

ATTACHMENT A

MELISSA FRINK

October 19, 2018

Hello, my name is Melissa Frink. I was employed with NECCOG animal services for 7 years. Because your town is contracted with NECCOG for your animal control services, and possible other services, I feel obligated to make you aware of inappropriate actions and behaviors that I have endured and witnessed during my service with NECCOG.

Please consider this my formal complaint. I'll be brief but understand I have detailed information and witnesses that will support the facts presented here. It is my hope that somehow I can effect change in the policies and behavior of personnel and management at NECCOG for the betterment of existing and future employees and the animals.

- Workplace harassment policy is not enforced. Complaints are ignored and mocked
- Fear of retaliation for speaking up about something you don't agree with
- No one of authority above the director position
- Several past legal issues barring public disclosure or discussion indicates problems within the council
- Private personal health information of employees being discussed and mocked; no confidentiality, breach of HIPAA Privacy Rule
- Personal mail being opened by office employees and shared with others
- Wage discrimination and favoritism with jobs for some employees
- Punishment of certain employees; bullying
- Pornographic images and sexual conversations frequently being shared with office employees
- Many instances of animal cruelty within the shelter
- Animal adoption process is not followed; favoritism in several cases.

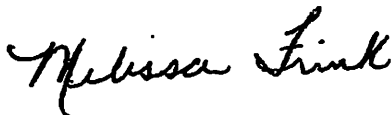
These workplace conditions are unacceptable. NECCOG management is aware of all these issues. There have been no actions by NECCOG management to improve the workplace environment or address employee concerns. This is a dictatorship that has no accountability for their actions.

As you manage your town's leadership, think about how these actions may affect your role as a contractor with NECCOG. I understand NECCOG services may be the best financial solution for your town, but do your voters and tax payers want to continue to support these types of behaviors? What would they think if they knew these behaviors are allowed and are being overlooked?

Thank you for your time and attention. I'd be happy to share more detailed information upon request.

Sincerely,

Melissa Frink



ATTACHMENT B

Contact List for Mr. Frank J. Amal Complaint
 Letter mailed 10. . e-mail sent 10.24.18

Town	E-mail Address	First	Last	Title	Address	Town	State	Zip	Phone	Fax	Comments
Town of Ashford	firstselectman@ashfordtownhall.org	Michael	Zambo	First Selectman	5 Town Hall Rd	Ashford	CT	06278	860-487-4400		
Town of Bozrah	firstselectman@bozrahct.org	Glenn	Pantea	First Selectman	1 River Rd	Bozrah	CT	06334	860-889-2639	ext 202	
Town of Canterbury	firstselectman@canterburyct.org	Richard	Ives	First Selectman	PO Box 958	Canterbury	CT	06231	860-778-9411	ext 11	E-mail undeliverable
Town of Chaplin	firstselectman@chaplinct.org	Christopher	Lipke	Town Selectman	1 Municipal Dr	Canterbury	CT	06331	860-549-9689		
Town of Colchester	firstselectman@colchesterct.org	Matthew	Cunningham	First Selectman	495 Phoenixville Rd	Chaplin	CT	06235	860-455-0073	ext 310	
Town of Eastford	firstselectman@townofeastford.com	Art	Dubois	First Selectman	127 Norwich Ave	Colchester	CT	06415	860-537-7200	ext 3	
Town of Franklin	firstselectman@franklinct.org	Jacqueline	Grant	First Selectman	7 Mashinghouse Hill Rd	Eastford	CT	06254	860-942-9055	ext 16	
Town of Griswold	firstselectman@griswoldct.org	Todd	Baobth	First Selectman	28 Main St	Franklin	CT	06351	860-378-7080		
Town of Hampton	firstselectman@hamptonct.org	Allan	Catill	First Selectman	164 Main St	Jewett City	CT	06351	860-778-8384		
Town of Killingly	firstselectman@killinglyct.org	Paul	Hopkins	Assting Town Manager	172 Main St 2nd Floor	Killingly	CT	06230	860-778-8384	ext 2	
Town of Killingly	firstselectman@killinglyct.org	Jonathan	Cescaff	Town Council Chairman	172 Main St 2nd Floor	Killingly	CT	06230	860-778-8384		
Town of Lebanon	firstselectman@lebanonct.org	Betsy	Petite	First Selectman	579 Exeter Rd	Lebanon	CT	06249	860-642-6100		No e-mail address online
Town of Lebanon	firstselectman@lebanonct.org	Thomas	Sparkman	First Selectman	1 Neward Rd	Lebanon	CT	06331	860-378-3400		
Town of Plainfield	firstselectman@plainfieldct.org	Cathy	Tenditch	First Selectman	8 Community Ave	Plainfield	CT	06374	860-230-3001		
Town of Pomfret	firstselectman@pomfretct.org	Maureen	Nicholson	First Selectman	5 Haven Rd	Pomfret Center	CT	06259	860-974-0191		
Town of Putnam	firstselectman@putnamct.org	Benny	Sney	Mayor	128 Church St	Putnam	CT	06260	860-883-8800	ext 100	
Town of Putnam	firstselectman@putnamct.org	Rick	Hayes	Selectman	180 Church St	Putnam	CT	06260	860-883-8800	ext 100	
Town of Scotland	firstselectman@scotlandct.org	David	Syme	First Selectman	PO Box 122	Putnam	CT	06264	860-496-7767	ext 1	
Town of Sprague	firstselectman@spraguect.org	Catherine	Osten	First Selectman	PO Box 677	Battle	CT	06330	860-822-3000	ext 201	
Town of Sterling	firstselectman@sterlingct.org	Fustell	Gray	First Selectman	PO Box 157	Chico	CT	06373	860-584-2151		
Town of Thompson	firstselectman@thompsonct.org	Ken	Beausoleil	First Selectman	PO Box 880	N Grovesnorcable	CT	06255	860-923-8561		
Town of Union	firstselectman@unionct.org	David	Eaton	First Selectman	1043 Buckley Hwy	Union	CT	06078	860-694-3812		
Town of Voluntown	firstselectman@voluntownct.org	Tracey	Hanson	First Selectman	PO Box 96	Voluntown	CT	06384	860-378-4089		
Town of Woodstock	firstselectman@woodstockct.org	Michael	Alberis	First Selectman	415 Rt 169	Woodstock	CT	06281	860-929-0208	ext 310	
Town of Bozrah		Michael	O'Connor	Chairman Board of Finance	1 River Rd	Bozrah	CT	06334	860-889-2689		
Town of Brooklyn		Jeffrey	Oto	Chairman Board of Finance	PO Box 336	Brooklyn	CT	06234	860-778-3411		
Town of Canterbury		Ryanford	Stitch Jr	Chairman Board of Finance	1 Municipal Dr	Canterbury	CT	06331	860-549-2089		
Town of Chaplin		Richard	Weingan	Chairman Board of Finance	495 Phoenixville Rd	Chaplin	CT	06235	860-455-0073		
Town of Colchester		Robert	Tarlov	Chairman Board of Finance	127 Norwich Ave	Colchester	CT	06415	860-537-7200		
Town of Franklin		Richard	Handfield	Chairman Board of Finance	7 Mashinghouse Hill Rd	Franklin	CT	06254	860-642-7882	ext 17	
Town of Griswold		Scott	Davis	Chairman Board of Finance	28 Main St	Jewett City	CT	06351	860-378-7080		
Town of Hampton		Jeffrey	Clemart	Chairman Board of Finance	164 Main St	Hampton	CT	06247	860-455-8132		
Town of Killingly		Carol	Lesiane	Budget & Finance Operations Mgr	172 Main St 2nd Floor	Killingly	CT	06239	860-778-8384		
Town of Lebanon		Elizabeth	Charon	Chairman Board of Finance	579 Exeter Rd	Lebanon	CT	06249	860-642-6100		
Town of Lisbon		Michael	Zelasky	Chairman Board of Finance	1 Neward Rd	Lisbon	CT	06331	860-378-3400		
Town of Pomfret		Margie	Huopel	Chairman Board of Finance	5 Haven Rd	Pomfret Center	CT	06259	860-974-0191		
Town of Putnam		Joseph	Nash	Chairman Board of Finance	128 Church St	Putnam	CT	06330	860-883-8800	ext 100	
Town of Sprague		David	Shippee	Chairman Board of Finance	PO Box 157	Battle	CT	06330	860-822-3000	ext 201	
Town of Sterling		Aaron	McGarry	Chairman Board of Finance	PO Box 880	Oneco	CT	06373	860-584-2151		
Town of Thompson		Tracey	Hanson	Chairman Board of Finance	PO Box 96	N Grovesnorcable	CT	06255	860-923-8563	ext 112	
Town of Voluntown		Michael	Deuphasty	Chairman Board of Finance	415 Rt 169	Voluntown	CT	06384	860-378-4089		
Town of Woodstock				Chairman Board of Finance	415 Rt 169	Woodstock	CT	06281	860-929-0208		

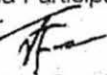
ATTACHMENT C



neccog

October 22, 2018

To: NECCOG Board of Directors and Participating Towns in the Animal Services Program

From: John Filchak, Executive Director 

RE: Complaint of Melissa Frink dated October 19, 2018

This memorandum is in response to the complaint sent to each of you (dated October 19, 2018) from Melissa Frink. By way background, Ms. Frink was employed by NECCOG from November 4, 2012 until June 2018 as a Kennel Maintainer. She left her employment following an incident (May 29, 2018) at the kennel where she was exposed to a cat that later tested positive for rabies. After the incident and subsequent treatment she had made known to her supervisor that she was not able to return to work as a result of the incident. Shortly after this I sent a registered letter to Ms. Frink asking that she contact us on or before June 25, 2018 to discuss her return to work. That day came and went and while we did receive a phone message - no details were provided as to her condition and or ability to work. We subsequently terminated her employment. I should note that this process was full in coordination with our labor attorney.

First, as a general statement, none of the following allegations/complaints were, to the best of my knowledge and certainly not to me, made during her time employed by NECCOG. Second, each of the charges are general in nature - lacking any specifics in terms of Ms. Frink - accordingly while I will attempt to address her specifically, some of the responses will be general in nature applying to how we address these issues.

- *Workplace harassment policy is not enforced. Complaints are ignored and mocked*

Our policy is enforced and never ignored - certainly not mocked. Complaints or even concerns that may raise to the level of a complaint are immediately made known to our labor attorney for guidance and investigations are undertaken immediately.

NECCOG and myself as Executive Director take the issue of workplace harassment very seriously. Our policy, as contained in our Employee Handbook, is current with both state and federal law. Our law firm provided the policy to us and provides any appropriate updates. As Executive Director I have received harassment training through CIRMA and as part of a recently completed university level Human Resources course for non-profits and public officials.

NECCOG depends upon a work environment of tolerance and respect. Workplace harassment including, but not limited to, verbal slurs, negative stereotyping, overt hostility and the distribution of written or graphic material intended to attack someone based on their race, color, sex, age, disability, religion, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, marital status, or sexual orientation is prohibited.

NECCOG will respond promptly to complaints of workplace harassment and where it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to put an end to the conduct and take any action necessary, including discipline where appropriate.

While this policy sets forth our goals of having a workplace that is free of any form of harassment, the policy is not designed or intended to limit our authority to take disciplinary or remedial action for workplace conduct that we consider unacceptable, regardless of whether that conduct satisfies the definition of workplace harassment.

At no time during Ms. Frink's employment did she raise a harassment issue with me and to the best of my knowledge any other member of our staff. This claim only surfaced after her employment ended and as part of a Department of Labor Unemployment Compensation Appeals Hearing - which Ms. Frink subsequently lost.

- ***Fear of retaliation for speaking up about something you don't agree with***

I am not sure to what situation(s) she is referring.

There has not been from my office and to the best of my knowledge from other persons in NECCOG "retaliation" for a person speaking out on an issue or suggesting a different way to do business. My practice has always been to be open to any and all suggestions as to how we do things here at NECCOG. I tell this to new employees - especially those in professional positions - that I often ask and take input from our support staff.

- ***No one of authority above the director position***

In accordance with NECCOG's Bylaws it has a board of directors made up of the CEOs of each member town and they employ an Executive Director who serves at the pleasure of that board.

Within NECCOG's Workplace Harassment Policy (page 12) is the following:

4. Procedures for Complaints

- NECCOG has designated the Executive Director and/or his/her designee (Finance Director) as the EEO Grievance Officer. If any employee believes he/she has been subjected to workplace harassment, the individual should initiate a complaint by contacting the EEO Grievance Officer as soon as possible. The individual should file the complaint promptly following any incident of alleged harassment. The longer the period of time between the event giving rise to the complaint and the filing, the more difficult it will be for NECCOG to reconstruct what occurred. The individual may be requested to write out his/her complaint to document the charge.***

If the individual is uncomfortable contacting the EEO Grievance Officer for any reason, the individual may contact the Chair of NECCOG. (emphasis added)

To the best of my knowledge, Ms. Frink did not inquire with myself or other persons on our staff as to how to file a complaint with someone other than myself or our Fiscal Director (who also handles personnel matters and records). Additionally, as we do with all employees, they are provided a copy of the Employee Handbook and asked to sign an acknowledgement page (attached) which Ms. Frink did.

- ***Several past legal issues barring public disclosure or discussion indicates problems within the council***

NECCOG, like its member towns and other organizations, has had to make settlements with employees related to different labor related issues. In each case, with the advise of our attorney, these

settlements contained nondisclosure provisions. To the best of my recollection there have been five such situations where non-disclosure agreements were made in the past twenty-three years. One of these five had as its basis an allegation of workplace harassment for a hostile work environment made against myself approximately four years ago. That allegation was fully investigated by our law firm with each staff person interviewed - which concluded that no such harassment took place and no action was necessitated. The employee filed a complaint with CHFO which was settled with a payment [REDACTED] through CIRMA and a non-disclosure agreement.

Clearly, any knowledge of the details of any such settlements with either involve a breach of such an agreement or speculation.

- **Private personal health information of employees being discussed and mocked; no confidentiality, breach of HIPAA Privacy Rule**

This issue came up during Ms. Frink's labor hearing - which was the first time it was raised with me. To the best of my knowledge we have never had any medical record provided to us related to any physical or mental condition Ms. Frink may have. If there were or are medical records in her personnel file I am unaware of them.

Early on in Ms. Frink's employment the prospect of her becoming a ACO was raised by her and her supervisor. At that time it was made known to me that Ms. Frink had an issue with traveling beyond a certain point - limiting her ability to respond to calls. To the best of my knowledge no medical records were provided to confirm this expressed travel limitation. While she did go on multiple calls, the attempt to make her an ACO did not go forward in large part due to the fact that our call locations are not predictable. As I recall she made no attempt to hide this issue from others at NECCOG and openly discussed it. To the best of my memory, at no time did I or anyone else "mock" her about her inability to go beyond a certain geography. I want to emphasize that Ms. Frink readily and voluntarily made her issue an open one and, as I recall, was made known by her to the other staff in the Animal Services Program.

With regards to personnel information - including medical records - I take confidentiality very seriously as well as full compliance with applicable laws and regulations. As a rule, I do not see this information unless there is a particular reason for me to see a medical record. In fact, I cannot recall seeing any such records during my time as Executive Director. Each employee's records is held by our Fiscal Director (who controls personnel files) and these records are kept in a locked file and within a locked room. Access is limited to the Fiscal Director and the employees rights to view their individual files.

- **Personal mail being opened by office employees and shared with others**

I'm not aware of anyone receiving "personal" mail at our address or anyone opening such mail if any did make it into our mail. All mail, with the exception of bank statements, entering our building are opened, dated stamped and forwarded to the person it is addressed.

- **Wage discrimination and favoritism with jobs for some employees**

There is no wage discrimination or favoritism within the Animal Services Program or elsewhere in NECCOG. This claim again seems to come from the recent labor hearing where it was mentioned that one animal control officer that had been in employment with NECCOG longer than another received a raise in pay to the same level. The employee who had been with NECCOG longer apparently thought this unfair and subsequently ended her employment. What she did not do was to ask the rationale for the adjustment. We made the decision to adjust the base pay for all ACOs to \$15 per hour - providing each with a raise - albeit variable. It was a simple decision to make the base pay more competitive to better allow us the opportunity to secure qualified officers.

- **Punishment of certain employees; bullying**

I do not understand this assertion. There has not been raised with me any allegation of punishment or bullying. If there were, it would be immediately investigated with guidance from our labor attorney and the appropriate action would then be taken.

- **Pornographic images and sexual conversations frequently being shared with office employees**

Again, this assertion was made during the recent unemployment compensation hearing.

Upon hearing of this allegation I immediately (the same day as the hearing) asked our IT consultant to examine each computer (5) used by the Animal Control Program for any such content. Our IT consultant has fully examined two of the five computers and should be done with the other three shortly. This examination is being done without anyone's knowledge other than myself, our labor attorney, our Fiscal Director and the IT consultant. Based on the results of the review I will consult with our labor attorney and take whatever appropriate actions are warranted.

- **Many instances of animal cruelty within the shelter**

Again, this is the first time I'm hearing of such a claim and from the person who for seven years had oversight on the daily functions of the shelter (cleaning, exercising, feeding, notifying her supervisor of any observed health issues, etc.). Our structure is that each of our officers, our program director and the office assistant have routine interactions at the shelter with the animals in our care. We also have multiple volunteers that interact with the animals daily. It is difficult for me to believe that there are "many instances of animal cruelty" at our shelter when we have so many different persons interacting with the animals. Animal Cruelty is a serious claim and is governed by state statute.

A recent Office of Legislative Research Report, in part, overviewed animal cruelty:

CGS § 53-247(a) prohibits people from overdriving, overloading, overworking, torturing, depriving of substance, mutilating, cruelly beating or killing, or unjustifiably injuring any animal. The law prohibits a person who impounds or confines an animal from (1) failing to provide it with proper care; (2) neglecting to cage or restrain it from injuring itself or another animal; or (3) failing to provide it with wholesome air, food, and water.

The statute also bans unjustifiably administering or exposing a domestic animal to any poisonous or noxious drug or substance intending the animal to take it. Individuals who have custody of an animal may not treat it cruelly; fail to provide it with proper food, drink, or shelter; abandon it; or carry or cause it to be carried in a cruel manner. Fighting with or baiting, harassing, or worrying an animal to make it perform for amusement, diversion, or exhibition is also prohibited.

NECCOG has placed, since 2004 more than 8,000 animals and euthanized any due to lack of space. Our return rate is low and we have not, to my knowledge received complaints or concerns from veterinarians regarding animals adopted from our facility.

- **Animal adoption process is not followed; favoritism in several cases.**

The adoption process is structured to find the best possible home for adoptable animals under our care. People (including staff) can and do differ on the selection process for adoptable animals. Since the beginning of the program we have amended the process multiple times. We have had, on multiple

occasions, instances where people become attached to a particular animal and are convinced that they are the best match - only to learn that they have not been selected. I get those calls and in those cases our selection process, no matter how well followed, is viewed as flawed. One of the basic tenants of the adoption process is that we do not allow staff or volunteers to adopt. This was put in place to avoid any appearance of favoritism or bias. We do waive this condition if an animal has been in the shelter for an extended period of time with no external interest in adopting the animal.

It is my hope that I have adequately addressed the claims made in the complaint from Ms. Frink. I have continually tried, during my twenty-three years as the Executive Director for NECCOG, to operate in a professional and ethical manner. My record, for which I am proud, is solid and my integrity is something I value because that is what separates a person of principle from others. Allegations such as those brought attempt to wipe that record out with little or no fact - just allegation. I realize and appreciate that when such allegations are made an organization has the duty to investigate and follow the facts. I pledge my full cooperation to that effort.

Thank you

ATTACHMENT D

My name is Maureen Adams, and I am the Fiscal Director at Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments. My position is also listed as the EEO Grievance Officer. I understand that if any employee believes he/she has been subjected to workplace harassment, the individual should initiate a complaint by contacting myself as soon as possible.

This letter serves as a response to the letter I received on October 23, 2018 regarding Melissa Frink. I will present her statement with my response.

Ms. Frink states the workplace harassment policy is not enforced. Complaints are ignored and mocked. I have never been told Ms. Frink had a workplace harassment complaint. I would never ignore or mock such complaint.

Ms. Frink states her fear of retaliation for speaking up about something you don't agree with. I have never felt fear of retaliation or witnessed any other employees feeling this. We have an open-door policy at all times to communicate any concerns.

Ms. Frink mentions there is no one of authority above the director position. I believe all employees realize the CEO's of the town along with Mr. Filchak are the authorities for NECCOG.

Ms. Frink mentions several past legal issues barring public disclosure or discussion indicates problems within the council. I myself along with Mr. Filchak contact legal council immediately in all situations to be sure we are following the law.

Ms. Frink states private health information of employees is being discussed and mocked: no confidentiality, breach of HIPAA Privacy Rule. This statement is a lie. I have all personnel files locked in my office. I would NEVER discuss, mock, or breach and HIPAA privacy rules. I take my position seriously and do not discuss any personnel information.

Ms. Frink states personal mail is being opened by the office employees and shared with others. All mail that is mailed to NECCOG is opened, date-stamped and given to the correct party by either myself or my assistant as requested by the Audit firm. Mail is not shared among employees.

Ms. Frink states wage discrimination and favoritism with jobs for some employees. I have NEVER witnessed or been told about any favoritism or wage discrimination within NECCOG.

Ms. Frink states punishment of certain employees; bullying. I have NEVER witnessed or have been told about any punishment or bullying of employees.

Ms. Frink states pornographic images and sexual conversations frequently being shared with office employees. I have never witnessed this in the eleven years I have been with the company. This would not be tolerated.

Ms. Frink states many instances of animal cruelty within the shelter. We take very good care of our animals. The vet bills are substantial and we do not know of any animal cruelty within the shelter.

Ms. Frink states animal adoption process is not followed; favoritism in several cases. The adoption process is fair and is followed as stated on our website. I have not seen favoritism in any cases.

Sincerely,

Maureen Adams

ATTACHMENT E

From: Janis Smith [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, October 30, 2018 10:56 PM
To: Rick Ives <r.ives@Brooklynct.org>
Cc: Janis Smith [REDACTED]
Subject: Formal Complaint

Dear Rick,

My apologies for the separate attachments, I was having technical difficulties. Please find attached three pages of my complaint. I look forward to your anticipated assistance.

Thank you,

Janis M Smith

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I Janis Smith tendered my letter of immediate resignation to Neccog from a full time Animal Control Officer on July 18, 2018. I had been working there from late Autumn of 2016, during my time working there it was made very clear on many occasions by different staff to never go to the executive director John Filchak to speak with him regarding anything. If you did not go through the proper chain of command and get approval to ask his administrator to possibly book a meeting, you would be reprimanded, harshly. This type of treatment happens to every employee that is not on Mr. Filchak's favorite list. If he didn't like you, you would know it, he is known to outwardly show favoritism in the office and often would say that Animal Control was his least favorite program, that his office and team are on the nice side of the building and then there's the low life's out here in animal control. A good example is, Mr. Filchak promoted Jennifer Hutchins from his side of the office from transportation to animal control as an administrative assistant. She was put in a supervisory role to work alongside the new director of animal control Kristian Hernandez. One day Mr. Filchak came into our office and brought one pastry, he walked by all of the officers and gave the cake to Jen, while walking past all of the officers he asked Jennifer how she liked her new space, he said he felt a little bad for her having to work with all the misfits and low life's, the look on his face while he was walking past all of us would erase any doubt that anyone may have had.

I began to expect to be ridiculed, mocked, and harassed on a daily basis. The hostile working conditions got worse not better. I was called back from medical leave to perform light duty. July 10 - July 18. I had been out on a medical leave for gynecological cancer surgery. When I went back...I was informed by Jennifer Hutchins that I got a \$1.00 raise, I asked the director if he had anything to do with my raise he stated NO. Since I was on light desk duty I planned to go to Maureen to ask if I could have a meeting with John during the week so I could speak to about the increase.

