- Another thing we are waiting for is PURA's decision in the medium and heavy-duty docket. PURA is looking into what role electric companies may have in supporting MHD vehicle electrification.
- The only other grant update was on DEEP's authorization for a medium and heavy-duty grant program for electric vehicles. DEEP indicated they are just not ready to move forward this time due to a lot of uncertainty in terms of the regulatory landscape, including the future fate of federal emissions standards. This is important because Connecticut never adopted the California standards so there's no regulatory tie-in to fund medium heavy-duty vehicles outside of school buses.
- Chris Herb asked how many Heavy-duty vehicles the charging structures could accommodate at one time. Paul responded it should be multiple vehicles, but they are not at the facility design stage yet.
- Jean Cronin added that she had a forum with Green Bank and the utilities in November it was very informative regarding school bus yards trying to electrify some of their vehicles. She said it is a very long process at least six months to a year of planning. They are starting to pair up school bus companies with local electric companies to they can start having conversations, but this may be more complicated that they thought.
- Paul Kritzler stated that PURA designated Connecticut Green Bank as an administrator for a fleet advisory service. It will be like what Massachusetts where it would help jump some barriers regarding fleets.

- Peter introduced himself stating that this is his first meeting stating that he is the Tax Unit manager for the Excise Audit Division which oversees compliances for over 20 excise taxes in which one of them is the highway use fee and gave an overview of what the Highway Use Fee is and how DRS oversees this. He explained that the fee is based on the weight of the vehicle as well as the classification of the vehicle and it is mainly for common carriers. Each carrier must hold a permit to travel through the state. The amount of the fee is determined based on the weight and the miles traveled in Connecticut. Over the past two years in which the fee was enacted the state has collected over \$117 million dollars.
- Steve Shore stated that he spoke with Chris Woods on the issue of every truck owner having to obtain a DOT number even though they are not a motor carrier transporting freight on an interstate basis. He stated that this has come up several times in meetings with the DMV but the topic was squashed because no one had any background or clear directive. Also asked if the fuel permit can only be granted to someone with a DOT number. Peter asked Steve to e mail him with that question and he will get back to him with the requirements regarding this issue.
- Chris Woods responded to Steve Shore that there is a long-standing practice that the taxpayers that register for IFTA must have a USDOT as an administrative policy of DRS and that the USDOT number should be active at the time of registration or renewal. Taxpayers need to be fully vetted by both DRS and the federal government to make sure that the carrier is properly credentialed.
- Kelly O'Connell added that this should be taken offline as a discussion later and in her research of this matter according to FMCSA anyone who owns that vehicle should have a DOT number whether it is leased or not.

#### **DOT – David Hiscox**

- Dave stated there are no changes to legislation to oversize overweight laws on the roads, DOT has some recommendations for implementation, he looked at a few that affect motor carriers, fines for violations of traffic control and road safety such as variable speed limits in work zones and more automated enforcement in work zones such as a work zone speed camera program.
- Aaron Swanson is new to freight he is a transportation planner from the Bureau of Policy and Planning. He had nothing new for legislative updates. He is working with some people from the DMV on the Virtual Weigh Station and E screening systems. He also has an active RFP that has been answered by a few vendors and is under evaluation.

#### **Judicial – No Attendee**

#### **UCONN – Eric Jackson**

- UCONN is working on truck parking app that truckers will be able to go to a location and scan a QR code which will identify available parking and what level of parking is available across the state. UCONN is working on developing this application as part of the ITD grant with Connecticut DMV.
- Working with DOT to expand truck parking. They are doing some studies to identify locations where they can expand truck parking throughout the state and help identify locations.
- The Connecticut DOT was awarded a grant to overhaul the crash reporting system in the state and update guidelines to the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of MUCK, which is the national guidelines for crash reporting which will impact commercial vehicle crashes in the state. Workshops will start soon and this group and anybody that is involved in commercial vehicle crashed is welcome to attend these workshops to help identify data collected at the scene of a commercial vehicle crash in Connecticut.
- Connecticut was selected as one of the states to participate in the crash causal factor program. FMCSA and USDOT asked Connecticut to collect additional data for commercial vehicle crashed that will go into a national database that will be used for future research and analysis of trends that are going on within commercial vehicle crashes across the country.
- Working with FMCSA to do a woman in trucking event to try and get more women involved in trucking. There is a company that has truck driving simulators that are focused and targeted towards women. That event will be May 17<sup>th</sup> not yet set on an exact place yet. Looking at Rentschler Field or possibly at a Yarde Goats game.
- Lastly, there have been several conversations with CT DOT on the purchase of School bus simulators, bus simulators and snowplow simulators to be able to train and encourage CDL driver to be safe on the roadways.

## **Motor Carrier Industry**

### **Connecticut Bus Association/CT School Transportation Association – Jean Cronin**

- Motor Bus regulations that our industry started revising in 2010 are still pending. Received a call from Phil Manero saying that the department is getting ready to start to move forward with those and happy to work with him on this.
- Working with DOT Lisa Rivers and Phil Manero and the public bus division on motorbus certificates which are becoming obsolete, and we are looking for a way to figure that out and navigate for those companies that are underneath those certificates going forward. There are some conversations coming up regarding a statutory rewrite which will probably not happen till 2026.
- COSTA – Electric buses – Jean stated they are very thankful for all of the grants and help from Green Bank, DEEP and the Feds it will be a very long and expensive process but its moving forward. There are some companies out there currently operating electric

school buses, and they are working out ok, but we still need to educate the towns and municipalities about the electric buses because they have to put in the bids and that's how they get the electric buses into their fleet.