I was allowed to dress business casual for these shifts instead of wearing my ACO uniform. On July 17, I received unwanted remarks from an employee (Jennifer Hutchins) regarding the dress I was wearing, questioned my undergarment status asked if I was going commando so Kristian could look up my dress. All of this was said while he was in his office with the door open. This made me very uncomfortable and extremely embarrassed. When I asked her why she say something like that they both laughed.

Later that day the same employee brought up pictures of diseased genitalia while comparing them to a fellow employee Hoween Flexor who is being retaliated against for going above her director's head regarding a sexual harassment issue. I was still healing from my surgery while performing light duty in the office and I have been made to feel extremely uncomfortable and targeted with harassment since I

arrived back. One of my duties was to finish ACO George Keeling's and Dianne Collette's reports in the system and assist them on completing investigations for bite reports, quarantine orders etc. Most all of the work I was doing was Officer Keelings.

On July 18, ACO Keeling sat down next to me and with another pile of unfinished work for me, asked me if I got a raise this pay period. I answered him yes, and he asked me how much, I told him a dollar. I then asked him how he did, he goes on to explain the he got two dollars more. I interjected at this point and said " So now you make the same as me??? And you are part time?? And haven't been here half the time I have? And you are not even CERTIFIED?!! All of this happened in front of Jennifer the admin and Kristian in his office with door open.

ACO Keeling also quietly informed me while speaking of his big raise that he had gotten reprimanded by Jennifer Hutchins for going up to John Filchak while he was walking to his car to go to lunch, he was surprised by this as he told me him and John were good buddies outside of work and it's not like I don't know the guy, I do work at his house, he stated he built a deck and some other construction work on Mr Filchak's personal property, and he could not believe that he would get in trouble at work for just approaching him...all be it that the reason for his conversation was to inform Mr Filchak that the animal services director Kristian Hernandez approved breaking protocol of the adoption process to give ACO Keeling a kitten instead of placing it up for adoption to the public. It was not hard not for me to surmise that ACO George Keeling's big raise isn't somehow attributed to "other" work he provides to Mr Filchak. Is it not enough that George is not full time, not certified by the state of CT, but seems to be reaping rewards and special treatment.

I decided I had enough. Between all of the sexually charged comments not only to me but between Jennifer and Kristian all day every week, doing them the favor of answering their call when asked to come in from medical leave to help with office work only to be mocked and made to feel targeted for my cancer surgery. All I ever felt upon return from my surgery was overwhelmed and unappreciated.

I had worked for Neeecog for three years, half of which I was a full time credentialed ACO, and while out with my medical issue after surgery I received flower deliveries and cards from the volunteers that I worked with at the pound. I know what I'm about to say is not illegal, but being made to feel unappreciated and worthless at a time in your life when you are asking for prayers being faced with an illness..when your own office did not so much as send a get well card. When I told Ms. Hutchins that my feelings were hurt that no one bothered to even send me a card, she told me she was just too busy and forgot. I punched out at the end of that work day, I knew I would not be able to return to such a toxic work environment. The fear of retaliation and unfair treatment by management became too much to bear during a time in my life I needed support, goodwill and a little common decency in my environment. Later this night on July 18; I went back and dropped off my letter of resignation, badge #3, key fob, work issued cell phone.

I would also like to add that my personal mail that was addressed to me at Neccog from a client was opened and passed around the office, only to be tossed at me afterwards by my boss Kristian Hernandez like a piece of trash. I was then verbally reprimanded for the thank you card, I asked him what is so wrong with a good public image..? I would have thought everyone would be happy that someone we helped in one of our many towns we service thought so much of our service they sent a thank you note... I was told I am too nice to people and form emotional connections, at that point it was par for the course. It should have been tacked up on a board and used to boost morale. I never received the envelope that it was sent in with the return address as they threw it out. It is a Federal crime and absolutely unforgivable , to open someone's private mail and send it around BOTH offices and the last to see it thrown at me across a desk like garbage, how could anyone work with these people is beyond me.

I implore you to please take action to save Neccog ,to replace the ExecutiveDirector John Filchak and all management under animal control. People and animals alike need to work on a morally sound foundation with professional caring management. Everyone deserves to be treated fairly with decency and respect regardless of age, gender, health or personality.

Sincerely,

Janis M Smith

ATTACHMENT F



neccog

November 1, 2018

To: Rick Ives, NECCOG Chair
From: John Filchak, NECCOG Executive Director

RE: Response to Janice Smith Complaints

This response is to the three page letter, dated October 31, 2018 from Janice Smith.

In terms of the statement that staff should "never go to the executive director," I do not know or understand where this understanding, if it exists, comes from. **I have maintained, at times to my detriment, an open door policy during my 23 years with NECCOG.** I am not aware of any employee ever being reprimanded (formally or informally) for trying to speak/meet with me. If I became aware of such an action, I would make clear that such a reprimand was inappropriate. There are persons working on projects for our towns that have regular interactions with me due to the nature of those projects. In general, those routine interactions are not made with the staff of the animal services program. Most of my routine interactions with the Animal Services Program are with Mr. Hernandez (the Animal Services Program Director - prior to which it was Diane Collete) and Ms. Hutchins (Administrative Assistant for the program). I try not to make direct requests to officers as it results in more confusion than not.

The Animal Services Program is now the largest one in Connecticut and probably the northeast. We have set a standard with this program of how to deliver this service in an efficient, cost-effective manner while optimizing the health and welfare of the animals we serve. I frequently speak about it around the state and it has been replicated in at least one other state. **The picture presented in Ms. Smith's letter would lead one to believe that I look down on it as a second tier program with little value to our organization and towns. This is simply not the case.** I can say that since the program's start in 2004 there has grown, on the part of some staff and volunteers, a sense of isolation or a sense that it was not treated equitable in terms of other NECCOG programs. For example, three or four years ago one a former staff person (then a volunteer - who continues to volunteer) made a serious allegation that we were diverting donations from the program for other NECCOG uses. At the request of our then chair, John Hallberg, I made detailed presentation of the Animal Services Program for our volunteers and anyone else that had an interest in the program. Unfortunately, despite a high level of detail, many still doubted the validity of our numbers. I spend a significant amount of time on this program - including some past significant personnel issues that NECCOG's legal counsel is familiar with.

Ms. Hutchens was not "promoted" in her role with Animal Services. The growth of the program coupled with the growth in Transit's activities necessitated an increase in staffing to support these programs. We have three persons who serve in various capacities as administrative assistants in support of NECCOG and they often overlap to cover for each other. Ms. Hutchins is an Administrative Assistant who is assigned to Animal Services. She also covers Transit and other duties as needed. Similarly, the other administrative assistants are cross-training to cover for Ms. Hutchins.

I have no recollection of the purported "pastry" incident. After meetings where we have donuts we often circulate the remaining items with the staff. The incident, as described, does not reflect my actions with the staff at NECCOG.

The allegation that I would publicly or privately refer to anyone working for NECCOG as "misfits and low life's" is absurd and false.

I was not aware, until after Ms. Smith's employment ended, that she was alleging that she had been routinely "ridiculed, mocked and harassed." Such behavior is not in accordance with our personnel policy or basic decency - it would not have been tolerated and corrective actions would have been taken had I been aware of such actions. However, during her employment with NECCOG - NO SUCH ALLEGATIONS were raised.

The issue concerning remarks made by Ms. Hutchins to Ms. Smith on July 17 were ones I only became aware of after her employment ended and we received the allegation in her Connecticut Labor Department appeal for unemployment compensation (which she lost). That notification was immediately (as is the case with all such matters) sent to our labor attorney (Kristi Kelly) and I immediately interviewed both Ms. Hutchins and Mr. Hernandez (Ms. Adams of Finance Director was present for each discussion). In my email communication with Ms. Kelly I noted that I would most likely be placing each on paid administrative leave. Subsequent to the interviews, the fact that Ms. Smith was no longer employed by NECCOG and after consultation with our labor attorney (Ms. Kelly), we decided to not go forward with the administrative leaves.

The reference to the graphic picture, cited in Ms. Smith's complaint, and its relationship to Ms. Flexer was again something that did not come up during her employment with NECCOG. I believe there was some reference to this during the Labor Department hearing along with allegations of pornographic pictures being shown on one or more of the Animal Services computers. I should note that after that hearing and in discussion with Ms. Kelly I instructed our IT person to conduct a full review of the hard drives of the computers under the control of the Animal Services Program. That review is not yet complete. Additionally, the implication that Ms. Flexer is being "retaliated against for going above her directors [presumably me] regarding a sexual harassment issue" is wrong. There is no such complaint here at NECCOG regarding Ms. Flexer.

In terms of private mail being opened, the issue was also raised in Ms. Frink's complaint. The mail we receive is all opened (except for certain financial/bank statements that go directly to me) and then routed to the person to whom it is addressed. Thank you notes to officers and drivers are not uncommon.

I was not present for the referenced July 18, 2018 dialogue between Ms. Smith and Mr. Keeling regarding compensation. Therefore, I can not attest to the actual conversation.

I was not aware that Ms. Hutchins had "reprimanded" Mr. Keeling. Additionally, and more importantly, Mr. Keeling and I are not, as described - "good buddies." I have had a few informal conversations with him - as I have had with most of the people that work for NECCOG. He has not ever worked for me at my home or anywhere else in a non-work related manner. He has never been to my home and has not done any construction or other work for me. Any such statement or representation is false.

Mr. Keeling did ask me, as I was going to my car, about the adoption of a cat that he had been fostering. I informed him that we had to follow our adoption protocols. Upon returning from lunch I did mention Mr. Keeling's request to either Mr. Hernandez or Ms. Hutchins (I don't recall). We make exception to the normal protocol if an animal has been under our care for an extended period of time with no legitimate interest in the animal in question. We do this to ensure that animals do not stay longer than needed and are placed in a permanent home. As I recall, Mr. Hernandez or Ms. Hutchins confirmed that the cat had no persons expressing an interest in its adoption and that it had been properly noticed for adoption. I subsequently gave to approval for Mr. Keeling to adopt the cat. The same such situation has previously happened with other staff or volunteers. **This incident, as described by Ms. Smith, was not a situation of favoritism based on some type of personal relationship - it was simply an accepted action - made in the best interest of an animal in need of a home.**

Subsequent to Ms. Smith's voluntarily leaving her position with NECCOG I learned of what I will call the "pay increase issue." Sometime in either later May or June, I made the decision to change the base rate for our officers to \$15 per hour. For each of those officers this represented a significant increase. In the case of Ms. Smith, her pay went from \$13 to \$15 per hour - a 15.38 percent increase. Had I not made the salary adjustment, her pay would most likely have risen about three percent - which is what others in the program over the \$15 level received. We had had significant issues recruiting officers and this change was an attempt to in part rectify that issue. **It was not structured to favor one employee over another - it was simply a base wage adjustment.** As I recall, Ms. Smith thanked me for the increase as well as the opportunity to return to light-duty work during her recovery from surgery. **At no time was this pay increase issue brought to my attention when she was employed by NECCOG. It came up during her Department of Labor appeals hearing and I explained the situation as I have in this memo.**

In terms of any verbal communications that I had with Ms. Smith or Mr. Keeling, other than those noted above and routine greetings passing by in the building, I do not recall anything of substance. As a rule, I do not meet with the Animal Services staff on operational details - that is left to Mr. Hernandez and he speaks/reports to me.

I believe I have addressed the issues raised by Ms. Smith in her October 31, 2018 letter. Should you require additional information, please let me know.

Thank you.

ATTACHMENT G

-----Original Message-----

From: cmsmailer@civicplus.com <cmsmailer@civicplus.com>

Sent: Thursday, November 01, 2018 10:15 AM

To: Rick Ives <r.ives@Brooklynct.org>

Subject: [Brooklyn CT] Formal complaint against NECCOG (Sent by Briana Ford,
[REDACTED])

Hello rives,

Briana Ford [REDACTED] has sent you a message via your contact form
(<https://www.brooklynct.org/users/rives/contact>) at Brooklyn CT.

If you don't want to receive such e-mails, you can change your settings at
<https://www.brooklynct.org/user/81/edit>.

Message:

whom it may concern,

I am writing on behalf of NECCOG Animal Services and its operational flow. Up until July 5th, 2016 I was a part time Assistant Animal Control Officer and have been employed with NECCOG for just over 2 years. There was some reconstruction in the office, and all three (3) part time positions were pulled into one full time position. In the two years employed there, I mentioned on various occasions to both my director and to the Commissioner John Filchak about the possibility of more than 17 hours a week, and if a full time position would be offered at any point. In the 2 years of employment, I have seen numerous employees leave NECCOG for whatever reasons they had or that John had to let them go. There was a time last year when a fellow employee was injured, and within 24 hours I changed my daycare and family schedule to accommodate the full time position, yet John pulled the opportunity 2 weeks into the position. The rumor for not wanting another full time position was that he did not want to pay benefits for another full time employee. At the time, there was only 2 full time Animal Control Officers (one being the director) and NECCOG Animal Services covers 10 towns.

As recently as May 2016, I talked to John again about adding hours or possible full time position. I was told yet again that NECCOG could not foresee another full time position being available. At that time, I mentioned that I would have to start looking elsewhere for full time jobs or at least a second job because I could not survive of 17 hours a week at \$12.00 an hr. In late April or early May, John met with each staff member of Animal Services to go over questionnaires we filled out regarding the job and the position. When I met with John, I asked about the additional hours, it was dismissed, I asked about a full time position- it was dismissed, and I mentioned that one could go to Aldis and be a cashier and make more then we as skilled trained, authoritative figures make at NECCOG. The starting pay for no experience Animal Control Officer in the state of CT starts at roughly \$15 an hr, and at NECCOG we all make right around \$12 an hr. Late May, I did apply for a full time position for Animal Control Officer, and out of respect I informed my boss, Dianne. In June it was mentioned that NECCOG would be adding a full time position and would be open to internal employees initially. It was between myself and one other officer (the officer that was injured last year).

On June 30th I had my interview with Dianne, Jim Larkin (Associate

Commissioner) and Howene (unclear as to her title, but not involved with Animal Services at all), and on July 5th, was told that I did not get chosen for the full time position. I am writing this letter not because I was not the chosen candidate, but because of the process. I was denied because I had pending applications elsewhere, and because I said I in the interview and not we enough. I was penalized and denied a position because I was told there would be no additional full time opportunities available so I was forced to apply elsewhere to support my family. One of the other two part time officers was offered an opportunity with NECCOG still, but as a transit driver, and as mentioned the other officer was given the full time position.

I willingly covered all shifts when needed, and covered any on call shifts when asked. Both officers who were also part time, had incomes provided from other jobs, I am a single mother and now left without any income.

I am not writing this to be petty, or immature but to inform someone about how NECCOG operates. Those who go above and beyond at NECCOG get penalized or lose any responsibility that they had in their department. The kennel manager had all responsibilities pulled and merged into the full time animal control officer position. The senior animal control officer was pulled from certain duties because it wasn't handled to John's liking, I have been there for two years with no raise or added responsibilities. The Director herself will not approach John on issues because it is wasted breath. John is full of empty promises and does not take animal control as the serious position it actually is considered. Something as critical as reliable transportation to get to and from calls and to carry animals was put on the back burner last year. Animal Services did not have a reliable van, we were using the van that was meant for TNR (trap, neuter, release), but only if not being used by the TNR director. Many times our road calls were bumped and delayed because we had no vehicle and John refused to purchase vehicles until late in the calendar year. Now with the restructuring, the ACO when on the road for road calls, will have to leave the call she is on and return to the shelter to do adoptions because the Kennel Manager is no longer allowed to do adoptions. The towns NECCOG services are not paying the municipality fees so that the officers are at the shelter, but so the officers are avail whenever needed for road calls. We barely have enough working equipment, no safety precautions when out on the road- and when we handle dangerous situations the way we were trained, John reprimands us and it is used against us and told that we do not know how to do our job accordingly and that we are not cops.

There is very little sense of professionalism in regards to animal control by the NECCOG higher ups and the decision makers.

The decision for the full time officer was not made by any one of animal services except Dianne the Director. The right way to determine any position would be to interview with the kennel manager, or at least the senior animal control officer along with the director. The commissioner does not go down to the pound to see how it operates or what needs improvement. There is no recognition for the amazing volunteers that make the shelter be the great place it is for animals. Our shelter thrives off volunteers and as staff we can not volunteer our time, nor can we do anything to acknowledge the volunteers we do have. I am involved in animal welfare because it is my passion and my career. I have a very strong resume and background in animal welfare and I have worked very hard to get into an animal control position, while have waited patiently for a full time position. I know how a shelter should be run, what safety protocols as ACOS we should be offered, and what training we should have provided to us at no cost to ourselves because it is skills needed to make us better officers. John Filchak runs NECCOG Animal Services as a joke, and it is very unprofessional, and at this time feel that the operational flow needs to be assessed by someone outside of NECCOG, and take the time to sit with the officers and listen to our concerns before the entire animal services program falls apart and the animals suffer. Thank you for your time, and I appreciate and look forward to further communication with someone.

ATTACHMENT H

10/30/18

Mr. Luce,

Per our conversation on 10/29/18 you had requested a complaint in writing by me - Please keep in mind as a past employee, I personally experienced all of what is written. My purpose in sending this letter and complaint is strictly to validate the accusations by Melissa Frisk. I have (4) pages of complaint along with this letter.

I thank you in advance for taking the time to read this.

Thank You,
Eric Longo
(ACU-K9-3) 2007-2009

①

10/29/02

Dear Sir,

I am a past employee of NECCOG. I worked from 2007-2009. As an Animal Control Officer. In the course of my career there I experienced things that resulted in me leaving my duty due to the inability to adequately perform my duties within the law, let alone morally. The leadership at NECCOG is far from leadership. Within the time, I was placed under great duress to perform within "Policy" vs. "Law." Personally, I could not and would not follow suit nor conduct myself in any less way other than what I swore in as and that was always an obstacle within the work place environment. Animal neglect, "fudging" State documents, and "private meetings" were normal routine. There were many times I was "teased" being "taunted"; and accused of having relations outside of professional with State Police. When I made a complaint to a State ACO. (Denise Alex) at the time. Life at NECCOG became unbearable. I was no longer

receiving "back-up" for calls which resulted in me being injured. And I was shamed by my executive director and told "Next time Tell me before you run to the State" The fact of the matter was during an annual State meeting I was taking a "verbal beating" in front of multiple ACOs by the State ACO regarding NECCOG's Short commings so to speak. With that said I opened up to the ACO and told her exactly what and why. She then confronted Mr. Felch. And from that time on I was deemed a "Snitch". As a result, NO BACK UP. The decision to leave was extremely difficult, however, I would not subject myself to further injury or death, and could no longer be part of the shady behaviors of my peers. With that, I wrote to the selectmen in which we as Animal Control worked under. Met with Cartersbury selectman Mr. Cyr. Mr. Felch scheduled a meeting with me and then, cancelled and failed to follow through.

Mr. Filchek's then ^③ secretary refused to give me my payroll unless I wrote a letter of resignation to Wick and did not. I kindly handed any and all NECCO's property over. And demanded my payroll. I never wanted to leave my job I loved my job! My employment went uncontested.

Things that occurred are too lengthy to write - some things were as follows:

- ① allowing owners to "visit" with quarantined dogs.
- ① Throwing deceased animals in the garbage - (Something I personally refused to do)
- ② Not vetting injured animals sometimes for days - ex. cat hit by a car, broken leg (obvious) left for the weekend, vetted on a Monday
- ③ No equipment and or inadequate equipment
- ④ Animals left to die example (Distemper re: cats)
- ⑤ Volunteers being asked to IV the cats
- ⑥ Dogs deemed dangerous ⑦ some removed and "hidden"
- ⑦ Disposal orders of biting dogs removed or denied
- ⑧ Local Vet and 1 of the ACO's hiding out a dog that was to be eutherized.
- ⑨ Biting dogs off of Quarantine re adopted just to re-bite
- ⑩ unadvertised dog - adopted out
- ⑪ Dog ordered to be eutherized by an aco (wrong dog) owner told it died during impound

- ⑫ ACO's using drugs during work time (Normally on-call time) assisting "high"
- ⑬ feeding the dogs food infested with worms.
- ⑭ Driving Animal Control bus (at the time) with a flat tire an entire weekend
- ⑮ Animals "doubled" up do to constant kennel crowding. CONSTANT

We were constantly reminded if we were ever to speak directly with a town official we would be FIRED.

I'm doing my best to find my initial complaint that was sent after my departure. at that time we covered the towns of:

Brooklyn
Killingly
Pomfret
Woodstock
Sterling
Canterbury

Along with Mr. Felich each town received one. The complaint was also from another ACO - Kathy McNeil.

Thank You
Eva Longo

ATTACHMENT I

Suisman Shapiro

Attorneys-At-Law

Kristi D. Kelly
Direct Dial: (860) 271-2223
E-mail Address: kkelly@sswbgg.com

Raymond L. Baribeault, Jr.

December 5, 2018

James P. Berryman

Michael A. Blanchard

Eric W. Callahan

Michael P. Carey

John A. Collins, III

Richard S. Cody

Jeanette M. Dostie

Eileen C. Duggan

Bryan P. Fiengo

Jeffrey W. Hill

Carolyn P. Kelly

Kristi D. Kelly

Robert B. Keville

Roger T. Lealty

Robert G. Tukey

In Memoriam

Andrew J. Brand

James F. Brennan

James J. Gaurity

L. Patrick Gray, III

Michael V. Sage

Matthew Shafer

Max M. Shapiro

Charles J. Sussman

Louis C. Wool

Of Counsel

Frederic R. Kimmel

Jay B. Levin

Richard A. Schatz

Thomas B. Wilson

Steven K. Reviczky
Commissioner
Connecticut Department of Agriculture
450 Columbus Boulevard
Suite 701
Hartford, CT 06103

Re: Request for Formal Investigation

Dear Commissioner Reviczky:

Please be advised that I represent the Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments ("NECCOG"), which owns and operates an animal control facility currently serving 19 towns in eastern Connecticut. The animal control facility, which is located at 125 Putnam Pike, Dayville, Connecticut, is directed by Executive Director, John Filchak, and it currently employs five (5) state-certified Animal Control Officers ("ACO"), namely its Director of Animal Services, ACO Kristian Hernandez, and ACOs Dianne Collette, George Keeling, Jared Ricci, and Rayann Sheerin.

On or about November 16, 2018, I contacted the Department of Agriculture ("DOAG") requesting a formal, thorough investigation by DOAG of NECCOG's animal services operations, following NECCOG's receipt of three (3) written complaints of animal cruelty occurring within the facility. Staff Attorney Carol Briggs and I spoke by telephone on November 30, 2018, along with Assistant Director Wayne Kasacek, to discuss DOAG's authority to conduct such an investigation and, at that time, I was directed to submit this request in writing, along with the requested scope of the investigation NECCOG seeks.

To that end, this letter shall serve as NECCOG's written request for a full-scale, thorough, unbiased investigation of the animal services physical facility and operations to be conducted by DOAG, together with the production of a written report of findings and recommendations, to include identification of any and all illegal practices or deficiencies, whatsoever, with respect to the provision of animal control services. NECCOG requests physical inspections, reviews of any and all records deemed relevant by the state investigator, interviews with any and all staff of the facility, including but not limited to the complainants, as well as current and former staff identified by the investigator as potentially having relevant information, and any other review deemed appropriate by the state investigator.

A Tradition of Innovative Solutions

Steven K. Reviczky
Commissioner
December 5, 2018

Page 2

To assist DOAG in understanding the nature of the allegations that have been made, I have enclosed the three (3) written complaints, in full, that have been filed with NECCOG in September and October, 2018, for your review and consideration. In addition, I have enclosed a written complaint filed with DOAG in October, 2009 by Eva Longo, which presumably was addressed by DOAG at that time; however, she has reiterated her claims again now.


Furthermore, below is a summary of verbal information that has been received by the undersigned, as well as NECCOG's Board Chairman, Rick Ives, in the course of the Board's initial investigation into the allegations, concerning allegations of current and/or recent (i.e. within past 24 months) conditions allegedly observed:

- Kittens that have died at the facility were disposed of in dumpster;
- Injured cat visibly in pain (potentially a video by former employee, Melissa Frink, exists; requested but not yet provided to NECCOG) not vetted promptly;
- A broken guillotine door injured dog in NECCOG's possession (caused broken leg) (allegedly Ms. Frink has photographs; requested but not yet provided by her);
- Overcrowding, resulting in dogs being held inside and outside (separated by closed door), and multiple cats being placed in same holding area; and
- Insufficient animal transportation (i.e. unreliable van) resulting in delayed road calls.

Finally, it is my understanding that there are currently two (2) assigned State ACOs (Linda Wenner and Dean Gates) who oversee regulation of NECCOG's animal services. In the interest of maintaining a clean, unbiased investigation into the allegations, and the current state of the animal control services facility and operations of NECCOG, I respectfully request that this investigation be assigned to someone without any knowledge of NECCOG's operations, past or present, even though ACOs Wenner and Gates may be witnesses in the investigation.

Please promptly contact me to discuss the acceptance of this request, and the commencement of the investigation, as well as to answer any questions or concerns, if necessary. On behalf of the Chairman of the Board of Directors, Mr. Rick Ives, as well as the entire Board, thank you for willingness to investigate these very serious allegations.

Sincerely,


Kristi D. Kelly

Encls.

Cc: Carol Briggs, Staff Attorney DOAG

MELISSA FRINK

October 19, 2018

Hello, my name is Melissa Frink. I was employed with NECCOG animal services for 7 years. Because your town is contracted with NECCOG for your animal control services, and possible other services, I feel obligated to make you aware of inappropriate actions and behaviors that I have endured and witnessed during my service with NECCOG.

Please consider this my formal complaint. I'll be brief but understand I have detailed information and witnesses that will support the facts presented here. It is my hope that somehow I can effect change in the policies and behavior of personnel and management at NECCOG for the betterment of existing and future employees and the animals.

- Workplace harassment policy is not enforced. Complaints are ignored and mocked
- Fear of retaliation for speaking up about something you don't agree with
- No one of authority above the director position
- Several past legal issues barring public disclosure or discussion indicates problems within the council
- Private personal health information of employees being discussed and mocked; no confidentiality, breach of HIPAA Privacy Rule
- Personal mail being opened by office employees and shared with others
- Wage discrimination and favoritism with jobs for some employees
- Punishment of certain employees; bullying
- Pornographic images and sexual conversations frequently being shared with office employees
- Many instances of animal cruelty within the shelter
- Animal adoption process is not followed; favoritism in several cases.

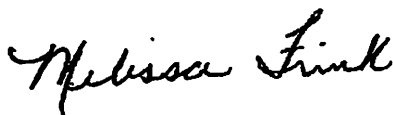
These workplace conditions are unacceptable. NECCOG management is aware of all these issues. There have been no actions by NECCOG management to improve the workplace environment or address employee concerns. This is a dictatorship that has no accountability for their actions.

As you manage your town's leadership, think about how these actions may affect your role as a contractor with NECCOG. I understand NECCOG services may be the best financial solution for your town. but do your voters and tax payers want to continue to support these types of behaviors? What would they think if they knew these behaviors are allowed and are being overlooked?

Thank you for your time and attention. I'd be happy to share more detailed information upon request.

Sincerely,

Melissa Frink



—Original Message—

From: cmsmailer@civicplus.com <cmsmailer@civicplus.com>

Sent: Thursday, November 01, 2018 10:15 AM

To: Rick Ives <r.ives@Brooklynct.org>

Subject: [Brooklyn CT] Formal complaint against NECCOG (Sent by Briana Ford,
[REDACTED])

Hello rives,

Briana Ford ([REDACTED]) has sent you a message via your contact form (<https://www.brooklynct.org/users/rives/contact>) at Brooklyn CT.

If you don't want to receive such e-mails, you can change your settings at <https://www.brooklynct.org/user/81/edit>.

Message:

whom it may concern,

I am writing on behalf of NECCOG Animal Services and its operational flow. Up until July 5th, 2016 I was a part time Assistant Animal Control Officer and have been employed with NECCOG for just over 2 years. There was some reconstruction in the office, and all three (3) part time positions were pulled into one full time position. In the two years employed there, I mentioned on various occasions to both my director and to the Commissioner John Filchak about the possibility of more than 17 hours a week, and if a full time position would be offered at any point. In the 2 years of employment, I have seen numerous employees leave NECCOG for whatever reasons they had or that John had to let them go. There was a time last year when a fellow employee was injured, and within 24 hours I changed my daycare and family schedule to accommodate the

full time position, yet John pulled the opportunity 2 weeks into the position. The rumor for not wanting another full time position was that he did not want to pay benefits for another full time employee. At the time, there was only 2 full time Animal Control Officers (one being the director) and NECCOG Animal Services covers 10 towns.

As recently as May 2016, I talked to John again about adding hours or possible full time position. I was told yet again that NECCOG could not foresee another full time position being available. At that time, I mentioned that I would have to start looking elsewhere for full time jobs or at least a second job because I could not survive of 17 hours a week at \$12.00 an hr. In late April or early May, John met with each staff member of Animal Services to go over questionnaires we filled out regarding the job and the position. When I met with John, I asked about the additional hours, it was dismissed, I asked about a full time position- it was dismissed, and I mentioned that one could go to Aldis and be a cashier and make more then we as skilled trained, authoritative figures make at NECCOG. The starting pay for no experience Animal Control Officer in the state of CT starts at roughly \$15 an hr, and at NECCOG we all make right around \$12 an hr. Late May, I did apply for a full time position for Animal Control Officer, and out of respect I informed my boss, Dianne. In June it was mentioned that NECCOG would be adding a full time position and would be open to internal employees initially. It was between myself and one other officer (the officer that was injured last year).

On June 30th I had my interview with Dianne, Jim Larkin (Associate Commissioner) and Howene (unclear as to her title, but not involved with Animal Services at all), and on July 5th, was told that I did not get chosen for the full time position. I am writing this letter not because I was not the chosen candidate, but because of the process. I was denied because I had pending applications elsewhere, and because I said I in the interview and not we enough. I was penalized and denied a position because I was told there would be no additional full time opportunities available so I was forced to apply elsewhere to support my family. One of the other two part time officers was offered an opportunity with NECCOG still, but as a transit driver, and as mentioned the other officer was given the full time position. I willingly covered all shifts when needed, and covered any on call shifts when asked. Both officers who were also part time, had incomes provided from other jobs, I am a single mother and now left without any income.

I am not writing this to be petty, or immature but to inform someone about how NECCOG operates. Those who go above and beyond at NECCOG get penalized or lose any responsibility that they had in their department. The kennel manager had all responsibilities pulled and merged into the full time animal control officer position. The senior animal control officer was pulled from certain duties because it wasn't handled to John's liking, I have been there for two years with no raise or added responsibilities. The Director herself will not approach John on issues because it is wasted breath. John is full of empty promises and does not take animal control as the serious position it actually is considered. Something as critical as reliable transportation to get to and from calls and to carry animals was put on the back burner last year. Animal Services did not have a reliable van, we were using the van that was meant for TNR (trap, neuter, release), but only if not being used by the TNR director. Many times our road calls were bumped and delayed because we had no vehicle and John refused to purchase vehicles until late in the calendar year. Now with the restructuring, the ACO when on the road for road calls, will have to leave the call she is on and return to the shelter to do adoptions because the Kennel Manager is no longer allowed to do adoptions. The towns NECCOG services are not paying the municipality fees so that the officers are at the shelter, but so the officers are avail whenever needed for road calls. We barely have enough working equipment, no safety precautions when out on the road- and when we handle dangerous situations the way we were trained, John reprimands us and it is used against us and told that we do not know how to do our job accordingly and that we are not cops.

There is very little sense of professionalism in regards to animal control by the NECCOG higher ups and the decision makers.

The decision for the full time officer was not made by any one of animal services except Dianne the Director. The right way to determine any position would be to interview with the kennel manager, or at least the senior animal control officer along with the director. The commissioner

does not go down to the pound to see how it operates or what needs improvement. There is no recognition for the amazing volunteers that make the shelter be the great place it is for animals. Our shelter thrives off volunteers and as staff we can not volunteer our time, nor can we do anything to acknowledge the volunteers we do have. I am involved in animal welfare because it is my passion and my career. I have a very strong resume and background in animal welfare and I have worked very hard to get into an animal control position, while have waited patiently for a full time position. I know how a shelter should be run, what safety protocols as ACOS we should be offered, and what training we should have provided to us at no cost to ourselves because it is skills needed to make us better officers. John Filchak runs NECCOG Animal Services as a joke, and it is very unprofessional, and at this time feel that the operational flow needs to be assessed by someone outside of NECCOG, and take the time to sit with the officers and listen to our concerns before the entire animal services program falls apart and the animals suffer. Thank you for your time, and I appreciate and look forward to further communication with someone.

10/30/18

Mr. Luce,

Per our conversation on 10/29/18 you had requested a complaint in writing by me - Please keep in mind as a past employee, I personally experienced all of what is written. My purpose in sending this letter and complaint is strictly to validate the accusations by Melissa Irish. I have (4) pages of complaint along with this letter.

I Thank You in advance for taking the time to read this.

Thank You,
Dina Longo

(ACU-K9-3)2007-2009

10/29/18^{PO2}

Dear Sir,

I am a past employee of NECCOG. I worked from 2007-2009. As an Animal Control Officer. In the course of my career there I experienced things that resulted in me leaving my duty due to the inability to adequately perform my duties within the law, let alone morality. The leadership at NECCOG is far from leadership. Within the time, I was placed under great duress to perform within "Policy" vs. "Law." Personally, I could not and would not follow suit nor conduct myself in any less way other than what I swore in as and that was always an obstacle within the work place environment. Animal neglect, "judging" State documents, and "private meetings" were normal routine. There were many times I was "teased" being "taunted", and accused of having relations outside of professional with State Police. When I made a complaint to a State ACO. (Denise Alex) at the time. Life at NECCOG became unbearable. I was no longer

receiving "back-up" for calls which resulted in me being injured. And I was shamed by my executive director and told "Next time Tell me before you run to the State" The fact of the matter was during an annual State meeting I was taking a "verbal beating" in front of multiple ACOs by the State ACO regarding NECCOG's Short Comings so to Speak. With that said I opened up to the ACO and told her exactly what and why. She then confronted Mr. Felch. And from that time on I was deemed a "Snitch". As a result, NO BACK UP. The decision to leave was extremely difficult, However, I would not subject myself to further injury or death, And could no longer be part of the study behaviors of my peers. With that, I wrote to the selectmen in which we as Animal Control worked under. Met with Canterbury selectman Mr. Cyr. Mr. Felch scheduled a meeting with me and then, cancelled and failed to follow through.

Mr. Filchek's then ⁽³⁾ secretary refused to give me my payroll unless I wrote a letter of resignation to Wick I did not. I kindly handed any and all NECCO's property over. And demanded my payroll. I never wanted to leave my job I loved my job! Unemployment went uncontested.

Things that occurred are too lengthy to write - some things were as follows:

- ① allowing owners to "visit" with quarantined dogs.
- ① Throwing deceased animals in the garbage - (Something I personally refused to do)
- ② Not vetting injured animals sometimes for days - ex. cat hit by a car, broken leg (obvious) left for the weekend, vetted on a Monday
- ③ No equipment and or inadequate equipment
- ④ Animals left to die example (Distemper re: cats)
- ⑤ Volunteers being asked to IV the cats
- ⑥ Dogs deemed dangerous ⑦ some removed and "hidden"
- ⑦ Disposal orders of biting dogs removed or denied
- ⑧ Local Vet and 1 of the ACO's hiding out a dog that was to be eutherized.
- ⑨ Biting dogs off of Quarantines re adopted just to re-bite
- ⑩ unadvertised dog - adopted out
- ⑪ Dog ordered to be eutherized by an aco (wrong dog) owner told it died during impound

(4) ACO's using drugs during work time (Normally on-call time) assisting "high"

(13) feeding the dogs food infested with worms.

(14) Driving animal control bus (at the time) with a flat tire an entire weekend

(15) Animals "doubled" up do to constant kennel crowding. CONSTANT

We were constantly reminded if we were ever to speak directly with a town official we would be FIRED.

I'm doing my best to find my initial complaint that was sent after my departure. at that time we covered the towns of:

Brooklyn
Killingly
Pomfret
Woodstock
Sterling
Canterbury

Along with Mr. Felchak each town received one. The complaint was also from another ACO - Kathy McNeil.

Thank You
Eva Longo

October 5, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

It is the intention of this letter to provide information which pertains to the many occasions in which we were not allowed to follow the written job description, titled "Assistant Animal Control Officer", issued by NECCOG; or allowed to uphold the laws as described by the Connecticut General Statutes.

We intend to continue to protect public health and safety through ensuring that the enforcement of the state animal control laws are followed, and to provide information regarding our constructive discharge due to "Whistle Blowing".

On June 11, 2009 State Animal Control Officer Denise Alix held a meeting for Animal Control Officers. The purpose of this meeting was to ensure that officers knew the state animal laws and were enforcing those laws. When the topics of "duration of stay for an impounded animal" and "adoption of an impounded animal" were discussed, Officer Alix was appalled at what she heard from both officers from NECCOG. Following the meeting Officer Alix took both officers to lunch to discuss some what was going on at the NECCOG facility.

The following issues were reported to State Animal Control Officer Denise Alix on June 11, 2009, by Officers Eva Longo and Kathleen McNeill.

1. Violations of quarantine orders: Director Collette allowed family members and friends to visit quarantined animals in the exercise pen; against the advice of Officer McNeill and Officer Longo. CGS 22-358, as amended.
2. In June of 2009 NECCOG was in possession of a dog owned by Mr. Edward Duffy of John Brook Road of Canterbury. All licensing and vet records were in Mr. Duffy's name; thereby proving ownership of the dog. After illegally seizing the dog, Director Collette released the dog to Mr. Duffy's estranged girlfriend, who gave the dog to a friend. Officer McNeill tried to stop this transaction but Director Collette said that she was the director and that she was the one making the decisions. The ownership of the animals from this property was a civil matter and it was the courts responsibility to determine such ownership, not NECCOG's. Officer Longo then contacted State Animal Control Officer, Denise Alix, and confirmed that both Officers had been correct.
3. Director Collette refused to euthanize dogs deemed dangerous and unadoptable to be safely placed within the community; which led to constant conflict within the work place.
4. Director Collette authorized the adoption and secret removal of vicious dogs from the facility located at 105 Putnam Pike, Dayville, CT. "Chief" and "Bruno" were snatched out of the pound and "Oreo", "Zane" and "Big Bear" were put up for

adoption. "Zane" and "Big Bear" both bit after they were adopted and returned the day after their adoptions. "Oreo" was euthanized after a complaint to John Fitchak was made by Yvonne Grillo. Ms. Grillo's poodle was killed by this dog.

5. Officer McNeill was verbally reprimanded by Director Collette for euthanizing "Big Bear", "Zane", and "Shelby" while Director Collette was on vacation. Director Collette wanted to know why the boarding kennel wasn't utilized. Officer McNeill did not use the boarding kennel because on May 10, 2009 she had attended a meeting at Officer Longo's home at the request of Director Collette, to discuss the order in which the dogs should be euthanized. After 3 hours of negotiating it was decided that 6 dogs would be euthanized within the week. "Chief", "Gwen", and "Bruno" were to be the first, and the second round consisted of "Shelby", "Zane", and "Big Bear". This was to be done with all 3 Animal Control Officers present and on 2 separate occasions. Only "Gwen" was euthanized that week. The director then waited a week and went on vacation. Officer McNeill was just following through with the pre-euthanized order from the director herself.
6. Housing animals for months; up to 1 year and 3 months in one particular case. At \$10.00 per day this cost this community somewhere close to \$4,500.00. Due to the interference of volunteer Heather Slater, which was suggested by Director Collette, and against the protests of Officers McNeill and Longo, "Chief" is currently residing at Morning Star Farm in Thompson. As of August 30, 2009, he had yet to be adopted.
7. Around the same time that "Chief" was housed in Thompson, Heather Slater, having received authorization from Director Collette, also transported the pit bull, "Bruno", to Manhattan, New York, for a possible adoption. This dog was scheduled for euthanasia due to attacking a 2 year old child and injuring the child's head. Officer Longo had requested a disposal at that time and Director Collette denied it. The dog was adopted and now resides in the state of New York.
8. Volunteer Garrett Focher, taking dogs for rides and outings. Officer McNeill, on two separate occasions, stressed to Director Collette that an accident could occur or that the dogs could bite someone and it was not known if the dogs were vaccinated. The second time that Officer McNeill expressed her disapproval to Director Collette, Director Collette told Garrett Focher that Officer McNeill was having a "hissy fit" and that he would not be allowed to take the dogs out anymore.
9. Volunteers having access to animal control records and files.
10. Volunteer taking license reports sent from the town halls out of the pound to build a clientele for their own business. Authorized by Director Collette, Josh Hoelg, Mike Papp, came in to the pound and returned one set of reports and exchanged them out for another. He boasted of how his business was booming. Fiscal year 08/09.

11. Over crowding in the facility at 105 Putnam Pike, Dayville. Officer Longo could not safely impound a vicious dog who bit and mauled a woman in Woodstock, June 2009, due to Director Collette's refusal to euthanize the 6 dogs that were deemed vicious and unadoptable. There were 15 dogs at this time and they were in the office, the cat room and doubled up. This made working conditions extremely hazardous for the officers and the volunteers.
12. Not enough time to complete work due to the growing area of coverage. Six (6) towns to one (1) full time officer, One (1) part time officer and (1) on call officer.
13. The Executive Director, John Filchak, refused to talk with the Assistant Animal Control Officers. Any complaints were to be made to the Director of Animal Control, who would then bring it to his attention. On several occasions requests and complaints were made to Director Collette and when she would return from her meetings with John Filchak, the Assistant Officers were told that "he wasn't in a good mood" or "it wasn't the right time to bring it up". This did nothing but create tension and anxiety among the two Assistant Animal Control Officers.
- ✓ 14. [Volunteers] were continuously in the main part of the office in the pound. They would sit at the Assistant Animal Control Officers desks and use the computer making it extremely difficult for the Officers to accomplish their tasks. This continued even after John Filchak told Director Collette that licensing could be accomplished within the NECCOG offices and to hold off until such arrangements could be made.

Following this meeting State Animal Control Officer Denise Alix investigated the allegations made by both Officers and the work environment became very hostile. Both Assistant Officers received heavy work loads and the Director, Diana Collette, made comments regarding the meeting with the State Animal Control Officer. On some days the Director would ignore the Assistant Animal Control Officers while they were trying to speak to her. The Director would also refuse to answer her phone to the Officer on call. While the Director was suppose to be the back up officer for the on call officer she deliberately shut her phone off. She was very cold and demanding and would not discuss any issues that she did not agree with.

John Filchak called a meeting at the end of June to meet individually with each Animal Control Officer and Director Collette regarding the issues that were made known to him from Denise Alix. Following these meetings there appeared to be no changes regarding the Director. However, both Assistant Officers continued to work with heavier work loads and more demands. It never appeared to either Assistant Officer that the Director was reprimanded in any way.

On August 19, 2009 at an Animal Control meeting with the Assistant Executive Director, James Larkin, the assistant to the Executive Director, Maureen Adams, the Director of

Animal Control, Dianne Collette, and the two Assistant Animal Control Officers, Eva Longo and Kathleen McNeill, it was stated by James Larkin that as of September 1st all on call hours were to be split between Officers Longo and McNeill with rotating weekends. Officer Longo stated that it wasn't fair that her hours were being taken away which would have resulted in two weekends a month. She was concerned because she only worked 8 hours a week and has to rely on the weekend calls to make any sort of viable income. The weekends are when there are more 'on call' hours. Mr. Larkin laughed and said, "You mean to tell me that the dog on Tuesday sits in his yard and says, 'I feel like being a jerk today, but I'll wait until Saturday because Eva works on Saturdays'". Maureen Adams laughed and added, "Bad doggy, wait til' Saturday." Director Collette also found this humorous and would not defend Officer Longo's claim until prompted several times by Officer Longo. At that time Director Collette agreed with Officer Longo and supported her claim. At this point Officer McNeill was firmly stating that she already covered Thursday evenings and that she was unable to take on any more on call hours. She also stated that it was not fair to Officer Longo. Mr. Larkin and Director Collette told Officer McNeill, "You will do them if you are told to." Mr. Larkin then told Officer McNeill that if she wanted to keep her job she would do them. This left Officer McNeill extremely concerned that she would be manipulated into doing more on call hours. Officer Longo then stated to Mr. Larkin, "If this is what is going to happen then you will be down to only two officers." Mr. Larkin interrupted and said, "How do you figure? We'll just hire someone else." Officer Longo then asked, "How long have I waited for more hours and been told by John Filchak he would see what he could do? And now you want to take hours away from me?" Maureen Adams then said that it was due to the fact that Officer Longo has all the experience and that it wasn't fair to Officer McNeill. Officer Longo said that it wasn't her problem. She was specifically hired for weekend on call so how can they take the hours away? Mr. Larkin then responded, "Because we can." Officers Longo and McNeill felt at this point that this was all in retaliation for complaining to the State Animal Control Officer. When Officer Longo called to inform Director Collette of her resignation, Officer Longo asked Director Collette why her hours were being taken away, Director Collette informed Officer Longo that it was at Director Collette's request and she would not elaborate any further.

Eva M. Longo	Date	Kathleen P. McNeill	Date
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1. **Violation of redemption payment, directed by John Filchak approximately 7/8/08**
Canterbury. Mr. Dave Motowidlak, would not pay redemption fee. Officer McNeill was the Officer on duty and told Mr. Motowidlak that she would not release the dog to him until that fee was paid. CGS 22-333, as amended. Mr. Motowidlak complained to Mr. Filchak at which time Mr. Filchak ordered Officer McNeill to release the dog without payment. This under mined Officer McNeill's authority and violated the Connecticut General Statute that she is obligated to enforce. This caused her great humiliation.

2. **Violations of quarantine orders, against the advice of Officer McNeill and Officer Longo, directed by Dianne Collette. Numerous animals in NECCOG's care. CGS 22-358, as amended. John Filchak and Denise Alex, State Animal Control, were informed of this violation in June of 2009.**

3. **Violations of a restraint order, against the advice of Officer Longo, per Dianne Collette July '09**
Dayville, Pepin, Putnam Pike. While responding to an anonymous tip, Officer's Longo and Collette responded to a complaint re: the dog "Kane", a male pitbull, being outside, unrestrained. CGS 22-358, as amended. Dog was not outside at such time as Officer Longo and Collette arrived; however, the owner's had not purchased a muzzle; which is stated on the restraint order. Officer Longo asked Mr. Pepin where the dog's muzzle was and Mr. Pepin stated that he had not purchased one. Officer Longo told him that he had ample time to purchase a muzzle, approx. 2 1/2 weeks, and he stated that he was not going to use a muzzle. Officer Longo attempted to take the dog into custody until a muzzle was purchased and approved by animal control. Officer Collette refused to seize the dog and told Officer Longo that they would wait at the residence until the Pepins went to Pet Co. and returned with a muzzle. There have been numerous complaints regarding this dog and it not being secured on the property after the restraint had been ordered. Due to fear of retaliation, the neighbors will not give a written statement. This left Officer Longo feeling extremely embarrassed.