- COSTA is working with the transportation Committee to come up with a proposal to modernize minimum liability insurance requirements for school transportation vehicles, the statute is quite old it is \$100,000 per vehicle and in today's works that is not nearly enough coverage.
- In the governor's budget for DMV there is some money for IT upgrades and there are a few projects they have been working on with the department that have stalled because we do not have the IT capabilities. That would consist of the Dashboard we have been working on for school bus companies and a way to get a fast track to get out of state school bus driver licenses in Connecticut.
- There was also talk of making the proficiency test more palatable for drivers, being able to bank some aspects of the proficiency test that the driver can pass but the system has no way to know that they passed so when the inspector comes back to train them on that part, they have no way to track what they did and did not pass.

#### **Connecticut Construction Industries Association – No Attendee**

#### **Connecticut Energy Marketers Association – Chris Herb**

- Thanked the Commissioner, Michelle, and Matthew for their quick response during extremely cold and windy weather we had a few weeks back. Rail systems were down and due to strong winds barges could not dock and deliveries of heating oil were having trouble with deliveries and the rail system was down which was making it hard to get propane as well as oil to its destinations. The DMV team were able to get the interstate waiver approved and they greatly appreciated that.
- One more added point, at the one of the main supply points in Selkirk NY there is anywhere from a 4 to 8 hour wait to get propane out of that supply point which is putting pressure on drivers to stay within their hours and be able to get enough propane back to meet customer needs.

#### **Connecticut Food Store Association – No Attendee**

#### **Connecticut Farm Bureau – Joan Nichols – No Attendee**

#### **Motor Transport Association of Connecticut – No Attendee**

#### **Shore Associates – Steve Shore**

- Question regarding the November 18, 2024, mandate that stated if CDL drivers were not enrolled in FMCSA drug and alcohol clearing house they would be down graded to a passenger drivers license, wondering if there were any statistics regarding this. Kelly responded that IRP would not have that information, she took note of that and will send Steve the information.

#### **U.S DOT Federal Motor Carrier Safety Association (FMCSA) – No Attendee**

#### **Innovative Technology Deployment/Commercial Vehicle Operations (ITD/CVO) – Kelly O’Connell / Jeannine Holmes**

- Kelly mentioned that there was nothing new to add, Aaron mentioned the Virtual Weigh Station and Jeannine confirmed that they were working together on the 24-hour Virtual Weigh Station Project. Jeannine stated that the RFP has been finalized and it was posted on December 26<sup>th</sup> to the DAS CT source bid board. The solicitations have been closed on Feb 4<sup>th</sup> and the next step for this project team is to evaluate the solicitations. The first virtual weigh station in Connecticut is expected to be located on 1-95, Whipper will Rd. in Old Lyme CT.

#### **Performance Registration Information System Management (PRISM) – Jeannine Holmes**

- The PRISM Project for automating the Federal out of Service suspensions has been successfully completed and is fully operational. The Federal Out of Service orders are now electronically reported to our Connecticut registration system which automatically triggers the vehicle suspension and generates a suspension letters.

#### **Connecticut Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program (MCSAP) – Lt. Stender**

- Lt. Stender highlighted some of CVSD successes in the last year since May 2024. CVSD inspected 15,523 trucks and placed 22% of them out of service. There were 3415 trucks operating with out of service violations on out roads.
- As far as school buses we are up to 5172 buses inspected so far this year, we are not even to the halfway point, and we are halfway done with the buses.
- In terms of FMCSA, we received new high priority funding to do a lot of high crash, work zone and motor coach enforcement so we will be able to extend out activities and hours to supplement the program and reduce crashes. Lt. Stender thanked Dr. Jackson’s excellent statistical analysis program, we have been able to track our CMV fatalities and serious injuries in CT for truck drivers are on a decline since 2022.
- The bypass program is still working smoothly for the industry to save time, gas and CO emitted into the atmosphere.
- Steve Shore asked Lt. Stender about CVSD Inspectors going out to truck owners and having their trucks inspected. He stated the insurance agents and brokers are complaining about this issue. Lt. Stender replied that she hears the concern a lot from

carriers however under FMCSA regulations we are not allowed to do request inspections on motor vehicles, we cannot solicit inspections, it must be don't on a random basis and based upon officers' locations. FMCSA will not allow it; we would lose all of our federal funding. She also stated that Bus inspections are allowed because they are not federally funded and required under statute.

- Chief Galante thanked Kelly O'Connell and all the Lieutenants for all their work in the interim of his position being filled, for all their hard work in keeping the numbers of inspections up. he also stated that he is looking forward to working with Commissioner Higgins and Carl Lochman going forward and working collaboratively with our partners and Connecticut State Police to increase our trucking numbers and keep this steady decline on commercial vehicle fatalities moving forward in a positive direction.

#### **CDL Testing – DEU – Cindy Zuerblis**

- Everything is status quo, Scheduling is going well everything is on time no delays. Hoping to get some grant money to put entry level driver training and appointment system or portal online for CDL drivers. We are hoping to use that money to get business requirements written for this project.

#### **Closing Statements**

- Chairman Galante thanked everyone for participating in the meeting and stating it was a pleasure meeting everyone and that he is looking forward to working with everyone in the future.

**Chairman Matthew Galante -Motion to adjourn – Michelle Givens, motion to adjourn, Paul Farrell, Second.**

- The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 pm.