4. **Early 2008, Officer Collette admitted to Officer Longo that she never would have followed through with a cruelty investigation and/or arrest pertaining to "Talia" and "Sari", the two starved greyhounds, which resulted in the tri-state convictions of Kevin Schneider, and Officer Longo's Animal Control Officer of the year award.**

5. **Failure to investigate a possible violent owner, Brooklyn, Lockwood Ave. August '08. A written statement was taken regarding the two dogs residing on this property. Owner accused of beating his dogs over the head with a stick on numerous occasions. Also, tied his dog to the top of his dog house for 3 consecutive days.**

6. Ordered to lie to owners regarding where their dog is. Tom & Laurie Hall, Sterling, Sterling Road, ("Rex", euthanized) Both Officers refused to lie. Aug/09 See attached.
7. Failure to follow up on restraint orders Young, Sterling (Swabby/Wallace, Brooklyn/Canterbury, Popin, Dayville, Cathleen Peabody, Woodstock, Keith Smith/Sterling, dog bit while under restraint order.
8. Failure to follow up on quarantine orders. Sus Montpelier, Canterbury/Dog bit again on last day of 1st quarantine.
9. Failure to supply officers with any personal safety equipment, numerous requests were made by both officers 06/07/08/09
10. Failure to secure a restraining order on Mr. Robert Gelfuso, Pomfret Aug/09 John Fiolak Mr. Gelfuso threatened Officer Collette the day his dog euthanized. The following day Mr. Gelfuso was at the Save Way gas station asking the attendant, Ray, if he knew the address of Officer McNeill.
11. Told not to speak with 1st selectmen or our jobs would be in jeopardy. Dianne Collette 06/07/08/09
12. Not allowed to follow through with cases which is why restraint or quarantine orders were not followed up on. Billings, Linda/Killingly, poodle, "Jaws", Officer Longo intended to follow up with a cruelty arrest but due lack of hours could not do so. Officer Collette did not pursue the case any further. See attached photo.
13. Officer Collette left money clipped to vouchers and left them on her desk and in the receipt book that most likely resulted in the loss of some funds. Officer Collette told Officer McNeill that she believed that Officer Longo was responsible for the missing cash and then told Officer Longo that she "knew" that Officer Longo would not steal. This caused the office to collect all money, causing an inconvenience to the public and the inability to adopt any animals out on Wednesday evenings and Saturdays.
14. Refusing to put all cats down, per Bolton Vet. Advisement. 11-12 cats died of distemper which is a very painful disease. Officer Collette July/09 Officer Longo attempted to contact Officer Collette while Officer Collette was on her way home from vacation to inform her of the epidemic at the pound. Officer Longo only reached Officer Collette's voice mail. Officer Collette received a call from Darlene, (a volunteer), who was fostering a cat, a few minutes later,

and informed Officer Collette that the cat was extremely ill. Officer Collette referred Darlene to Officer Longo. Officer Longo did not want to disclose to Darlene what she believed the illness until she spoke with Officer Collette. (Officer Longo had had to euthanize 5 cats earlier that day and more were showing signs of the same illness) Officer Longo told Darlene that she would call her back and once again attempted to reach Officer Collette unsuccessfully. Upon returning the call back to Darlene, Officer Longo had to ask Darlene to call Officer Collette and have Officer Collette return Officer Longo's call. Within minutes Officer Collette called back with a major attitude and began by saying, "I do not want to hear anything regarding work, I just want to deal with Darlene's cat." At that time Officer Longo said, "I need you to know what is going on and what I believe that is wrong with the cat." Officer Collette interrupted and said, "I don't want to hear it! Just vet her cat." At that time Officer Longo sternly said, "We've lost 6 cats to distemper, today alone." Again Officer Collette responded with, "I don't want to hear it." Officer Longo said, "I believe her cat has distemper!" She agreed. Officer Longo tried to explain that Bolton Vet. Advised Officer Longo that all the cats should be euthanized and Officer Collette once again interrupted and said, "Just bring it and get it vetted".

- a. Please note: This is the first time that Officer Longo had dealt with any epidemic type situation and had absolutely no guidance during that weekend. The fact that Officer Collette was on vacation was considered; however, due to the severity of the situation, Officer Longo felt she was within her rights to contact her director. Officer Longo was later reprimanded for "bothering" her.

15. Calls from the community screened and advised through a transit district operator.

16. A pit bull, female, "Oreo" had bitten a 7 year old child, placed under quarantine, unclaimed by owner, and pregnant. After quarantining she was fostered on April 1, 2009, due to that pregnancy, to Yvonne Grillo who had not been informed that the dog had previously bitten someone and while in Ms. Grillo's care the dog attacked and killed Ms. Grillo's toy French poodle on April 4, 2009. Against the advice of Officer Longo, Officer Collette still fully intended to adopt the animal out after the pups were whelped, until Ms. Grillo contacted John Filchak. Officer Longo spoke with State Animal Control Officer Denise Alex re: the dangerous nature of this animal and stated, "This animal must be euthanized for the safety of the community." State Animal Control Officer agreed.

17. August 30, 2009, "Chief" went to the birthday party of Sandy Richmond at Owen Park and was aggressive towards women, children and dogs, in the presence of Dinna Collette; and is still the property of NECCOG at the time this grievance is filed. NECCOG is fully aware that this dog is no longer

residing at the pound and has no documentation of any adoption of this animal at this time.

18. **Misrepresentation on business cards.** The title "Animal Control Officer" was replaced with animal care service assistant. This made us look like social workers and not law enforcement officers.
19. **Once we received our badges we were told that the first time one of us 'played cop' we would be gone.** This was said by John Fitchak. It is our understanding that we are 'animal law enforcement officers' and that is how we represented ourselves to the communities that we served.
20. **July 08 - Officer McNeill was reprimanded for asking Maureen Adams where the Executive Director was and when he would be returning.** When Mr. Fitchak heard that she had asked where he was he reprimanded Officer McNeill and very audibly asked her if she wanted his schedule for the month; that way she would know where he was at all times. Normally Maureen Adams will share where Mr. Fitchak is, regardless of who asks. This embarrassed Officer McNeill as he reprimanded her with other employees within hearing distance. He was not trying in anyway to be discreet.

ATTACHMENT J

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
ANIMAL CONTROL DIVISION

INVESTIGATION
REPORT



TYPE OF COMPLAINT Impounded dog		STATUTE 22-332	OFFICER ASSIGNED Denise Alix	CASE NUMBER 2007-069
ADDRESS / LOCATION Rt. 12		TOWN AND CODE Killingly	INCIDENT DATE 3-14-07	REPORT DATE 4-30-07
INCIDENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	COMPLAINT <input type="checkbox"/>	DAMAGE <input type="checkbox"/>	DATE / TIME COMPLAINT RECEIVED 3-29-07	DATE / TIME OF INVESTIGATION 3-29/30-07
			DATE / TIME COMPLAINANT NOTIFIED 3-30-07	

KEY	NAME	ADDRESS	D.O.B.	SEX	RACE	TELEPHONE
A	Collette, Diane	ACO District of NECOG	--	F	W	860-774-1253
C	Latour, Ryan	[REDACTED]	--	M	W	[REDACTED]
O	Copley, Robert	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	M	W	[REDACTED]
O	Filchek, John	NECOG	--	M	W	860-774-1253

SUMMARY: A dog was impounded in the Killingly pound and the owner showed up to redeem his dog. The ACO had already adopted out the dog.

ACTION TAKEN: On March 14, 2007 ACO Diane Collette, Killingly District Animal Control impounded a dog from the town of Sterling. The dog being a female, Pit Bull, brindle in color. An ad was placed in the Shoppers Guide to appear on March 20, 2007. The Shoppers Guide is a once-a-week paper having circulation in the Killingly area.

On March 22, 2007, Latour saw the ad and went to the pound and told the ACO that she had impounded his dog, and identified the dog. ACO told Latour that the fee for redemption was \$15.00, plus ad fees, and board fees, totaling to approximately \$176.00. Latour was upset at the cost, claiming he didn't have that much money at this time, and left the pound without telling the ACO what his plans were for redeeming the dog.

On March 27, 2007, at about 3:50 p.m. Latour left a message on the voice mail system to have the ACO call him. And again on March 28, stating he didn't have the money but to call him, not to give away the dog. People from the NECOG offices who answer the phone for the ACO, did not inform the ACO promptly of this call. "Rita" called the ACO during the ACO's lunch hour to talk with the ACO, but said she would call her when lunch was over. At about 2:45 p.m. "Kathy" called the ACO and told her Latour still wanted his dog back. Just about that time, the ACO was selling the dog to Copley. ACO did not know, at the time of sale, that Latour had been calling and still wanted his dog. Latour then contacted the NECOG office and spoke to John Filchek.

Filchek called this office and I sat with Filchek and ACO, to discuss the complaint. I informed both ACO and Filchek that the fees were wrong. It should have cost Latour only the redemption fee of \$15.00, and the cost of the ad, which ACO stated at this time was about \$6.00. I explained that by using the Shoppers Guide and the ad not appearing for another week, the dog was being held at the cost of the town. The ACO could not charge fees from the date of impoundment, only from the date of ad, and board fees to start after 24hrs. of notification. All of which Latour could have afforded when he was at the pound on March 22.

ACTION TAKEN:	<input type="checkbox"/> INFRACTION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ADVISED	OFFICERS SIGNATURE	ID. NUMBER	SUPERVISOR
	<input type="checkbox"/> ARREST	<input type="checkbox"/> WRITTEN WARNING	<i>Denise Alix</i>	K9-3	<i>[Signature]</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> SUMMONS	<input type="checkbox"/> NO VIOLATIONS FOUND			



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Office of the Commissioner



Steven K. Reviczky
Commissioner

860-713-2501
www.CTGrown.gov

December 14, 2018

Via email: kkelly@sswbagg.com

Attorney Kristi Kelly
Suisman, Shapiro
2 Union Plaza
Suite 200
PO Box 1591
New London, CT 06320

Re: Request for Formal Investigation by NECCOG

Dear Attorney Kelly:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter dated December 5, 2018 regarding a request for an investigation of certain allegations contained in your letter regarding the animal control facility in Dayville operated by NECCOG.

We have reviewed the materials that were included in your letter related to certain allegations about management oversight, operations and events that occurred at the facility. We note that the allegations relate to personnel matters, animal control officer duties and animal mistreatment at the Dayville facility. As you know, our Department's statutory authority only extends to matters related to the statutory duties of ACO's and the treatment of animals by individuals and organizations responsible for their care. We do not have any authority to address personnel issues internal to NECCOG, and will focus our response to the 2 items over which we have jurisdiction.

The allegations in your letter date from 2007 to the present. We have reviewed our file for records related to the allegations from 2007-2009, and do not have them any longer, in accordance with our state records retention schedule, with the exception of the attached report related to an impoundment error that occurred at the Dayville facility. Because of the age of these allegations, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible to investigate them for purposes of determining the merits of the complaints. Therefore, we do not intend to investigate the complaints that are raised in Ms. Longo's statement, or the 2009 fax to Mr. John Filchak from our Department.

We have inspected the Dayville facility on a number of occasions, and enclose those records for your client's use and consideration. We plan to conduct an inspection and interview the individuals named in the more recent complaints. The purpose will be to determine what, if any,

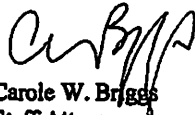
450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT 06103
Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Employer

K. Kelly
Page 2

violations of state laws may have occurred related to the treatment of animals at the Dayville facility, and possible actions that may have prevented, or currently prevent NECCOG's ACO's from carrying out their statutory duties.

The state animal control officer supervisor from the Department will be in contact with you to discuss this investigation further. If you have any questions or concerns about this letter, or the proposed investigation, please contact me. We look forward to your cooperation and assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,



Carole W. Briggs
Staff Attorney

Encs.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
ANIMAL CONTROL DIVISION

INVESTIGATION
REPORT



TYPE OF COMPLAINT	ACCUSED / SUSPECT	CASE NUMBER
Impounded Dog	Diane Colletto	

At Filcheles request, we called Copley, the new owner, and he agreed to come to the office and discuss this problem. I informed him of the mistake that took place, because of a communication gap in the offices. ACO did believe she was selling the dog on time and properly. I then requested Copley to consider returning the dog and the ACO would try to find him another to replace this one. Copley at first did not want to, claiming that he was "attached" to the dog and so was his daughter. He has had the dog a total of two days. He did ask if the ACO was in "trouble" and I replied that the ACO would probably be reprimanded because of this incident. Copley later did agree to bring the dog back around 5:00 p.m.

CONCLUSION: NECOG needs to correct its communication gap.

OFFICERS ASSIGNED	OFFICERS SIGNATURE	I.D. NUMBER
Denise Alix	<i>Denise Alix</i>	

ACC No 315

Date 3/29/2006

Time

Contact Type Phone

Message Taken By Rita

First Name Ryan

Last Name Letour

Address [REDACTED]

TOWN [REDACTED]

Telephone [REDACTED]

DOG

dog issue dog is at pound

CAT

cat issue

LIVESTOCK

livestock issue

WELFARE

VOLUNTEER

TRAP

Trap issue

Narrative

Brdie pitbull was picked up on the 14th, doesn't have money. Don't give dog away.

ACTION BY:

ACTION:

OUTCOME

IMPOUNDED?

INVESTIGATION??

TYPE of OUTCOME

ACC No 305
Date 3/27/2007
Time 3:49 PM
Contact Type voice mail
Message Taken By: Kathy
First Name Ryan
Last Name LaTour
Address [REDACTED]
TOWN [REDACTED]
Telephone [REDACTED]
DOG
dog issue redeeming dog
CAT
cat issue
LIVESTOCK
livestock issue
WILDLIFE
VOLUNTEER
TRAP
Trap issue
Narrative No money for dog. Please call.

ACTION BY:
ACTION:
OUTCOME:

IMPOUNDED?
INVESTIGATION??
TYPE of OUTCOME:

ACO No 224

Date 3/22/2007

Time 10:15 AM

Contact Type Phone

Message Taken By: Kathy

First Name Ryan

Last Name Latour

Address [REDACTED]

TOWN [REDACTED]

Telephone [REDACTED]

DOG

dog issue picking up dog

CAT

cat issue

LIVESTOCK

livestock issue

WILDLIFE

VOLUNTEER

TRAP

Trap issue

Narrative Dog was picked up on 3/14 in Sterling for roaming. Total charges came to \$132.00. 8 days in the pound, \$12 per ad.

ACTION BY: Kathy

ACTION: telephone

OUTCOME: See 6235

IMPOUNDED? NO

INVESTIGATION?? NO

TYPE of OUTCOME resolved

ACC No 235
Date 3/22/2007
Time 12:02 PM
Contact Type voice mail
Message Taken By: Kathy
First Name Ryan
Last Name Latour
Address [REDACTED]
TOWN [REDACTED]
Telephone [REDACTED]
DOG
dog issue dog is impounded
CAT
cat issue
LIVESTOCK
livestock issue
WILDLIFE
VOLUNTEER
TRAP
Trap issue
Narrative Doesn't have the money to get her out. "Clover"

ACTION BY: Kathy
ACTION: telephone
OUTCOME LM and told him that the charge is \$117 and if she's here another day it will go up another \$15.00.

IMPOUNDED? NO
INVESTIGATION?? NO
TYPE of OUTCOME resolved

ACO No 225
Date 3/21/2007
Time 7:54 PM
Contact Type voicemail
Message Taken By: Kathy
First Name Ryan
Last Name Latour
Address [REDACTED]
TOWN [REDACTED]
Telephone [REDACTED]
DOG
dog issue dog is at the pound
CAT
cat issue
LIVESTOCK
livestock issue
WILDLIFE
VOLUNTEER
TRAP
Trap issue
Narrative The pit bull is mine that is at the pound. It was found on Margaret Henry Road in Sterling. Please call
ACTION BY: ACO
ACTION: site visit
OUTCOME told about impound fee, doesn't have money
IMPOUNDED? NO
INVESTIGATION?? NO
TYPE of OUTCOME resolved

85-
#286c Kathy
Eligibility Certification Application
Bridgette P. L. 6-2-21
Madi Lusk
Ruan - Latmer
Bridgette P. L. 6-2-21
Don't give
them + give
Don't give away



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
ANIMAL CONTROL DIVISION
DOG POUND INSPECTION

CITY/TOWN NECOC, Killingly DATE 4-10-18 TIME 1345
 LOCATION 125 Putnam Pike, Dayville, Killingly
 MUNICIPAL FACILITY COMMERCIAL KENNEL VET HOSPITAL WRITTEN AGREEMENT

	YES	NO	N/A		YES	NO
PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS, 22-336-16				HEAT AND VENTILATION, 22-336-19		
Maintained in good repair	✓	—	—	Thermostatically controlled	✓	—
Interior / Exterior Walls:				Clean and sanitary	✓	—
Concrete or cement block	✓	—	—	Proper temperature maintained	✓	—
Minimum 4 feet high	✓	—	—	Mechanical ventilation	—	✓
* Proper size and gauge fencing	—	✓	—			
PENS AND RUNS, 22-336-17				WATER SUPPLY, 22-336-20		
Indoor Runs:				Sufficient amount of hot water	✓	—
Not less than 40 square feet	—	—	✓	Sufficient amount of potable water	✓	—
Minimum 4 feet wide	—	—	✓			
Minimum 6 feet high	—	—	✓	LIGHTING, 22-336-21		
Solid partitions 4 feet high	—	—	✓	Natural or artificial lighting provided	✓	—
Outdoor Runs:				for a minimum of 8 hours.	—	—
Minimum 4 feet wide	✓	—	—	SANITATION, 22-336-22		
Minimum 8 feet long	✓	—	—	Facility clean and sanitary	✓	—
Minimum 6 feet high	✓	—	—	Proper type of disinfectant	✓	—
* Solid partitions 4 feet high	✓	—	—	Control of vermin / insects / odors	✓	—
* Permanent roof over runs	✓	—	—			
* Barrier on top of runs	—	✓	—	FOOD / WATER CONTAINERS, 22-336-23		
Indoor Pens:				Galvanized or stainless steel containers	✓	—
Minimum 4 feet square	✓	—	—	Washed and disinfected	✓	—
Minimum 4 feet high	✓	—	—			
Covered (under 6 feet high)	✓	—	—	STORAGE OF DOG FOOD, 22-336-24		
Solid partitions 4 feet high	✓	—	—	Metal or heavy duty plastic containers	✓	—
				Unopened bags stored above the floor	✓	—
FLOOR AND BASE OF RUNS, 22-336-18						
Outdoor Runs / Indoor Pens:				ISOLATION AREA, 22-336-26		
Smooth concrete floors	✓	—	—	* One area per ten runs	—	✓
Troughs / runs / pens properly pitched	✓	—	—	One dog per isolation area	✓	—
Troughs inaccessible to dogs	✓	—	—			
* Covered 6 inch drains	✓	—	—	ANIMAL CARE, 22-336-28		
* Doorways offset for resting beds	✓	—	—	Water provided at all times	✓	—
Indoor Runs:				Proper type and quantity of food	✓	—
Runs pitched toward trough	—	—	✓	Sick or injured dog examined by	✓	—
Trough inaccessible to dogs	—	—	✓	a licensed veterinarian	✓	—
* Covered 6 inch drains	—	—	✓	Water impervious resting beds	✓	—
Facility/proper sewage disposal system	—	—	✓	One adult dog per run or pen	✓	—

* Grandfather clause applies to this facility Approved Not Approved
 Officer AG #9 Owner / Agent [Signature]
 A-69 revised 8/2015



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
ANIMAL CONTROL DIVISION

TRADE NAME Pound DATE 4-10-18 TIME 1345
 LICENSEE NECCOG STATE LICENSE # N/A
 LOCATION 125 Putnam Pike TOWN Killingly
 PET SHOP GROOMING COMMERCIAL KENNEL TRAINING DOG POUND

WARNING NOTICE

You are hereby warned that this facility was found to be in violation of the laws and regulations listed below.

22-336 2. Isolation Area: There needs to be at least
1 isolation run per ten runs, there is only one for the
21 runs available. NECCOG covers 18 towns and has and
two dogs in quarantine. Three quarantine runs should
be available.

A reinspection of this facility will be conducted on or about 5/10/18

Continued violations or failure to make corrections could subject you to fines and/or suspension or revocation of license. Dog pounds could be subject to closure.

If you have any questions regarding this matter you can contact the State Animal Control Division at 860-713-2506.

Officer AG #9 Owner / Agent [Signature]



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
ANIMAL CONTROL DIVISION
DOG POUND INSPECTION

CITY/TOWN NECCOG DATE 10-18-2017 TIME 1:30

LOCATION 125 Putnam Pike, Killingly

MUNICIPAL FACILITY COMMERCIAL KENNEL VET HOSPITAL WRITTEN AGREEMENT

	YES	NO	N/A		YES	NO
PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS, 22-336-16				HEAT AND VENTILATION, 22-336-19		
Maintained in good repair	✓	—	—	Thermostatically controlled	✓	—
Interior / Exterior Walls:				Clean and sanitary	✓	—
Concrete or cement block	✓	—	—	Proper temperature maintained	✓	—
Minimum 4 feet high	✓	—	—	Mechanical ventilation	—	✓
* Proper size and gauge fencing	✓	—	—			
				WATER SUPPLY, 22-336-20		
PENS AND RUNS, 22-336-17				Sufficient amount of hot water	✓	—
Indoor Runs:				Sufficient amount of potable water	✓	—
Not less than 40 square feet	—	—	✓			
Minimum 4 feet wide	—	—	✓	LIGHTING, 22-336-21		
Minimum 6 feet high	—	—	✓	Natural or artificial lighting provided	✓	—
Solid partitions 4 feet high	—	—	✓	for a minimum of 8 hours.		
Outdoor Runs:						
Minimum 4 feet wide	✓	—	—	SANITATION, 22-336-22		
Minimum 8 feet long	✓	—	—	Facility clean and sanitary	✓	—
Minimum 6 feet high	✓	—	—	Proper type of disinfectant	✓	—
* Solid partitions 4 feet high	✓	—	—	Control of vermin / insects / odors	✓	—
* Permanent roof over runs	✓	—	—			
* Barrier on top of runs	—	✓	—	FOOD / WATER CONTAINERS, 22-336-23		
Indoor Pens:				Galvanized or stainless steel containers	✓	—
Minimum 4 feet square	✓	—	—	Washed and disinfected	✓	—
Minimum 4 feet high	✓	—	—			
Covered (under 6 feet high)	✓	—	—	STORAGE OF DOG FOOD, 22-336-24		
Solid partitions 4 feet high	✓	—	—	Metal or heavy duty plastic containers	✓	—
				Unopened bags stored above the floor	✓	—
FLOOR AND BASE OF RUNS, 22-336-18						
Outdoor Runs / Indoor Pens:				ISOLATION AREA, 22-336-26 / runs		
Smooth concrete floors	✓	—	—	One area per ten runs	—	✓
Troughs / runs / pens properly pitched	✓	—	—	One dog per isolation area	✓	—
Troughs inaccessible to dogs	✓	—	—			
* Covered 6 inch drains	—	✓	—	ANIMAL CARE, 22-336-28		
* Doorways offset for resting beds	✓	—	—	Water provided at all times	✓	—
Indoor Runs:				Proper type and quantity of food	✓	—
Runs pitched toward trough	—	—	✓	Sick or injured dog examined by	—	—
Trough inaccessible to dogs	—	—	✓	a licensed veterinarian	✓	—
* Covered 6 inch drains	—	—	✓	Water impervious resting beds	✓	—
Facility/proper sewage disposal system	—	—	✓	One adult dog per run or pen	✓	—

* Grandfather clause applies to this facility

Approved _____ Not Approved

Officer DB#9

Owner / Agent Jennifer Hethcote



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
ANIMAL CONTROL DIVISION

TRADE NAME NECCOG DATE 10-18-17 TIME 1330
 LICENSEE _____ STATE LICENSE # _____
 LOCATION 125 Putnam Pike TOWN Millingly
 PET SHOP GROOMING COMMERCIAL KENNEL TRAINING DOG POUND

WARNING NOTICE

You are hereby warned that this facility was found to be in violation of the laws and regulations listed below.

This facility has an old and a new section. The old section is grandfathered and the new section is not.
22-336-17. The "new section" is required to have a barrier on the top of the outside runs.
22-336-24 One isolation run is required per 10 runs - you need at least three.
- The front of a quarantine run (the door) does not need to be covered because this facility has limited access. All access is controlled.
The walks between the quarantine runs need to be six feet min.

A reinspection of this facility will be conducted on or about 4/1/18

Continued violations or failure to make corrections could subject you to fines and/or suspension or revocation of license. Dog pounds could be subject to closure.

If you have any questions regarding this matter you can contact the State Animal Control Division at 860-713-2608.

Officer CS #9

Owner / Agent Jennifer Hutchins
 AFD REV 04/2015



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
ANIMAL CONTROL DIVISION
DOG POUND INSPECTION

RKC

CITY/TOWN Killingly DATE 2-21-17 TIME 1:30
 LOCATION 125 Putnam Pike, Dayville
 MUNICIPAL FACILITY COMMERCIAL KENNEL VET HOSPITAL WRITTEN AGREEMENT

	YES	NO	N/A		YES	NO
PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS, 22-336-16				HEAT AND VENTILATION, 22-336-19		
Maintained in good repair	✓	—	—	Thermostatically controlled	✓	—
Interior / Exterior Walls:				Clean and sanitary	✓	—
Concrete or cement block	✓	—	—	Proper temperature maintained	✓	—
Minimum 4 feet high	✓	—	—	Mechanical ventilation	✓	—
• Proper size and gauge fencing	—	✓	—			
PENS AND RUNS, 22-336-17				WATER SUPPLY, 22-336-20		
Indoor Runs:				Sufficient amount of hot water	✓	—
Not less than 40 square feet	—	—	✓	Sufficient amount of potable water	✓	—
Minimum 4 feet wide	—	—	✓			
Minimum 6 feet high	—	—	✓	LIGHTING, 22-336-21		
Solid partitions 4 feet high	—	—	✓	Natural or artificial lighting provided		
Outdoor Runs:				for a minimum of 8 hours.	✓	—
Minimum 4 feet wide	✓	—	—			
Minimum 8 feet long	✓	—	—	SANITATION, 22-336-22		
Minimum 6 feet high	✓	—	—	Facility clean and sanitary	✓	—
• Solid partitions 4 feet high	✓	—	—	Proper type of disinfectant	✓	—
• Permanent roof over runs	✓	—	—	Control of vermin / insects / odors	✓	—
• Barrier on top of runs	—	✓	—			
Indoor Pens:				FOOD / WATER CONTAINERS, 22-336-23		
Minimum 4 feet square	✓	—	—	Galvanized or stainless steel containers	✓	—
Minimum 4 feet high	✓	—	—	Washed and disinfected	✓	—
Covered (under 6 feet high)	✓	—	—			
Solid partitions 4 feet high	✓	—	—	STORAGE OF DOG FOOD, 22-336-24		
				Metal or heavy duty plastic containers	✓	—
				Unopened bags stored above the floor	✓	—
FLOOR AND BASE OF RUNS, 22-336-18						
Outdoor Runs / Indoor Pens:				ISOLATION AREA, 22-336-26		
Smooth concrete floors	✓	—	—	One area per ten runs	✓	—
Troughs / runs / pens properly pitched	✓	—	—	One dog per isolation area	✓	—
Troughs inaccessible to dogs	✓	—	—			
• Covered 6 inch drains	✓	✓	—	ANIMAL CARE, 22-336-28		
• Doorways offset for resting beds	✓	—	—	Water provided at all times	✓	—
Indoor Runs:				Proper type and quantity of food	✓	—
Runs pitched toward trough	—	—	✓	Sick or injured dog examined by	✓	—
Trough inaccessible to dogs	—	—	✓	a licensed veterinarian	✓	—
• Covered 6 inch drains	—	—	✓	Water impervious resting beds	✓	—
Facility/proper sewage disposal system	—	—	✓	One adult dog per run or pen	✓	—

• Grandfather clause applies to this facility Approved Not Approved
 Officer AL #9 Owner / Agent Devin Carter



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
ANIMAL CONTROL DIVISION

RE

TRADE NAME Killingly DATE 2-21-17 TIME 13:20
 LICENSEE Town of STATE LICENSE # N/A
 LOCATION 125 Putnam Pike TOWN Killingly
 PET SHOP GROOMING COMMERCIAL KENNEL TRAINING DOG POUND

WARNING NOTICE

You are hereby warned that this facility was found to be in violation of the laws and regulations listed below.

22-336.17 A barrier is required on top of
the "new" section of outside runs.

A reinspection of this facility will be conducted on or about 3/21/17

Continued violations or failure to make corrections could subject you to fines and/or suspension or revocation of license. Dog pounds could be subject to closure.

If you have any questions regarding this matter you can contact the State Animal Control Division at 860-713-2508.

Officer OG #9

Owner / Agent Deanne Colter



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
ANIMAL CONTROL DIVISION
DOG POUND INSPECTION

RP

CITY/TOWN NECCOG DATE 6-30-17 TIME 1200

LOCATION 125 Putnam Pike, Killingly

MUNICIPAL FACILITY COMMERCIAL KENNEL VET HOSPITAL WRITTEN AGREEMENT

	YES	NO	N/A		YES	NO	
PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS, 22-336-16				HEAT AND VENTILATION, 22-336-19			
Maintained in good repair	—	✓		Thermostatically controlled	✓	—	
Interior / Exterior Walls:				Clean and sanitary	✓	—	
Concrete or cement block	✓	—		Proper temperature maintained	✓	—	
Minimum 4 feet high	✓	—		Mechanical ventilation	—	✓	
* Proper size and gauge fencing	✓	✓		WATER SUPPLY, 22-336-20			
PENS AND RUNS, 22-336-17				Sufficient amount of hot water			
Indoor Runs:				Sufficient amount of potable water			
Not less than 40 square feet	—	—	✓	LIGHTING, 22-336-21			
Minimum 4 feet wide	—	—	✓	Natural or artificial lighting provided			
Minimum 6 feet high	—	—	✓	for a minimum of 8 hours.			
Solid partitions 4 feet high	—	—	✓	SANITATION, 22-336-22			
Outdoor Runs:				Facility clean and sanitary			
Minimum 4 feet wide	✓	—	—	Proper type of disinfectant			
Minimum 8 feet long	✓	—	—	Control of vermin / insects / odors			
Minimum 6 feet high	✓	—	—	FOOD / WATER CONTAINERS, 22-336-23			
* Solid partitions 4 feet high	✓	—	✓	Galvanized or stainless steel containers			
* Permanent roof over runs	✓	—	—	Washed and disinfected			
* Barrier on top of runs	—	✓	✓	STORAGE OF DOG FOOD, 22-336-24			
Indoor Pens:				Metal or heavy duty plastic containers			
Minimum 4 feet square	✓	—	—	Unopened bags stored above the floor			
Minimum 4 feet high	✓	—	—	ISOLATION AREA, 22-336-26			
Covered (under 6 feet high)	✓	—	—	One area per ten runs			
Solid partitions 4 feet high	✓	—	—	One dog per isolation area			
FLOOR AND BASE OF RUNS; 22-336-18				ANIMAL CARE, 22-336-28			
Outdoor Runs / Indoor Pens:				Water provided at all times			
Smooth concrete floors	✓	—	—	Proper type and quantity of food			
Troughs / runs / pens properly pitched	✓	✓	—	Sick or injured dog examined by			
Troughs inaccessible to dogs	✓	—	—	a licensed veterinarian			
* Covered 6 inch drains	✓	—	✓	Water impervious resting beds			
* Doorways offset for resting beds	✓	—	—	One adult dog per run or pen			
Indoor Runs:							
Runs pitched toward trough	✓	—	✓				
Trough inaccessible to dogs	—	—	✓				
* Covered 6 inch drains	—	—	✓				
Facility/proper sewage disposal system	—	—	✓				

* Grandfather clause applies to this facility Approved Not Approved

Officer OG #9 Owner / Agent Dianne Callette



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
ANIMAL CONTROL DIVISION
DOG POUND INSPECTION

12C

CITY/TOWN NECCOG Regional DATE 3/11/14 TIME 6 PM
 LOCATION 125 Putnam Pike, Killingly / Dayville
 MUNICIPAL FACILITY COMMERCIAL KENNEL VET HOSPITAL WRITTEN AGREEMENT

	YES	NO	N/A		YES	NO
PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS, 22-336-16				HEAT AND VENTILATION, 22-336-19		
Maintained in good repair	/			Thermostatically controlled	/	
Interior/ Exterior Walls :				Clean and sanitary	/	
Concrete or cement block	/			Proper temperature maintained	/	
Minimum 4 feet high	/			Mechanical ventilation	/	
* Proper size and gauge fencing	/			WATER SUPPLY, 22-336-20		
PENS AND RUNS, 22-336-17				Sufficient amount of hot water		
Indoor Runs :				Sufficient amount of potable water	/	
Not less than 40 square feet			/	LIGHTING, 22-336-21		
Minimum 4 feet wide			/	Natural or artificial lighting provided		
Minimum 6 feet high			/	for a minimum of 8 hours.		
Solid partitions 4 feet high			/	SANITATION, 22-336-22		
Outdoor Runs :				Facility clean and sanitary		
Minimum 4 feet wide	/			Proper type of disinfectant		
Minimum 8 feet long	/			Control of vermin/ insects/ odors		
Minimum 6 feet high	/			FOOD / WATER CONTAINERS, 22-336-23		
* Solid partitions 4 feet high	/			Galvanized or stainless steel containers		
* Permanent roof over runs	/			Washed and disinfected		
* Barrier on top of runs	/			STORAGE OF DOG FOOD, 22-336-24		
Indoor Pens				Metal or heavy duty plastic containers		
Minimum 4 feet square	/			Unopened bags stored above the floor		
Minimum 4 feet high	/			ISOLATION AREA, 22-336-26		
Covered (under 6 feet high)	/			One area per ten runs		
Solid partitions 4 feet high	/			One dog per isolation area		
FLOOR AND BASE OF RUNS, 22-336-18				ANIMAL CARE, 22-336-28		
Outdoor Runs / Indoor Pens :				Water provided at all times		
Smooth concrete floors	/			Proper type and quantity of food		
Troughs / runs / pens proper pitch	/			Sick or injured dog examined by		
Troughs inaccessible to dogs	/			a licensed veterinarian		
* Covered 6 inch drains	/			Water impervious resting beds		
* Doorways offset for resting beds	/			One adult dog per run or pen		
Indoor Runs						
Runs pitched toward trough	/					
Trough inaccessible to dogs	/					
* Covered 6 inch drains	/					
Facility/proper sewage disposal system	/					

* GRANDFATHER CLAUSE APPLIES APPROVED NOT APPROVED
 OFFICER [Signature] OWNER / AGENT [Signature]
 A-09 revised 4/15/2003



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
ANIMAL CONTROL DIVISION
DOG POUND INSPECTION

RR

CITY/TOWN Brooklyn Catteraug Killingly DATE 11-29-11 TIME 11:00 am

LOCATION RT. 12 Poutret Stealing Woodstock

MUNICIPAL FACILITY COMMERCIAL KENNEL VET HOSPITAL WRITTEN AGREEMENT

	YES	NO	N/A		YES	NO
PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS, 22-336-16				HEAT AND VENTILATION, 22-336-19		
Maintained in good repair	✓	—	—	Thermostatically controlled	✓	—
Interior/ Exterior Walls :	✓	—	—	Clean and sanitary	✓	—
Concrete or cement block	✓	—	—	Proper temperature maintained	✓	—
Minimum 4 feet high	✓	—	—	Mechanical ventilation	✓	—
* Proper size and gauge fencing	✓	—	—	WATER SUPPLY, 22-336-20		
PENS AND RUNS, 22-336-17				Sufficient amount of hot water		
Indoor Runs :				Sufficient amount of potable water		
Not less than 40 square feet	—	✓	—	LIGHTING, 22-336-21		
Minimum 4 feet wide	—	✓	—	Natural or artificial lighting provided		
Minimum 6 feet high	—	✓	—	for a minimum of 8 hours.		
Solid partitions 4 feet high	—	✓	—	SANITATION, 22-336-22		
Outdoor Runs :	✓	—	—	Facility clean and sanitary		
Minimum 4 feet wide	✓	—	—	Proper type of disinfectant		
Minimum 8 feet long	✓	—	—	Control of vermin/ insects/ odors		
Minimum 6 feet high	✓	—	—	FOOD / WATER CONTAINERS, 22-336-23		
* Solid partitions 4 feet high	✓	—	—	Galvanized or stainless steel containers		
* Permanent roof over runs	✓	—	—	Washed and disinfected		
* Barrier on top of runs	✓	—	—	STORAGE OF DOG FOOD, 22-336-24		
Indoor Pens	—	—	—	Metal or heavy duty plastic containers		
Minimum 4 feet square	—	—	—	Unopened bags stored above the floor		
Minimum 4 feet high	—	—	—	ISOLATION AREA, 22-336-26		
Covered (under 6 feet high)	—	—	—	One area per ten runs		
Solid partitions 4 feet high	—	✓	—	One dog per isolation area		
FLOOR AND BASE OF RUNS, 22-336-18				ANIMAL CARE, 22-336-28		
Outdoor Runs / Indoor Pens :				Water provided at all times		
Smooth concrete floors	✓	—	—	Proper type and quantity of food		
Troughs / runs / pens proper pitch	✓	—	—	Sick or injured dog examined by		
Troughs inaccessible to dogs	✓	—	—	a licensed veterinarian		
* Covered 6 inch drains	✓	—	—	Water impervious resting beds		
* Doorways offset for resting beds	✓	—	—	One adult dog per run or pen		
Indoor Runs	—	—	—			
Runs pitched toward trough	—	✓	—			
Trough inaccessible to dogs	—	✓	—			
* Covered 6 inch drains	—	✓	—			
Facility/proper sewage disposal system	—	✓	—			

* GRANDFATHER CLAUSE APPLIES APPROVED NOT APPROVED

OFFICER Daniel Olip

OWNER / AGENT Darius Colletto



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
ANIMAL CONTROL DIVISION

TRADE NAME Killingly District 6 DATE 11-29-11 TIME 1:00 PM
 LICENSEE Town of Killingly STATE LICENSE # _____
 LOCATION Rt. 12 TOWN Killingly
 PET SHOP GROOMING COMMERCIAL KENNEL TRAINING DOG FOUND

WARNING NOTICE

You are hereby warned that this facility was found to be in violation of the laws and regulations listed below.

22-336-17 solid partitions - Newer half of this building has no solid partitions on the inside or outside

A reinspection of this facility will be conducted on or about 1/30/12

Continued violations or failure to make corrections could subject you to fines and/or suspension or revocation of license. Dog pounds could be subject to closure.

If you have any questions regarding this matter you can contact the State Animal Control Division at 860-713-2506.

Officer Denise Alix Owner / Agent Denise Alix

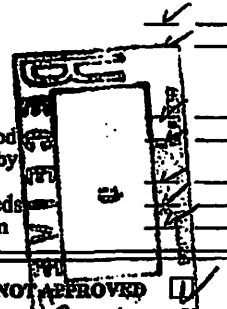


**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
ANIMAL CONTROL DIVISION
DOG POUND INSPECTION**

RJK

CITY/TOWN Brooklyn Centerbury DATE 4-19-11 TIME 1:20 pm
 LOCATION Killingly Pondret Sterling woodstock
 MUNICIPAL FACILITY COMMERCIAL KENNEL VET HOSPITAL WRITTEN AGREEMENT

	YES	NO	N/A		YES	NO
PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS, 22-336-16				HEAT AND VENTILATION, 22-336-19		
Maintained in good repair	✓	—	—	Thermostatically controlled	✓	—
Interior/ Exterior Walls :				Clean and sanitary	✓	—
Concrete or cement block	✓	—	—	Proper temperature maintained	✓	—
Minimum 4 feet high	✓	—	—	Mechanical ventilation <i>needed in new addition</i>	✓	—
* Proper size and gauge fencing	✓	—	—			
PENS AND RUNS, 22-336-17				WATER SUPPLY, 22-336-20		
Indoor Runs :				Sufficient amount of hot water	✓	—
Not less than 40 square feet	✓	—	—	Sufficient amount of potable water	✓	—
Minimum 4 feet wide	✓	—	—			
Minimum 6 feet high	✓	—	—	LIGHTING, 22-336-21		
Solid partitions 4 feet high	✓	—	—	Natural or artificial lighting provided for a minimum of 8 hours.	✓	—
Outdoor Runs :						
Minimum 4 feet wide	✓	—	—	SANITATION, 22-336-22		
Minimum 8 feet long	✓	—	—	Facility clean and sanitary	✓	—
Minimum 6 feet high	✓	—	—	Proper type of disinfectant	✓	—
* Solid partitions 4 feet high	✓	—	—	Control of vermin/ insects/ odors	✓	—
* Permanent roof over runs	✓	—	—			
* Barrier on top of runs	✓	—	—	FOOD / WATER CONTAINERS, 22-336-23		
Indoor Pens				Galvanized or stainless steel containers	✓	—
Minimum 4 feet square	✓	—	—	Washed and disinfected	✓	—
Minimum 4 feet high	✓	—	—			
Covered (under 6 feet high)	✓	—	—	STORAGE OF DOG FOOD, 22-336-24		
Solid partitions 4 feet high	—	✓	—	Metal or heavy duty plastic containers	✓	—
				Unopened bags stored above the floor	✓	—
FLOOR AND BASE OF RUNS, 22-336-18				ISOLATION AREA, 22-336-26		
Outdoor Runs / Indoor Pens :				One area per ten runs	✓	—
Smooth concrete floors	✓	—	—	One dog per isolation area	✓	—
Troughs / runs / pens proper pitch	✓	—	—			
Troughs inaccessible to dogs	✓	—	—	ANIMAL CARE, 22-336-28		
* Covered 6 inch drains	✓	—	—	Water provided at all times	✓	—
* Doorways offset for resting beds	✓	—	—	Proper type and quantity of food	✓	—
Indoor Runs				Sick or injured dog examined by a licensed veterinarian	✓	—
Runs pitched toward trough	✓	—	—	Water impervious resting beds	✓	—
Trough inaccessible to dogs	✓	—	—	One adult dog per run or pen	✓	—
* Covered 6 inch drains	✓	—	—			
Facility/proper sewage disposal system	✓	—	—			



* GRANDFATHER CLAUSE APPLIES APPROVED NOT APPROVED
 OFFICER *Daniel Alip* OWNER / AGENT *Dorine Cotto*

ATTACHMENT K



neccog

Employee Handbook

Updated November, 2016

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Confidentiality Statement

Receipt of Employee Handbook

Introduction

This handbook represents a collection of NECCOG's policies as they have been issued, revised and amended over time. This handbook is designed to acquaint you with NECCOG and provide you with information about working conditions, employee benefits and some of the policies affecting your employment. **You should read, understand and comply with all provisions of the handbook.** It describes many of your responsibilities as a NECCOG employee and outlines the programs developed by NECCOG to benefit employees.

The practices, policies, plans and benefits in this handbook apply to all employees including those whose conditions of employment are covered by a separate agreement. However, if the policies of this Handbook differ from the terms of an individual employment agreement, the provisions and terms of the individual employment agreement shall take precedence.

No employee handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question about policy. As NECCOG continues to grow, the need may arise, at any time, to amend or terminate the practices, policies, plans and benefits described in this document. **Any changes will supersede the contents of this document.**

Disclaimer

This handbook is intended for information and guidance. Since this handbook is only a summary compiled for the convenience of our employees and supervisors, it is not intended to cover all topics or circumstances. **It is NOT an employment contract or agreement of any type, either expressed or implied, does not guarantee any fixed terms and conditions of employment, or guarantee benefits or working conditions between any employee and NECCOG.** Bear in mind that unless your employment is covered by a separate agreement, providing for the contrary, your employment with NECCOG is not for any specific time and may be terminated at-will by you or NECCOG for any reason and at any time.

Except for NECCOG's policy of employment at-will, NECCOG may change, delete, suspend, or discontinue any part or parts of this Handbook at any time without prior notice and any such action shall apply to existing as well as future employees. Continuation of employment after any such action constitutes consent to such action. Additionally, NECCOG reserves the right to respond to specific situations in whatever manner it believes best suits the needs of NECCOG. Consequently, NECCOG's actions, from time to time, may vary from the attached policies and procedures, or any subsequent policies and procedures implemented. Furthermore, NECCOG's actions may from time to time be guided by policies and procedures which are not contained in this handbook.

Employees should familiarize themselves with the contents of the Employee Handbook as soon as possible, for it will answer many questions about employment with NECCOG. The Executive Director and/or his/her designee will be available to address any questions not answered by this handbook.

Employee Categories/Glossary of Employment Terms

Employer: Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments ("NECCOG")

Employee: A person who receives wages or salary from the Northeastern Connecticut NECCOG.

Introductory/New Employee: A newly hired person who has not yet completed six (6) months of uninterrupted employment. Introductory/New Employees are not eligible for NECCOG fringe benefits

described in this handbook, except as granted on occasion, or to the extent required by state and/or federal laws.

Exempt: Employees who are exempt as either executive, administrative, or professional employees and are not subject to overtime provisions under the Fair Labor Standards Act ("FLSA") and /or Connecticut Wage and Hour statutes and regulations.

Nonexempt: Employees who are compensated hourly and are eligible for overtime as provided in the FLSA and/or Connecticut Wage and Hour statutes and regulations.

Reemployment Status: The status of an employee who leaves NECCOG on good terms only (i.e. leaves voluntarily, gives two weeks' notice, works fully through the last two weeks, is not terminated, etc.) and later seeks re-employment with NECCOG. The anniversary date of a reemployment individual is the first day the employee reports to work pursuant to the reemployment.

Regular Full-Time: An employee who is not in a temporary or introductory status and who is regularly scheduled to work between thirty-five (35) and forty (40) hours per week and maintains continuous regular employment. Regular full-time employees are eligible for NECCOG fringe benefits, as described in this Handbook.

Regular Part-Time: An employee who is not in a temporary or introductory status and who is regularly scheduled to work between twenty (20) hour and thirty-five (35) per week and maintains continuous employment. Regular Part-Time employees are not eligible for NECCOG fringe benefits described in this Handbook, except as specifically stated in this Handbook or to the extent required by state and/or federal laws.

Temporary: Any employee hired for a specific period of time or for the completion of a specific project or job assignment. The job assignment, work schedule, and duration of the position will be determined on an individual basis. Temporary employees are generally not eligible for benefits described in this Handbook, except as granted on occasion, or to the extent required by provision of state and/or federal laws. Seasonal employees and summer help are considered temporary employees. Those temporary employees who qualify as "nonexempt" (see definition set forth above) and who work more than forty (40) hours during any work week will receive overtime pay.

Anniversary Date: The first day you report to work is your "official" anniversary date. Your anniversary date is used to compute various conditions and benefits described in this Handbook.

Re-employment: The status of an employee who leaves NECCOG on good terms only (i.e., leaves voluntarily, gives two (2) week's notice, works fully through the last two (2) weeks, is not terminated, etc.) and later seeks re-employment with NECCOG.

Confidentiality

As an employee of NECCOG, you have access to business-related confidential information of NECCOG. Confidential information includes financial and operating data of NECCOG. Confidentiality is to be observed and respected at all times. Your obligation to maintain confidentiality continues even after your employment ends. Documents containing confidential information are not to be copied, removed from the office or used for your own purposes without NECCOG's permission.

You must not discuss or reveal business-related confidential information except when such disclosure is made as part of your normal duties. If you are questioned by someone outside NECCOG and you are concerned about the appropriateness of giving him or her certain information, remember that you

are not required to answer. Instead, as politely as possible, refer the question to the Executive Director and/or his/her designee.

This policy is not intended to restrict an employee's rights under state and/or federal law.

Disposal of Confidential Material. In an effort to protect the Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments, the privacy of our residents, and to reduce the risk of fraud and identify theft, NECCOG requires that confidential documents, including, but not limited to, files or any document that references a resident, payroll documentation, Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments financial statements, consumer reports and sensitive information derived from consumer reports, be disposed of by shredding.

Conflict of Interest

This policy applies to all employees of NECCOG, without exception. This policy is important to NECCOG and should be taken seriously by all employees. Non-compliance or violation of these standards will not be accepted or tolerated, and will lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

1. During their employment, employees will not participate, directly or indirectly, in any other business activity that will interfere in any way with their ability to perform their duties and responsibilities at NECCOG without prior approval, regardless of whether such activity is pursued for profit, gain or other pecuniary advantage.
2. **Outside Employment:** An employee may engage in additional employment provided such employment does not interfere with the proper and effective performance of the duties of his/her position with NECCOG or result in a conflict of interest. If your financial situation requires you to hold a second job, part-time or full-time, or if you intend to engage in a business enterprise of your own, we would like to know about it. Please consult the Executive Director and/or his/her designee if you are unsure whether a situation might involve a conflict of interest.
3. All employees will be judged by the same performance standards and subject to NECCOG's scheduling demands regardless of any existing outside work requirements or interests. If NECCOG determines that an employee's outside work or activities interfere with his/her performance or ability to meet the requirements of NECCOG as they are modified from time to time, the employee may be asked to terminate his/her outside employment if he/she wishes to remain with NECCOG.
4. All employees have a responsibility to protect and safeguard NECCOG's assets against loss, theft and misuse. NECCOG assets include not only cash, but also physical articles such as computers, vehicles, tools, office supplies etc. NECCOG equipment, supplies and facilities are the sole property of NECCOG and, as such, may only be used for conducting NECCOG business or for other purposes expressly authorized by the Executive Director and/or his/her designee.
5. The following activities are prohibited, including, but not limited to:
 - Use of official position for personal gain, including the use of confidential information.
 - Performing outside work while on NECCOG time or premises.

- Use of NECCOG materials, resources, property or proprietary information for any non-NECCOG purpose.
6. **Gifts, Gratuities and Entertainment.** Employees may **not** provide and accept business amenities, such as advertising, promotional, or goodwill gifts (e.g., clothing, pens, mugs, calendars) of any value. It is acceptable for employees to participate in business-related functions, such as lunches or dinners. However, good judgment must be exercised regarding the cost, frequency and the intent to influence or appearance of being influenced.
 7. **Employment of Spouse and Relatives.** Hiring of spouse or other relatives as employees or consultants is permitted only with the knowledge and consent of the Executive Director and/or his/her designee. A spouse or other relative may not be placed in or accept a position involving a direct or indirect reporting relationship to the current employee.
 8. **Political Activity.** Employees who run for office, serve as a public official or campaign for a political candidate must do so on their own personal time. NECCOG assets and resources may not be used or deployed in support of personal political activity, nor will NECCOG reimburse employees for expenses incurred in support of personal political activity.
 9. **Disciplinary Action.** NECCOG is committed to operating according to the highest standards of business ethics and conduct. Employees have the responsibility to be alert and sensitive to actions by others that may be improper, unethical or illegal. If, or when, it appears that a fellow employee may be in violation of NECCOG's rules or regulations, employees have the obligation to bring that situation to his or her attention and, if not corrected, to the attention of the Executive Director and/or his/her designee.
 10. Keep in mind that while employees are encouraged to report known or suspected violations to NECCOG, information obtained through rumor or hearsay should be handled with care and good judgment.

Employment Applications

NECCOG relies upon the accuracy of information contained in the employment application and resume, as well as the accuracy of other data presented throughout the hiring process and employment. NECCOG may investigate references provided by an applicant. Any misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in any of this information or data may result in NECCOG's exclusion of the individual from further consideration for employment or if the person has been hired, termination of employment.

Employee Relations/Open Door Policy

Our employees have the freedom to speak for themselves and discuss their concerns, suggestions and problems with us. All employees should utilize NECCOG's Open Door Policy to raise all problems, complaints or concerns they may have regarding employment with NECCOG. NECCOG firmly believes we have much to offer and will continue to listen and endeavor to respond to the concerns and needs of our employees. If you have any questions, you are urged to talk with the Executive Director and/or his/her designee. NECCOG hopes that you take constructive advantage of this procedure. Employees will not be subjected to any form of discrimination or reprisal for identifying issues or raising a problem.

Equal Employment Opportunity

It is our policy to provide equal employment opportunity without regard to race, color, sex (including pregnancy and sexual harassment), sexual orientation, transgender status, gender identity or expression) age, genetic information, physical disability, religion, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, marital status, civil union status, veteran status, or any other criteria protected under applicable federal, state, or local law.

This policy applies to all areas of employment, including recruitment, advertising, hiring, training and development, classifying, referring, promotion, transfer, termination, layoff, compensation, and all other terms, conditions and privileges of employment in accordance with applicable federal, state or local laws.

Any employee that believes they are not being properly treated should contact the Executive Director and/or his/her designee (Finance Director) to initiate a complaint as soon as possible.

Immigration Law Compliance

NECCOG is committed to employing only persons who are authorized to work in the United States. NECCOG does not discriminate on the basis of citizenship or national origin. In compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility.

Former employees who are rehired must also complete the form if they have not completed an I-9 with NECCOG within the past three (3) years or if their previous I-9 has not been maintained or is no longer valid.

New Employees

Before an introductory employee can achieve regular status (see Employee Categories/Glossary of Employment Terms) you must meet two requirements:

1. You must successfully complete six (6) months of continuous, active employment; and
2. You must have successfully performed your duties and responsibilities during the six (6) month introductory period. Since this introductory period is an extension of the application/examination process, a determination of unsatisfactory performance is considered a failure to meet the basic job qualifications.

YOUR EMPLOYMENT CAN BE TERMINATED WITH OR WITHOUT CAUSE, DURING THIS SIX (6) MONTH PERIOD OR AT ANY OTHER TIME, AT EITHER YOUR OPTION, OR THE OPTION OF THE NORTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT NECCOG. Only the Executive Director and/or his/her designee has the authority to enter into agreements for employment for any specified period of time.

Orientation

Upon employment with NECCOG you will be given a copy of the Employee Handbook. NECCOG requires that you read this Employee Handbook. You need to complete employment and tax forms, learn about your date of eligibility for benefits, and discuss certain routines in the operation of NECCOG. NECCOG encourages you to ask questions and to take an active part in learning your new work environment.

Personnel Files

NECCOG maintains all your employee and payroll records. It is important to keep your personnel file up to date. Coverage or benefits that you and/or your family receive could be negatively affected if the information in your personnel file is incorrect. Please notify the Executive Director and/or his/her designee's office of any change(s) in the following items, as soon as possible:

- * Legal name
- * Home address
- * Home telephone number
- * Person to contact in case of emergency
- * Number of dependents
- * Marital status
- * Change of beneficiary
- * Military or draft status
- * Exemptions for your W-4 tax form
- * Driving record or status of driver's license and proof of insurance

Since NECCOG refers to your personnel file in connection with your employment, it is to your benefit to make sure your personnel file includes information concerning the completion of educational or training courses, work-related areas of interest, and skills that may or may not be part of your current position.

Personnel files are the property of NECCOG, and access to the information they contain is restricted. Generally, only the Executive Director and/or his/her designee are allowed to review information in a personnel file. Information provided to outside agencies (e.g., credit agencies, potential employers) is limited to name, title, and dates of employment. No other information will be released unless the employee or former employee has given written permission for release or unless NECCOG is required to disclose such information by law.

Employees who wish to obtain a copy of or review their file must submit a written request to the Executive Director and/or his/her designee may review their personnel file in the presence of an individual appointed by NECCOG, within seven (7) working days of the written request.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA"). NECCOG shall comply with the rules and regulations promulgated under the HIPAA.

Workplace Assignments

NECCOG attempts to assign employees to their regular job responsibility/work assignment. However, illness, absence, vacation, or other circumstances may make it necessary to assign an employee to a job other than his or her customary one.

Workplace Harassment Policy

NECCOG depends upon a work environment of tolerance and respect. Workplace harassment including, but not limited to, verbal slurs, negative stereotyping, overt hostility and the distribution of written or graphic material intended to attack someone based on their race, color, sex, age, disability, religion, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, marital status, or sexual orientation is prohibited.

NECCOG will respond promptly to complaints of workplace harassment and where it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to put an end to the conduct and take any action necessary, including discipline where appropriate.

While this policy sets forth our goals of having a workplace that is free of any form of harassment, the policy is not designed or intended to limit our authority to take disciplinary or remedial action for workplace conduct that we consider unacceptable, regardless of whether that conduct satisfies the definition of workplace harassment.

1. Sexual Harassment:

Sexual harassment is a form of workplace harassment which adversely affects the employment relationship. Sexual harassment of employees occurring in the workplace or in other settings in which individuals of NECCOG may find themselves is prohibited by state and federal law. The law also prohibits sexual or other forms of harassment by or against any vendor, customer or member of the general public.

Definition of Sexual Harassment Sexual harassment refers to behavior that is not welcome by the individual, is personally offensive to him/her and interferes with the ability of the individual to work effectively. The following are some examples of conduct which, if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment depending upon the totality of the circumstances, including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness:

- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature;
- Use of sexually degrading words;
- Jokes or language of a sexual nature;
- Conversation or gossip with sexual overtones;
- Obscene or suggestive gestures or sounds;
- Sexually-oriented teasing;
- Inquiries into one's sexual experiences;
- Verbal comments of a sexual nature about an individual's appearance or sexual terms used to describe an individual;
- Discussion of one's sexual activities;
- Comments, jokes or threats directed at a person because of his/her sexual preference;
- Unwelcome and repeated invitations (for lunch, dinner, drinks, dates, sexual relations);

- Physical contact such as touching, hugging, kissing, stroking, fondling, patting, pinching or repeated brushing up against another's body;
- Demands or requests for sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning an individual's employment status or promises of preferential treatment;
- Deliberate bumping, cornering, mauling, grabbing;
- Assaults, molestations or coerced sexual acts;
- Posting or distributing sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons or other materials;
- Sexually-oriented letters or notes;
- Sending offensive or discriminatory messages or materials through the use of electronic communications (e.g., electronic mail, including the Internet, voice mail and facsimile) which contain overt sexual language, sexual implications or innuendo, or comments that offensively address someone's sexual orientation;
- Staring at parts of a person's body;
- Sexually suggestive gestures, leering; and

Keep in mind that:

- A man and/or a woman may be either the victim of sexual harassment and/or the harasser;
- The harasser does not have to be the victim's supervisor;
- The victim does not have to be of the opposite sex from the harasser; and
- The victim does not have to be the person at whom the unwelcome sexual conduct is directed. The victim may be someone who is affected by the conduct, even when it is directed toward a third person, if the conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment for the person or interferes with the person's work performance.

The Rule: It is against the policies of NECCOG for any individual, male or female, to harass another individual sexually, by making unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other uninvited verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

2. Individual Responsibilities for Preventing Workplace Harassment

Each individual of NECCOG is personally responsible for:

- Ensuring that his/her conduct does not harass any other person with whom he/she comes in contact on the job, such as a vendor, customer, or member of the general public;
- Cooperating in any investigation of alleged harassment by providing any information he/she possesses concerning the matter being investigated;
- Actively participating in efforts to prevent and eliminate harassment and to maintain a working environment free from such discrimination;

- Ensuring that an individual who files a harassment claim or cooperates in an investigation may do so without fear of retaliation or reprisal;

Any individual who believes he/she has been the subject of any form of harassment may object directly to the individual about the offensive nature of the conduct or action or bring the alleged incident or situation to the attention of EEO Grievance Officer or the alternate Grievance Officer.

3. Violation of Policy

Retaliation against an individual for filing a complaint of workplace harassment or cooperating in an investigation of a complaint is against the law. NECCOG will take appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination, against employees who retaliate against those who object to or report harassment or participate in an investigation.

4. Procedures for Complaints

- a. NECCOG has designated the Executive Director and/or his/her designee (Finance Director) as the EEO Grievance Officer. If any employee believes he/she has been subjected to workplace harassment, the individual should initiate a complaint by contacting the EEO Grievance Officer as soon as possible. The individual should file the complaint promptly following any incident of alleged harassment. The longer the period of time between the event giving rise to the complaint and the filing, the more difficult it will be for NECCOG to reconstruct what occurred. The individual may be requested to write out his/her complaint to document the charge.

If the individual is uncomfortable contacting the EEO Grievance Officer for any reason, the individual may contact the Chair of NECCOG.

- b. Upon receipt of the complaint, the EEO Grievance Officer or the alternate EEO Grievance Officer will promptly conduct an investigation into the matter. The charged individual will be asked to respond to the complaint. Additional investigation will be made to the extent appropriate in each case. If, after the completion of this investigation, it is determined that there is reasonable cause for finding a violation of this policy, NECCOG will notify the complainant and the charged individual of the finding verbally. This process will be confidential to the extent consistent with an effective investigation, subject to the business needs of NECCOG.
- c. After the investigation has been concluded, NECCOG will make a final decision. If NECCOG finds that the investigation substantiates the allegations in the complaint, NECCOG will discipline the charged individual. Disciplinary action will be appropriate to the offense and may include termination. The complainant may be notified in writing of the disposition of the investigation.

ANY QUESTIONS ON THIS POLICY SHOULD BE REFERRED TO THE EEO GRIEVANCE OFFICER OR THE ALTERNATE EEO GRIEVANCE OFFICER

Workplace Violence Policy

NECCOG seeks to have a workplace free of violence and the threat of violence. **THERE WILL BE ZERO TOLERANCE OF ACTS OR THREATS OF VIOLENCE IN OUR WORKPLACE BY EMPLOYEES, CUSTOMERS, THE GENERAL PUBLIC, AND/OR ANYONE WHO CONDUCTS**

BUSINESS WITH NECCOG. It is the intent of NECCOG to provide a workplace which is free from physical attacks, harassment, property crimes, threats, or any other violent act(s).

NECCOG has developed the following procedures and principles with regard to violence in the workplace. Each employee must familiarize him or herself with these policies and regulations in order to achieve the goals of NECCOG in this regard.

1. Definitions:

a. For this policy "Acts of violence" or "threats of violence" are defined as:

- i. Any act of physical violence including, but not limited to, pushing, shoving, punching, striking, pinching, biting, kicking, wrestling, slapping, or any other aggressive or unsolicited unwanted contact between two parties. By their nature, physical attacks often involve breaking criminal laws.
- ii. A threat of immediate or future harm, made seriously or in jest, whether orally, in writing or by an employee's conduct or physical gesturing.
- iii. Any implied threat, made seriously or in jest, made either orally or by an employee's conduct or physical gesturing.
- iv. Harassment, often involving verbal abuse, including unwanted telephone calls, involves acts or language by a party that is designed to damage or harm another.
- v. Vulgar or obscene language, racial or ethnic slurs.
- vi. Threatening with a weapon, dangerous instrument or item construed to be or utilized as a weapon which may include but is not limited to firearms, models, replicas, or an object whose outline represents a firearm, knives, mace, bats, ammunition, clubs and other such items.
- vii. POSSESSION OF ANY WEAPONS OR DANGEROUS INSTRUMENTS BY AN EMPLOYEE DURING WORK HOURS AND/OR ON NECCOG PROPERTY IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN AND IS GROUNDS FOR DISCIPLINE UP TO AND INCLUDING TERMINATION.
- viii. Property crimes, including but not limited to sabotage, theft, abuse or destruction of NECCOG, customer or employee property, tools, or equipment;
- ix. The willful, malicious and repeated following of another person and/or the making of a credible threat with intent to place the other person in reasonable fear for his/her safety.

b. "Workplace" is defined as ALL of NECCOG's property and even locations where an employee is assigned if not on NECCOG property.

2. Reporting Procedure:

- a. All personnel are responsible for immediately notifying the Executive Director and/or his/her designee of any threats which they have experienced or observed.
- b. Call 911 (or 9-911) if you believe there is an immediate emergency.

- c. Employees may sometimes be involved in personal disputes with family members, neighbors, etc. that can sometimes escalate to the point where injunctions, restraining orders, and other court orders are sometimes sought. We request that employees include their work location as well as their residence in the order. We suggest that the employee inform the Executive Director and/or his/her designee of the issuance of such an order and provide a description of the individual cited in the order. Even in the case where an employee has not secured a court order but fears for his or her safety, we request that the employee notify the police department immediately, and inform the Executive Director and/or his/her designee soon as practicable.
- d. NECCOG (Police and/or Management, as appropriate) will assess and investigate the incident. In situations involving weapons, or in situations where the threat of bodily harm is immediate and readily apparent, the Executive Director and/or his/her designee may suspend the individual(s) in question and provide a written summary of the incident to the Executive Director and/or his/her designee for further action. Each incident of violent behavior, whether the incident is committed by another employee or an external individual such as a customer, vendor or member of the general public, must be reported. Final disciplinary action, if any, up to and including termination, will be determined pending completion of the investigation.
- e. E. In situations involving physical altercations or weapons, the Executive Director and/or his/her designee may request the aid and presence of police personnel.

3. Discipline

- a. After each incident is evaluated a proper remedy will be provided based upon the nature of the offense, duration, totality of the circumstances and past offenses. Remedies could range from an oral reprimand to suspension or immediate termination depending upon the severity of the offense. The employee may be subject to criminal charges and penalties.
- b. Incidents involving weapons or other dangerous instruments are grounds for immediate disciplinary action up to including termination from employment.
- c. Any employee who acts in good faith by reporting real or implied violent behavior will not be subjected to any form of retaliation or harassment. Any action of this type, i.e., retaliation or harassment, resulting from a report of violence must be reported to the Executive Director and/or his/her designee for investigation and decision regarding proper action and sanction. Conversely, false or malicious reporting will also result in investigation and appropriate sanction.

4. Prevention

Prevention efforts include, but are not limited to, informing employees of this policy, instructing employees regarding the dangers of workplace violence, communicating the sanctions imposed for violating this policy, and providing a reporting system within which to report incidents of violence without fear of reprisal.

Benefits

Eligible employees at NECCOG are provided a wide range of benefits. A number of the programs (such as Social Security, workers' compensation, state disability, and unemployment insurance) cover all employees in the manner prescribed by law. Eligibility for other benefits is dependent upon a variety of factors, including the employee's classification. The Executive Director and/or his/her designee's Office can identify the programs for which you are or will be eligible.

Details of many of these programs can be found elsewhere in the Employee Handbook and should be carefully reviewed. A package describing each of the offered benefits, in detail, will be provided to each new employee. It is then the employee's responsibility to initiate enrollment in those plans he or she selects.

Health Insurance

NECCOG provides comprehensive group medical insurance and life insurance plans to eligible employees who have completed three (3) months of employment. The cost of coverage is shared by the employee and NECCOG. Coverage is subject to change or elimination, without notice, at NECCOG's discretion. Employees who elect coverage are required to contribute their portion of the premium cost through automatic payroll deduction on a weekly basis. If an employee desires insurance for his or her dependents, the additional premium is deducted through payroll as well.

A detailed explanation of all benefits, limitations, and provisions is provided in separate booklets with which you will be provided. If you have any questions about the plan, contact the Executive Director and/or his/her designee.

Insurance Benefits Continuation (COBRA)

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA) requires that most employers sponsoring group health plans offer employees and their families the opportunity for a temporary extension of health coverage (called "continuation coverage") at group rates in certain instances where coverage under the plan would otherwise end. This notice is intended to inform you, in a summary fashion, of your rights and obligations under the continuation coverage provisions of that law.

If you are an employee of NECCOG and are covered by NECCOG's group health insurance plan (the "Plan"), you have a right to choose this continuation coverage if you lose your group health coverage because your hours of employment are reduced or your employment ends for any reason other than your gross misconduct.

If you are the spouse of an employee covered by the Plan, you will become a qualified beneficiary if you lose your coverage under the Plan because any of the following qualifying events happen:

1. Your spouse dies.
2. Your spouse's hours of employment are reduced.
3. Your spouse's employment ends for any reason other than his or her gross misconduct.
4. You become divorced or legally separated from your spouse.

5. Your spouse becomes eligible for Medicare benefits (under Part A, Part B, or both).

Your dependent children will become qualified beneficiaries if they lose coverage under the Plan because any of the following qualifying events happen:

1. The parent-employee dies.
2. The parent-employee's hours of employment are reduced.
3. The parent-employee's employment ends for any reason other than his or her gross misconduct.
4. The parents become divorced or legally separated.
5. A parent-employee becomes eligible for Medicare benefits (under Part A, Part B, or both).
6. The child stops being eligible for coverage under the plan as a "dependent child."

UNDER THE LAW, THE EMPLOYEE OR A FAMILY MEMBER HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO INFORM THE PLAN ADMINISTRATOR OF A DIVORCE, LEGAL SEPARATION, OR A CHILD LOSING DEPENDENT STATUS UNDER THE PLAN WITHIN 60 DAYS AFTER THE QUALIFYING EVENT OCCURS. NECCOG HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO NOTIFY THE PLAN ADMINISTRATOR OF THE EMPLOYEE'S DEATH, TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT, REDUCTION IN HOURS, COMMENCEMENT OF PROCEEDING IN BANKRUPTCY WITH RESPECT TO THE EMPLOYER, OR THE EMPLOYEE BECOMING ELIGIBLE FOR MEDICARE BENEFITS (UNDER PART A, PART B OR BOTH).

When the Executive Director and/or his/her designee is notified that one of these events has happened, he or she will, in turn, notify you that you have the right to choose continuation coverage. Each qualified beneficiary will have an independent right to elect COBRA continuation coverage. Under the law you have at least sixty (60) days from the date you would lose coverage, due to one of the qualifying events described above, to inform the Plan Administrator that you want continuation coverage.

If you do not choose continuation coverage, your group health insurance coverage will end.

If you choose continuation coverage, NECCOG is required to give you coverage which, as of the time coverage is provided, is identical to the coverage provided under the plan to similarly situated employees or family members.

COBRA continuation is a temporary continuation of coverage. When the qualifying event is the death of the employee, the employee's becoming entitled to Medicare benefits (under Part A, Part B, or both), your divorce or legal separation, or a dependent child losing eligibility as a dependent child, COBRA continuation coverage lasts for up to a total of thirty-six (36) months. When the qualifying event is the end of employment or reduction of the employee's hours of employment, and the employee became entitled to Medicare benefits less than eighteen (18) months before the qualifying event, COBRA continuation coverage for qualified beneficiaries other than the employee lasts 36 months after the date of Medicare entitlement. For example, if a covered employee becomes entitled to Medicare eight (8) months before the date on which his employment terminates, COBRA continuation for his spouse and children can last up to thirty-six (36) months after the date of Medicare entitlement, which is equal to twenty-eight (28) months after the date of the qualifying event (thirty-six (36) months minus eight (8) months). Otherwise, when the qualifying event is the end of employment or reduction of the employee's hours of employment COBRA continuation coverage generally lasts for only up to a total of eighteen (18) months. There are two (2) ways in which this eighteen (18) month period of COBRA continuation coverage can be extended.

An additional eleven (11) months may be available to a covered employee and an enrolled dependent who is determined to be disabled under Title II or Title XVI of the Social Security Act at the time he or she becomes eligible for extended continuation coverage under COBRA; or becomes disabled at any time during the first sixty (60) days of COBRA continuation coverage. The covered employee or enrolled dependent must provide notice of the disability determination to the Plan Administrator not later than sixty (60) days after the date of the Social Security Administration's determination, and before the end of the initial eighteen (18) months of COBRA continuation coverage.

If it is determined that the member is no longer disabled, the extended continuation of coverage period can be terminated on the first of the month following thirty (30) days after the final determination notice.

However, the law also provides that your continuation coverage may be cut short for any of the following four reasons:

1. NECCOG no longer provides group health coverage to any of its employees.
2. The premium for your continuation coverage is not paid.
3. You become eligible for benefits under another group health plan as a result of employment, re-employment, or marriage, except when the new plan contains any exclusion or limitation relating to any pre-existing condition.
4. You become eligible for Medicare.

You do not have to show that you are insurable to choose continuation coverage. However, under the law you may have to pay all or part of the premium for your continuation coverage.

The law also says that, at the end of the eighteen (18) months or three (3) year continuation coverage period, you must be allowed to enroll in an individual conversion health plan provided under the Plan.

NECCOG reserves the right to charge an administrative fee of two percent (2%) for COBRA enrollees.

There may be other coverage options for you and your family. When key parts of the health care law take effect, you'll be able to buy coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplace. In the Marketplace, you could be eligible for a new kind of tax credit that lowers your monthly premiums right away, and you can see what your premium, deductibles, and out-of-pocket costs will be before you make a decision to enroll. Being eligible for COBRA does not limit your eligibility for coverage for a tax credit through the Marketplace. Additionally, you may qualify for a special enrollment opportunity for another group health plan for which you are eligible (such as a spouse's plan), even if the plan generally does not accept late enrollees, if you request enrollment within 30 days.

If you have any questions about the law, please contact the Executive Director and/or his/her designee. Also, if you have changed marital status or you or your spouse has changed your address please notify the Executive Director and/or his/her designee.

For more information about your rights under ERISA, including COBRA, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and other laws affecting group health plans, contact the nearest Regional or District Office of the U.S. Department of Labor's Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) in your area or visit the EBSA website at www.dol.gov/ebsa.

Section 125 Plan (FSA)/Cafeteria Plan

NECCOG offers a pre-tax contribution option for employees. This employee benefit is known as a Section 125 Plan. A Section 125 Plan is a benefit which allows you to make defer a portion of your weekly pay, on a pre-tax rather than an after tax basis, to pay for medical and dental insurance premiums. This means your total deferral is deducted from your gross pay prior to the calculation of payroll taxes.

To participate in this plan, you simply need to complete an election form and return it to the Executive Director and/or his/her designee.

Once you have signed the Section 125 form, you may not make any changes to your pre-tax contributions until the following January 1st, unless the change which you elect is a result of a change in family status (such as marriage, divorce, death of a spouse or child, birth or adoption of a child or termination of employment of your spouse). A change in election due to a change in family status will be effective the next pay period.

Workers' Compensation Insurance

The purpose of the workers' compensation law is to provide financial assistance to you if you are injured on the job. On-the-job injuries are covered by Workers' Compensation insurance. How much you will be paid, for how long, and when benefits become payable may vary. While absent from work on Workers' Compensation, the employee will not continue to accumulate paid leave or accrue seniority.

If Workers' Compensation benefits are awarded, they are coordinated with and not paid in addition to other NECCOG benefits.

Neither NECCOG nor the insurance carrier will be liable for the payment of Workers' Compensation benefits for injuries that occur during an employee's voluntary participation in any off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activity sponsored by NECCOG, or during an employee's employment by another Employer.

It is the responsibility of the employee to immediately notify the Executive Director and/or his/her designee when injured or taken ill during working hours.

NECCOG reserves the right to place employees on medical leave as set forth in the section on Unpaid Leave Time. A worker's compensation leave of absence will be designated as FMLA leave provided the reason for the absence is due to a qualifying serious illness or injury. Time off taken for a qualifying illness or injury will be counted against an employee's applicable FMLA entitlement to job-protected FMLA leave.

457 Deferred Compensation Plan

NECCOG has established a 457 Deferred Compensation Retirement Plan for its employees. A complete description of the plan describing the benefits, eligibility requirements, and NECCOG's and employee's responsibilities will be provided to each new employee. It is the employee's responsibility to initiate enrollment. NECCOG reserves the right to discontinue this plan or to adopt an alternative plan.

Travel/Expense Reimbursement

NECCOG will reimburse employees for authorized business and/or travel expenses. In order to receive reimbursement, employees must have the Executive Director and/or his/her designee's prior written authorization and must submit a Travel Expense Statement accompanied by receipts and approved by the proper authority. Employees should submit their Travel Expense Statement each week, as the authorized reimbursable expenses are incurred.

Employees using their personal vehicle while conducting NECCOG business will be reimbursed at NECCOG's current approved rate per mile.

Insurance Coverage. Employees are required to maintain adequate automobile insurance coverage when utilizing privately owned or rental vehicles for NECCOG business.

Education/Training

From time to time, NECCOG may arrange for full time employees to attend both formal and informal training programs. All or a portion of the expenses for off-premises training will be paid for by NECCOG depending on the nature of the course. Please contact the Executive Director and/or his/her designee for details.

If you become aware of a particular seminar that you believe is appropriate for enhancing your skills (and/or those of other employees), please bring it to the attention of the Executive Director and/or his/her designee.

Paid Leave Time

Time off, except in the case of emergency, must be requested in writing. *It should not be assumed* that completing the request form automatically means that it will be granted. The needs of NECCOG, specifically, proper staffing, must come first. To request time off an employee must complete a "Request for Time Off" form and give it to the Executive Director and/or his/her designee for review, approval and signature.

Paid time off will not be counted as hours worked for the purposes of determining overtime.

The smallest unit of time an employee may request off is one-half day.

Bereavement Leave

Employees who wish to take time off due to the death of an immediate family member should notify the Executive Director and/or his/her designee immediately. Up to three (3) consecutive days of paid bereavement leave will be provided to eligible employees in order for them to attend the funeral or memorial service. Bereavement Leave is intended for the convenience of the bereaved to complete necessary arrangements, not guaranteed time off.

For purposes of this policy, NECCOG defines "immediate family" as the employee's spouse, partner, parent, stepparent, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, child, stepchild, brother, sister, niece, nephew, grandchild or grandparent.

Holidays

Regular full-time and regular part-time employees (See Glossary of Employment Terms) shall receive the following paid holidays:

Independence Day	Christmas Day
Labor Day	1/2 Day New Years Eve, if not on weekend
Columbus Day	New Years Day
Veterans' Day	Martin Luther King Day
Thanksgiving Day	Presidents Day
1/2 day prior to Thanksgiving	Good Friday
Day After Thanksgiving	Memorial Day
1/2 Day X-Mass Eve, if not on weekend	1/2 day prior Labor Day
1/2 day prior to Memorial Day	

Holiday pay is calculated based on the employee's straight-time pay rate (as of the day of the holiday) times the number of hours the employee would have otherwise worked on that day. All holidays are with pay.

If you are a regular full-time or regular part-time employee scheduled to work less than thirty-five (35) hours per week and the Holiday falls on you're regularly scheduled day off, you will not be eligible for holiday pay.

In order to be eligible for holiday pay, employees must have completed their six (6) month introductory period, must be on active payroll, and must have worked the last scheduled day before and the first scheduled day after a holiday. Employees are not eligible to receive holiday pay when on a paid or unpaid leave of absence.

If a holiday occurs during your scheduled vacation, you are permitted to take an extra day of vacation.

In addition to the above holidays, each employee is entitled to one floating holiday per year. The floating holiday may not be carried over to another year. Permanent part-time employees shall receive holidays with pay equivalent to one-half the amount accorded to full-time regular employees.

Jury Duty Leave

Full-time employees who regularly work thirty (30) or more hours per week and are required to report for jury duty, shall be entitled to leave with pay for scheduled work hours lost as the result of such service, up to a maximum of five (5) calendar days.

1. An employee who receives notice of jury duty must notify the Executive Director and/or his/her designee within forty-eight (48) hours of receipt of the jury summons in order that arrangements may be made to cover his or her position.
2. An employee serving on jury duty must present the official court documentation to the Finance Director and/or his/her designee which will thereafter arrange for remuneration.

Additional paid leave for jury duty may be approved, at the sole discretion of NECCOG.

Military Leave

The Employer will comply with its obligations under Federal and State Law.

Personal Leave

Each employee is provided three (3) personal days per employment year. Personal days may not be accumulated and must be requested in advance of the day sought to be taken off. Personal days may be used in either half-day or full-day segments.

Sick Leave

Regular full-time employees who successfully complete their introductory period will be eligible for sick leave on a prorated basis from the date of completion of their introductory period. Employees who have successfully completed their introductory period will receive a total of twelve (12) paid sick days per fiscal year. Part-time employees (See Glossary of Employment Terms) receive sick leave on a prorated basis. This policy also may be used if the employee is unable to work due to her or his own medical/dental appointments.

- ▶ The following basic guidelines for sick leave are observed by NECCOG:
- ▶ Sick leave benefits will be calculated based on the employee's straight time pay rate times the number of hours the employee would have otherwise worked that day.

- ▶ Employees shall be allowed to accumulate up to a maximum of thirty (30) sick days.
- ▶ Sick leave compensation will begin on the employee's first day of absence.
- ▶ Employees may be required to provide medical verification from a healthcare provider of an illness at any time.
- ▶ An employee, who is unable to report to work for any reason, must inform NECCOG as soon as possible, and, with the exception of emergency situations, is required to provide notice within one-half hour prior to the start of his/her assigned work day. Please call (860) 774-1253. The message should include the employee's name and the expected time of return. Failure to comply with the provision may result in denial of paid sick leave or disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Vacation

Regular full-time employees who are currently employed and on active status are eligible for vacation after successful completion of the introductory period. Regular part-time employees earn leave on a pro-rated basis. Employees may take their vacations at any time during the year, subject to their eligibility outlined herein and the operational needs of NECCOG. The amount of vacation varies with length of service.

<u>Completed Years of Service</u>	<u>Amount of Vacation</u>
Upon successful completion of the introductory period	5 days
One (1) to the completion of five (5) years	10 days
Six (6) to the completion of ten (10) years	15 days
More than ten (10) years	20 days

The following basic guidelines for vacations are observed by NECCOG:

- ▶ Time off for any reason during a working day will count against an employee's vacation leave in either half-day or full-day increments, as appropriate.
- ▶ Vacation time off is paid at the employee's hourly base rate. It does not include overtime.
- ▶ If a holiday occurs when an employee is on vacation, the employee shall be entitled to an additional vacation day.
- ▶ Scheduling of vacation periods must be arranged with the Executive Director and/or his/her designee. NECCOG reserves the right to deny a request based on the operational needs of NECCOG.
- ▶ Vacation time may not be accrued from one year to the next. Notwithstanding the foregoing, at the Executive Director and/or his/her designee's discretion, unused vacation may be either carried over or paid out to the employee at the end of the fiscal year in special circumstances.
- ▶ In the event an employee terminates his/her employment voluntarily, without cause, gives two (2) weeks notice, and has completed one (1) full year's service, he/she will be paid for any unused vacation time earned.

Family and Medical Leave

If you must cease work due to a medical condition, including pregnancy or pregnancy related conditions, you may be granted a reasonable leave of absence consistent with state and/or federal law. You shall be requested to use accrued but unused Vacation Time and Sick Time; otherwise this leave is unpaid. You must provide written medical verification from a healthcare provider before any leave will be granted, which must specify the reason for the leave and the amount of leave time needed. Consistent with state and/or federal law, NECCOG may require updated verification from your healthcare provider.

Leave of Absence

NECCOG, at the discretion of the Executive Director and/or his/her designee, may grant a leave of absence without pay in appropriate circumstances. A request for a leave of absence shall be made in writing to, and require prior approval of, NECCOG's Executive Director and/or his/her designee. NECCOG shall be notified not less than 30 days in advance. Vacation, sick leave and pension credits shall not be earned during leave without pay. Employees with less than one (1) year of service with NECCOG shall not be eligible for a leave of absence.

Other

Hours of Work

NECCOG has normal hours of operations which are Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Employee work schedules vary throughout NECCOG. NECCOG reserves the right to schedule hours to accommodate the organization's needs.

The employee's supervisor will advise the employee of his or her individual work schedule. Starting times and the length of the workday can vary depending upon employee classification, job, or department. Staffing needs and needs of the organization may necessitate variations in starting and ending times, as well as variations in the total hours that may be scheduled each day and week.

Lunch Periods

Lunch periods are scheduled depending on the needs of NECCOG, but are generally at Noontime. Your supervisor will assign your lunch period schedule. Every hourly employee is required to sign in and out for lunch, regardless of whether or not you leave the building. You are expected to take your full allotted time for lunch. You are requested not to perform any work during your regularly scheduled lunch period, unless specifically requested to do so. In that event, your lunch will be rescheduled or you will be paid for the time that you worked.

Overtime

If you are a non-exempt employee (see "Glossary of Employment Terms") and you perform overtime work, you will be paid one and one-half (1-1/2) times your regular hourly wage for all approved hours actually worked over forty (40) hours in a seven (7) day work cycle. Paid leave shall not be considered hours worked when calculating overtime pay.

All overtime must be approved in advance by your supervisor or the Executive Director and/or his/her designee.

NECCOG reserves the right to require overtime work and employees may not refuse overtime assignments. Failure to work scheduled overtime or overtime worked without prior authorization may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Pay Deductions

The law requires that NECCOG make certain deductions from every employee's compensation. Among these are applicable federal, state, and local income taxes. NECCOG also must deduct Social Security taxes on each employee's earnings up to a specified limit that is called the Social Security "wage base." NECCOG matches the amount of Social Security taxes paid by each employee.

NECCOG offers programs and benefits beyond those required by law. Eligible employees may voluntarily authorize deductions from their paychecks to cover the costs of participation in these programs.

If you have questions concerning why deductions were made from your paycheck or how they were calculated, the Executive Director and/or his/her designee can assist in having your questions answered.

Paycheck Errors

Every effort is made to avoid errors in an employee's paycheck. If an employee believes an error has been made, he or she must inform Executive Director and/or his/her designee immediately. Executive Director and/or his/her designee will take the necessary steps to research the problem and to assure that any necessary correction is made properly and promptly.

Pay Periods

NECCOG operates on a bimonthly pay period basis. Paychecks for NECCOG employees are issued three working days after the 15th day and final working day of each month. Each paycheck will include earnings for all work performed through the end of the previous payroll period. In the event that a regularly scheduled payday falls on a NECCOG day off, such as a holiday, employees will receive paychecks on the last day of work before the regularly scheduled payday.

Employees are encouraged to have pay directly deposited into their bank accounts. To do so, they must provide advance written authorization to NECCOG. Employees will receive an itemized statement of wages when NECCOG makes direct deposits.

Timekeeping

NECCOG wants to make sure that you are paid correctly every week. You may be required to input information into either an electronic or manual timecard (hereinafter "timecard"), or you may be required to punch a time clock. It is your responsibility to record your time accurately. The Attendance and Punctuality Policy described in this handbook must be adhered to.

Federal and State labor laws require that you maintain an accurate record of your working hours. You will do this using your timecard or by punching a time clock, as directed by your supervisor.

1. Record on/Punch your own Time Card/Sheet (and only yours) the days worked and the hours worked.
2. You must sign in at the beginning of a work period when you are prepared to work and out at the end of a work period. Lunch periods and time when an employee is away from his/her office/job assignment on business other than NECCOG business must be recorded in the same manner. The time away from the office should be listed as "other hours" on your Time Sheets with a reference below or a written explanation signed by your department head.
3. No one is allowed to punch the time clock for anyone else.
4. No one is allowed to enter time on another employee's electronic timecard.
5. If there is a problem with your time keeping, have your immediate supervisor or the Executive Director and/or his/her designee to correct the error immediately.
6. No one is to work overtime without authorization.

No one is permitted to work unless the work time is recorded. *There is no such thing as working "off the clock."*

If you falsify time records for yourself or another employee or work "off the clock," you may be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including, termination.

All time-sheets are due by the 10th of the next month. If you know that you will be away from work during the beginning of a month, you can work with the Finance Director and/or his/her designee to submit your timesheet earlier.

For salaried employees, your timesheet must account for all hours worked and indicate to which project the hours are allocated.

W-2 Forms

NECCOG will give you a W-2 Form no later than January 31st for the previous year. If you are no longer employed by us, NECCOG will mail it to your last known address. The form shows your total gross pay for the calendar year and the taxes deducted from it.

Rules and Regulations

Attendance and Punctuality

The success of NECCOG depends on your good attendance. Absenteeism detracts from our high quality of service and causes an unfair burden for those employees who must fill in for absent employees. Most people will be late or sick at one time or another, but when short-term absences become frequent, they often signal personal or job-related problems. In regard to attendance, you are expected to:

1. Notify your supervisor or the Executive Director and/or his/her designee as soon as possible if you are ill or unable to report to work for any reason. It is understood that emergencies do occur. However, you are generally expected to notify NECCOG within one-half (1/2) hour prior to the start of the first work day and each morning thereafter that you are unable to report to work. If you are unable to call personally, have a friend or relative call for you.
2. Avoid letting minor inconveniences keep you from performing your jobs. At the same time, good judgment should be used with respect to contagious ailments which might have an adverse effect on other employees.
3. Attend to personal affairs during non-working hours.
4. Be at your appointed workplace, ready to work, at the regular starting time and remain at said workplace and at work until the regularly scheduled ending time.

Medical Certification. NECCOG reserves the right to request written verification from a health care provider at any time. Moreover, an employee must obtain written approval to return to work from his/her healthcare provider for absences in excess of five (5) consecutive work days and/or if the absence was the result of one or more of the following conditions:

1. Surgery was performed.
2. You were confined to a hospital or other treatment facility.
3. You had a communicable disease.
4. You suffered a fracture or dislocation.
5. You suffered a muscle strain or a sprain.

Excused absences. The following are considered excused:

1. Absences because of illness - However, for absences of five (5) or more successive days, the absence will only be considered excused if the employee complies with the Medical Certification policy set forth above.
2. Absence approved by the Executive Director and/or his/her designee in advance.
3. Absence because of death in the immediate family (See Paid Leave Section for Bereavement Leave).

4. Absence or delayed arrival because of extreme weather conditions.
5. Absence or delayed arrival because of a bona fide personal emergency as determined by the Executive Director and/or his/her designee.
6. Absence because of a work-related injury.

The determination of whether or not an absence is excused will be made by the Executive Director and/or his/her designee after a review of all the circumstances related to the absence.

Excessive Absenteeism or Lateness. While there may be times when an absence or lateness is unavoidable, there are also times when absences or tardiness is unacceptable. You will be counseled regarding absenteeism or tardiness if NECCOG determines that you have not met its expectations. If the problems persist, you may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

The absence of an employee from work, including an absence for a single day, or portion of a day, that is not authorized, shall be deemed as absent without leave, unless otherwise prohibited by law. Excessive absenteeism, lateness or leaving early may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including, termination.

If you are absent for three (3) consecutive work days without notifying NECCOG, it is assumed that you have voluntarily abandoned your position with NECCOG and you will be removed from the payroll.

Communications Policy

This Communication Policy establishes the policies and procedures for the use of NECCOG electronic equipment and computers, as defined in the Policy, including but limited to, all computer hardware and software, Internet access, electronic mail (including the Internet), social media, telephone systems (including voice mail), cellular phones, handheld computers (e.g., iPads), cameras, facsimiles and scanners (collectively "Information Systems").

It is the policy of NECCOG to ensure effective business communications among all individuals within NECCOG and with others outside of NECCOG. It is important that all forms of communication, whether verbal, written or transmitted via NECCOG's Information Systems, promote an atmosphere of professionalism, courtesy and respect.

Violation of this Communication Policy may result in loss of access privileges and/or disciplinary action - up to and including termination of employment.

NECCOG Information Systems

NECCOG Information Systems are NECCOG-owned resources and are provided to employees to assist and facilitate NECCOG business communications. Employees are not allowed to use NECCOG Information Systems for personal use.

1. Users are responsible for using NECCOG Information Systems in an efficient, ethical, and lawful manner. Usage that conflicts with this policy is prohibited, and includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 2. Supporting commercial interests not related to the work of NECCOG.
 3. Intentionally introducing viruses, worms, Trojan horses or other malicious activity.

4. Tampering or interfering with the intended use of NECCOG Information Systems.
5. Engaging in any unauthorized activities that result in monetary charges to NECCOG.
6. Using NECCOG Information Systems to convey fraudulent, defamatory, harassing, obscene or threatening messages or material and/or any communications prohibited by law.
7. Intentionally bypassing spam filters or other security features on NECCOG's computers or the network.
8. Use of NECCOG Information Systems, including the Internet, to send (upload) or receive (download) copyrighted materials, trade secrets, proprietary financial information, or similar materials without prior authorization is prohibited.
9. Use of NECCOG Information Systems for peer-to-peer file sharing including, but not limited to, the exchange of music files.

NECCOG Communications

All communications regarding NECCOG policies, procedures and administration or which may affect NECCOG or its personnel as a whole, will either originate from or be approved by the Executive Director and/or his/her designee prior to distribution. No individual in NECCOG is to send or distribute any communication regarding NECCOG policies, procedures or administration to "All Personnel" or "All Users" without the authorization of the Executive Director and/or his/her designee. Within these guidelines, the Executive Director and/or his/her designee are authorized to send and/or distribute any communications regarding NECCOG business. Should an employee need to call any matter of interest related to NECCOG's business to the attention of "All Users," the employee must receive authorization from the Executive Director and/or his/her designee.

Electronic messages should be drafted with the same thought and care devoted to written or verbal communications. Employees should not transmit any form of communication that they would not be comfortable writing in a letter or memorandum. Good judgment must be exercised when using electronic communications. All individuals of NECCOG must adhere to the following, both while on NECCOG's premises and off-site, when using NECCOG Information Systems:

1. The following disclaimer should be incorporated into all outgoing e-mail:

"Please note: "The information contained in this e-mail and any attachments hereto are intended only for the personal and confidential use of the designated recipients. If the reader/recipient of this message is not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that you have received this e-mail and all attachments hereto in error and that any review, dissemination, distribution or copying of this e-mail or any of its attachments is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify the sender immediately by e-mail and destroy the original message received. Thank you."

2. Use of NECCOG Information Systems, in particular cellular phones, to discuss NECCOG-related information must be done with extreme caution so as to eliminate the possibility of a breach of confidentiality and/or the inadvertent disclosure of confidential information.
3. Use of NECCOG Information Systems, in particular e-mail and the Internet, to evaluate or offer feedback regarding an individual's work performance is prohibited. NECCOG Information Systems may be used for administrative purposes (e.g., scheduling reviews).

4. Use of NECCOG Information Systems, in particular e-mail and the Internet, to evaluate or offer feedback regarding a candidate's application for employment is prohibited. NECCOG Information Systems may be used for administrative purposes (e.g., scheduling reviews).

Use of Computers, Electronic Mail, and the Internet

It is NECCOG's policy to protect computer hardware, software, data, and business information from misuse, theft, unauthorized access, and environmental hazards. In addition to adhering to this policy, employees are expected to follow NECCOG Information Systems security procedures to safeguard NECCOG equipment and information. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Depending on the nature of the violation, action may also include civil or criminal prosecution under federal and/or state law.

1. Computers. Computers, computer files, and software furnished to employees are NECCOG's property intended for business use. Employees should have no expectation of privacy when utilizing computers including, but not limited to, the internet and e-mail, which may be subject to monitoring by the Employer. This includes communications sent or received with NECCOG's equipment even if the employee marks a file as "private" and/or attaches a password. All electronic messages are public records and are subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Since messages may be retained at different locations or levels of NECCOG's Information Systems, users must remember that their messages can be retrieved. Therefore, discretion is an important consideration when using electronic messages to send, record and/or retain communications. NECCOG has the right to access, and does access, information on its Information Systems at any time to monitor the use of the systems in accordance with all applicable federal and state laws, including Connecticut General Statute § 31-48d. In this regard, NECCOG may require from employees passwords to files that have been password protected. Employees are responsible for safeguarding their passwords, which should not be printed, stored on line, or given to others. Employees should not use a password, access a confidential file or retrieve any stored confidential communication without authorization. Moreover, use of another employee's password, without his/her authorization, to access information is prohibited. Further, employees are responsible for all transaction made using their passwords. The Information Systems shall not be used for the following purposes:
 - a. Downloading into the Information Systems any material that is copyrighted and/or programs you are not licensed to use.
 - b. Transmitting or distributing any software licensed to NECCOG.
 - c. Hacking into the Information Systems that you are not authorized to use.
 - d. Installing programs on any computer without the approval and/or assistance of a member of the technical staff.
 - e. Illegal activities, including but not limited to threats, harassment, sexual harassment, slander or defamation.
 - f. Transmitting or downloading obscene or suggestive messages or offensive graphic images.
 - g. Political endorsements.
 - h. Commercial activities (i.e., conducting a private business).
 - i. Use for personal gain.

- j. Copying electronic files without permission.
- k. Distributing NECCOG private and/or confidential information to unauthorized users (such as confidential personal and/or medical information).
- l. Electronic communications cannot be sent that attempt to hide the identity of the sender or represent the sender as someone else.
- m. Fundraising activities.
- n. Chain letters, lotteries, games, etc.

NECCOG recognizes that employees cannot control communications received through the Internet or emails and some communication may be received that are against this Policy. Employees should delete the items and contact person(s) sending the item(s) to inform them that such items are unacceptable. You should understand that certain violations of these rules, e.g., copyright violation, may also constitute a violation of state and/or federal law.

NECCOG purchases and licenses the use of various computer software for business purposes and does not own the copyright to this software or its related documentation. Unless authorized by the software developer, NECCOG does not have the right to reproduce such software for use on more than one computer.

Employees may only use software on local area networks or on multiple machines according to the software license agreement. NECCOG prohibits the illegal duplication of software and its related documentation.

Employees are responsible for the content of all text, audio or images that they place and/or send over the Internet and for ensuring that the Internet is used in an effective, ethical and lawful manner. The transmission or downloading of any sexually explicit materials including abusive, profane or offensive language and/or images is prohibited. All messages created, sent or retrieved over the Internet are the property of NECCOG and should be considered public information. NECCOG reserves the right to access and monitor all messages and files.

Unless permission is granted by the Executive Director and/or his/her designee, employees are not permitted to install or copy software on NECCOG equipment. Only software that is licensed to or owned by NECCOG is to be installed on NECCOG computers.

Employees should regularly (at a minimum of once a quarter) modify their passwords. Passwords should not be readily identifiable, but should be a combination of six (6) characters, i.e., letters and numerals. Do not share your password.

Use of Employee-Owned Computers and Equipment

There are many possible combinations of interaction among the software needed by the remote user and the average mix of programs on most home computers. Troubleshooting software and hardware conflicts can take many hours, and a complete reinstall of operating systems and application software is often the only remedy for problems. For these reasons, NECCOG will provide support for NECCOG-owned equipment and software only.

NECCOG will bear no responsibility if the installation or use of any NECCOG software on employee-owned computers causes system lockups, crashes, or complete or partial data loss on employee-owned equipment.

3. **Electronic Mail ("E-Mail").** Employees should be aware that e-mail is not private and messages can be retrieved even after they are deleted. Most e-mail systems instantly make back-up copies of files and copies may be easily retrieved by computer experts. The following are guidelines to follow when utilizing e-mail:

The e-mail system is not to be used in ways that are disruptive or offensive to others or in ways that could be harmful to workplace morale.

There shall be no display or transmission of sexually explicit images, messages, or cartoons, or any transmission and/or use of cartoons and/or e-mail communications containing ethnic slurs, racial epithets, or anything that may be construed as harassment and/or disparagement of others based on their race, color, sex (including pregnancy and sexual harassment), sexual orientation, transgender status, gender identity or expression) age, genetic information, physical disability, religion, national origin, ancestry, citizenships status, marital status, civil union status, veteran status, or any other criteria protected under applicable federal, state, or local law.

- a. The e-mail system should not be used to communicate with others regarding commercial, religious or political causes or for any other reasons that are not work-related.
 - b. All e-mail messages are records of NECCOG. NECCOG reserves the right to access and disclose all messages sent over its e-mail system for any purpose.
 - c. Employees should not attempt to gain access to another employee's personal file of e-mail messages without the employee's express permission. However, NECCOG reserves the right to enter an employee's e-mail files whenever there is a need to do so.
 - d. Employees must not initiate or propagate electronic chain mail, commercial mailings, or other mass mailings in violation of the CAN-SPAM Act of 2003.
 - e. All incoming and outgoing electronic mail messages must be deleted on an ongoing basis.
 - f. Employees should not accept, open or view e-mail from unknown persons or organizations. If an employee receives such e-mail, he or she should notify the Executive Director and/or his/her designee immediately to determine what action should be taken.
 - g. Any violation of NECCOG's policy on e-mail use will result in appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
4. **Internet Access.** Employees should not consider their use of the Internet to be private. NECCOG may implement software and/or systems that can monitor and record all Internet usage. Security systems are capable of recording (for each and every user) each World Wide Web site visit, each chat, news group or e-mail message and each file transfer into and out of our internal networks, and we reserve the right to do so at any time.

Additionally, NECCOG may utilize independently supplied software and data to identify inappropriate or sexually explicit Internet sites. NECCOG shall block access from within our networks to all such sites of which we are aware.

NECCOG reserves the right to inspect any and all files stored in private areas of our network and/or an employee's NECCOG provided computer in order to assure compliance with policy.

NECCOG's Internet facilities and computing resources must not be used knowingly to violate the laws and regulations of the United States or any other nation, or the laws and regulations of any state, city, province and/or other local jurisdiction in any way.

Any software or files downloaded via the Internet into NECCOG network and/or employee's NECCOG provided computer become the property of NECCOG. Unless specifically related to processing business transactions, file downloads from the Internet are not permitted unless specifically authorized in writing by the Executive Director and/or his/her designee.

Dress Code

As an employee you are also a representative of NECCOG in the eyes of the public. Therefore, it is important that you exercise good judgment and report to work properly groomed and wearing appropriate attire. It is expected and a necessary part of your job duties that you dress neatly and in a manner consistent with the nature of the work you are performing. Any employee who reports to work inappropriately dressed may be asked to leave and return properly groomed and attired. Attire should be conducive to a professional environment, maintain office decorum and enable the employee to interact with the public and fellow employees in a professional manner. When determining appropriate dress, employees are expected to consider, among other factors, the following:

- ▶ The nature of work;
- ▶ The nature of public contact, if any, and the normal expectations of the public;
- ▶ The safety considerations of the work environment (e.g., safety shoes, eye and ear protection, hard hats, high visibility safety-wear , etc.) Employees are required to wear proper safety equipment at all times, with no exceptions; and
- ▶ Whether the appearance is distracting or disrespectful of other employees.

Acceptable attire includes slacks with shirts and sweaters or jackets for men and dresses, slacks or skirts with shirts, sweaters or jackets for women. For all employees, tee shirts, tank or halter tops, athletic shorts, sweat pants or other clothing more suitable for a gym, and worn or tattered clothing, including shoes or sneakers are not acceptable. All clothing should be clean and without rips or holes. If your position entails outside work, closed toed or safety shoes should be worn as directed. Employees that are provided with a uniform are required to wear such uniform.

Drug and Alcohol Use

It is the policy of NECCOG that its residents and fellow employees have the absolute right to expect that persons employed by NECCOG will be free from the effects of drugs and alcohol. The Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments has the right to expect its employees to report to work fit and able for duty, and not impaired by drugs or alcohol.

Prescription Drugs. If job-related and consistent with business necessity, NECCOG may require employees who use a prescription drug that may affect their ability to perform the essential functions of their position to report to the Executive Director when they are taking such medications.

Drug Testing. Where NECCOG has reasonable suspicion to believe that a current employee (1) is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, which at that time, adversely affected or could adversely affect the employee's job performance or (2) has abused prescribed drugs; or has used illegal drugs, NECCOG may require the employee to submit to alcohol or drug testing. NECCOG also may conduct drug tests for individuals seeking employment (prior to the date of their hire) or upon promotion to another position within NECCOG.

NECCOG requires that an employee notify the Executive Director within five (5) days after a conviction of any criminal drug statute for a violation occurring outside the workplace.

Employees with questions on this policy or issues related to drug or alcohol use in the workplace should raise their concerns with the Executive Director.

Safety

NECCOG endeavors to provide safe working conditions for all employees, instructions concerning safe working methods, and to make available the necessary equipment required to protect employees against particular hazards. It is the obligation of each employee to observe the safety regulations, to use the safety equipment provided and to practice safety at all times.

Safety can only be achieved through teamwork. Each employee and management personnel must practice safety awareness by thinking defensively, anticipating unsafe situations, and reporting unsafe conditions immediately.

Please observe the following precautions:

1. Notify the Executive Director and/or his/her designee's Office of any emergency situation. If you are injured or become sick at work, no matter how slightly, you must inform the Executive Director and/or his/her designee's Office immediately.
2. Use, adjust, and repair machines and equipment only if you are trained and qualified.
3. Get help when lifting or pushing heavy objects.
4. Avoid overloading electrical outlets with too many appliances or machines.
5. Use flammable items, such as cleaning fluids, with caution.
6. Walk – don't run.
7. No Smoking in all buildings, grounds and working areas and all NECCOG vehicles.
8. Keep cabinet doors and file and desk drawers closed when not in use.
9. Avoid "horseplay" or practical jokes.
10. Start work on any equipment only after safety procedures and requirements have been explained (and you understand them).
11. Keep your work area clean and orderly, and the aisles clear.
12. Stack materials only to safe heights.
13. Watch out for the safety of fellow employees.
14. Use the right instrument for the job, and use it correctly.
15. Know the location of all alarms and fire extinguishers, and familiarize yourself with the proper procedure for using them, should the need arise. Know the locations, contents, and use of first aid equipment.
16. When you leave NECCOG's premises make sure that all entrances are properly locked and secured.

Reporting an Injury/OSHA

Federal law ("OSHA") requires that we maintain records of all recordable occupational injuries and/or illnesses which occur during the workday. The State of Connecticut Workers' Compensation Act also requires that you report any illness or injury on the job, no matter how slight. If you hurt yourself or become ill, please contact the Executive Director and/or his/her designee's Office for assistance. If you fail to report an injury, you may jeopardize your right to collect workers' compensation payments as well as health benefits.

Miscellaneous

Emergency Closings

At times, emergencies such as snow, fires, power failures, or hurricanes can disrupt NECCOG operations. In extreme cases, these circumstances may require the closing of NECCOG.

In the event that such an emergency occurs during non-working hours, the Executive Director and/or his/her designee will decide whether to open NECCOG or to delay opening. If NECCOG is open and developing weather conditions necessitate an early closing, the Executive Director and/or his/her designee will make the decision. No employee should leave for early closing unless directed to do so by the Executive Director and/or his/her designee.

If an employee is absent due to inclement weather when NECCOG is open, the employee will not be paid. An employee may elect to use paid time off for the time missed.

Good Housekeeping

Good work habits and a neat place to work are essential for job safety and efficiency. You are expected to keep your place of work neat and organized and materials in good order at all times. It is a required safety precaution. Easily accessible trash receptacles are located throughout the office. Please put all litter in the appropriate receptacles and containers. Always be aware of good health and safety standards, including fire and loss prevention.

Report anything that needs repair or replacement to your supervisor or department head immediately.

NECCOG Issued Cell Phones

Termination of Employment

Exit Interviews

NECCOG will generally schedule exit interviews at the time of employment termination. The exit interview will afford an opportunity to discuss such issues as employee benefits, conversion privileges, or return of NECCOG-owned property. Suggestions, complaints, and questions may also be voiced.

Resignation

Resignation is a voluntary act initiated by the employee to terminate employment with NECCOG. Employment at NECCOG is on an "at-will" basis. This means that either you or NECCOG may terminate your employment at any time. However, NECCOG requests at least two (2) weeks written resignation notice from all employees to remain an employee in good standing (i.e., leaves voluntarily, gives two (2) weeks notice, works fully through the last two (2) weeks, is not terminated, etc.).

Employees in good standing will be paid for accrued, but unused, vacation time in accordance with NECCOG's policies and/or pursuant to applicable state law.

Former employees seeking re-employment must have been in good standing at the time of their previous termination of employment in order to be considered. An employee who leaves his or her employment with NECCOG without prior notification will not be rehired.

Return of NECCOG Property

Any NECCOG property issued to you, keys, uniforms, this handbook, etc., must be returned to NECCOG at the time of your dismissal or resignation, or whenever it is requested by NECCOG. You are responsible for paying for any lost or damaged items if the loss or misconduct is due to your misconduct.

Unemployment Compensation

The purpose of unemployment compensation laws is to protect you and your family by providing financial assistance if you are out of work. How much you will be paid and for how long may vary according to current law and your particular situation.

To qualify for unemployment compensation, you must be out of work through no fault of your own (e.g., you were laid off) and actively looking for another job. If you were fired for cause or voluntarily quit, you may not be able to collect benefits. NECCOG pays the full cost of your unemployment compensation, and the government pays for the administrative cost.

Wages

Employees who are discharged by NECCOG will have their wages paid in full not later than the next succeeding business day after the employee's last day of employment. Employees who retire or resign will have their wages paid in full not later than the next regular pay day.

Unemployment Compensation

The purpose of unemployment compensation laws is to protect you and your family by providing financial assistance if you are out of work. How much you will be paid and for how long may vary according to current law and your particular situation. To qualify for unemployment compensation, you must be out of work through no fault of your own (e.g., you were laid off) and actively looking for another job. If you were fired for cause or voluntarily quit, you may not be able to collect benefits.

Confidentiality Statement

I hereby acknowledge, by my signature below, that I understand that Company records, including, but not limited to, financial information and data, to which I have knowledge and access, in the course of my employment with Company, are to be kept confidential, and this confidentiality is a term and condition of my employment. This information and any and all other information of a confidential nature shall not be disclosed to anyone under any circumstances, except to the extent necessary to fulfill my job requirements. I must first obtain the approval of the Executive Director and/or his/her designee before any disclosure is made.

I hereby agree to avoid any activity that results in a real or apparent conflict of interest. I will not accept any fee or payment from anyone seeking to do business with NECCOG. I will not take advantage of any business opportunity learned of at work, and I will not use confidential information for personal gain under any circumstances.

I understand and agree that any violation of this Agreement is grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Signature of Employee

Date

Employee's Printed Name

Executive Director and/or his/her designee

Receipt of Employee Handbook

I have this day received a copy of Northeastern Connecticut NECCOG of Governments' Employee Handbook, and I understand that I am responsible for reading the personnel policies and practices described within it. I understand that this Employee Handbook replaces any and all prior handbooks, policies and practices of Northeastern Connecticut NECCOG of Governments ("NECCOG"). I agree to abide by the policies and procedures contained herein. I acknowledge that this Employee Handbook is intended for my information and guidance.

NECCOG may amend or terminate at any time the practices, policies, plans and benefits described in this Employee Handbook as the need arises and experience dictates. Any changes will supersede the contents of this Employee Handbook.

I understand that neither this Employee Handbook nor any other written or verbal communication by a NECCOG representative is intended to, in any way, create a contract of employment. It is not an employment contract, either expressed or implied, and it does not guarantee any fixed terms or conditions of employment. I understand that my employment can be terminated, with or without cause, and with or without notice, at either my option or the option of NECCOG. Only the Executive Director and/or his/her designee has the authority to enter into agreements for employment for any specified period of time, or an agreement that is contrary to employment at will, and any such agreement must be in writing and signed by the Executive Director and/or his/her designee.

If I have any questions regarding the content or interpretation of this Employee Handbook, I will bring them to the attention of my Supervisor or the Executive Director and/or his/her designee.

Please sign and return this form to the Executive Director and/or his/her designee.

EMPLOYEE'S NAME

DATE

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE

ATTACHMENT L

Suisman Shapiro

Attorneys-At-Law

Eileen C. Duggan
Direct Dial: (860) 271-2241
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October 16, 2015

Matthew E. Auger

Raymond L. Baribeault, Jr.

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Jeanette M. Dostie

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Jeffrey W. Hill

Ryan W. Jaziri

Carolyn P. Kelly

Kristi D. Kelly

Robert B. Keville

Roger T. Scully

Matthew Shafner

Robert G. Tukey

In Memoriam

Andrew J. Brand

James F. Brennan

James J. Courtney

L. Patrick Gray, III

Michael V. Sage

Max M. Shapiro

Charles J. Suisman

Louis C. Wool

Of Counsel

Hinda K. Kimmel

Richard A. Schatz

Thomas B. Wilson

Russell Gray
Chair - Board of Directors
Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments
P.O. Box 759
Dayville, CT 06241

Re: Investigation of Complaint

Dear Mr. Gray:

I am writing as a follow up to the verbal complaint made to you by Sharon Aguiar in later July 2015. The complaint, in general, alleged that, during Mr. Aguiar's employment with NECCOG (and particularly while she served as a dispatcher in the front office), Executive Director John Filchak made comments or statements to her which she found to be verbally abusive, vulgar and/or intimidating. On July 21, 2015, you requested that our firm investigate the complaint. My investigation report, finding that no evidence of violation of NECCOG policy and/or state or federal law exists, and a letter to Ms. Aguiar regarding the completion of the investigation, are enclosed.

Of note, despite four attempts (beginning with a scheduled interview on July 23, 2015 and ending with a request to Ms. Aguiar's attorney on September 18, 2015) to meet with Ms. Aguiar in person, she did not participate in an in person interview and/or submit documentation in support of her complaint. In attempting to schedule an interview with Ms. Aguiar, I spoke briefly with her on two occasions, wherein she asserted that Mr. Filchak acted like a tyrant and that Mr. Filchak's behavior caused her to cry on more than one occasion and ultimately resulted in her request to transfer from dispatch back to transit/driving. Given the above, I completed the investigation without the benefit of significant involvement on Ms. Aguiar's part.

As described more fully in the enclosed investigation report, and on the basis of the information gathered through, for example, interviews, document review and policy and legal review, I have determined that Mr. Filchak's conduct in interacting with employees has violated neither NECCOG policy and/or the law. Nonetheless, given that Ms. Aguiar and one other employee expressed experiencing some difficulty in interactions with Mr. Filchak, I am recommending that these two employees meet separately with Mr. Filchak for a mediated

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Russell Gray
October 16, 2015
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discussion (utilizing either an attorney from my office or a clinician from an Employee Assistance Program as a facilitator), to assist in working on productive and positive lines of communication going forward. I trust that you are comfortable with this recommendation, and ask for your confirmation that I may proceed in coordinating the meetings.

Thank you for your patience as I completed the investigation, and please contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



Eileen C. Duggan

Enc: Investigation Report
Correspondence to Ms. Aguiar dated October 16, 2015

cc: John Filchak, Executive Director - NEECOG

Suisman Shapiro

Attorneys-At-Law

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Thomas B. Wilson

October 16, 2015

Sharon Aguiar
Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments
P.O. Box 759
Dayville, CT 06241

Re: Investigation of Complaint

Dear Ms. Aguiar:

I am writing as a follow up to the verbal complaint you made to NECCOG Board Chair Russell Gray in July 2015. The complaint, in general, alleges that, during your employment with NECCOG (and particularly while you served as a dispatcher in the front office), Executive Director John Filchak has made comments or statements to you which you have found to be verbally abusive, vulgar and/or intimidating. On July 21, 2015, Mr. Gray requested that our firm investigate your complaint.

While I spoke with you briefly on the telephone on two occasions, you did not participate in an in person interview or otherwise provide documentation to support your allegations. As a result, I completed the investigation without the benefit of significant involvement on your part. On the basis of the information gathered through, for example, interviews, document review, policy and legal review, I have determined that Mr. Filchak's conduct in interacting with employees has violated neither NECCOG policy and/or the law. Nonetheless, given that you have expressed that you have experienced difficulty in your interactions with Mr. Filchak, I am recommending that you and Mr. Filchak participate in a mediated discussion, utilizing either an attorney from my office or a clinician from an Employee Assistance Program as a facilitator, to assist in working on productive and positive lines of communication going forward. Please anticipate a follow up communication from me coordinating that mediated discussion.

It is important that employees are able to bring workplace concerns forward and have those concerns reviewed. In this case, I trust that you understand that

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Sharon Aguiar
October 16, 2015
Page 2 of 2

NECCOG has taken your complaint seriously, and attempted, as best possible under the circumstances, to investigate and resolve the same.

Sincerely,


Eileen C. Duggan

cc: Russell Gray, Chair – NECCOG Board of Directors

Investigation Report

October 16, 2015


Eileen Duggan
Suisman Shapiro, PC

I. Introduction

On or about July 21, 2015, Russell Gray, Chairman of the Board of the Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments ("NECCOG") received a verbal complaint from Sharon Aguiar. Ms. Aguiar, currently a bus driver with Northeastern Connecticut Transit District, asserted that John Filchak, Executive Director of NECCOG, had "harassed" her during her recent employment as a dispatcher with NECCOG¹. NECCOG determined it necessary to conduct an investigation into the alleged misconduct by Mr. Filchak. As my law firm serves as employment counsel for NECCOG, I conducted the investigation, focusing on whether the alleged conduct occurred and, if so, whether it violated any NECCOG policy and/or law.

II. NECCOG Policies and Legal Standards

NECCOG maintains written Personnel Policies which were last formally updated in 1997. Although the Policies are due for revision, the Policies contain a general statement prohibiting discrimination on the bases of protected class status as otherwise outlined in state and federal law. An environment is considered hostile or harassing under the law when, as a result of a protected class status (presumably gender in this case), the workplace is permeated with discriminatory intimidation, ridicule and insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter an individual's employment and create an abusive working environment.

In addition, the Policies provide a general statement on "demeanor", indicating that NECCOG "employees are expected to demonstrate and maintain a professional level of conduct at all times when representing the Council and in dealing in general with the general public and other employees."

III. Investigation Chronology

On July 21, 2015, Attorney Kristi Kelly (another attorney in my office) and I learned that a verbal complaint that had been lodged by Ms. Aguiar against Mr. Filchak, and that NECCOG requested that our firm investigate. As part of the investigation, I reviewed NECCOG's Personnel Policies, state and federal law regarding hostile work

¹ Ms. Aguiar was hired as a driver with Northeastern Connecticut Transit District on September 9, 2011; this position is part of a bargaining unit. She left Northeastern Connecticut Transit District to take a position as Dispatcher with NECCOG on October 31, 2014; this position is not part of a bargaining unit. In May 2015, Ms. Aguiar returned to the position of Driver with Northeastern Connecticut Transit District, with the same wage rate she earned as a Dispatcher (i.e., higher than a Driver), as well as the same seniority she held in the bargaining unit at the time she took the position as a Dispatcher.

environment, and documents provided to me by an interviewee, and took the following steps:

7/22/15 I spoke with Mr. Gray to obtain background information. Mr. Gray described Ms. Aguiar's complaint to allege that Mr. Filchak has used vulgar or inappropriate language in the workplace and/or has been verbally abusive to staff

7/22/15 I spoke briefly with Ms. Aguiar by telephone. During the conversation with Ms. Aguiar, I reviewed that NECCOG had requested that my firm investigate her complaint. Ms. Aguiar provided some additional information (e.g., she alleged that Mr. Filchak acted like a tyrant; Mr. Filchak's behavior caused her to cry on more than one occasion and ultimately resulted in her request to transfer from dispatch back to transit/driving). Ms. Aguiar and I scheduled an in-person interview for July 23, 2015, at 10 a.m. at NECCOG

Ms. Aguiar left me a voice mail message in the early evening stating that she appreciated my call earlier in the day, but that she was declining to be interviewed at that time

7/23/15 I met with Jennifer Cobb, Dispatcher

7/23/15 I met with Sam Alexander, Regional Project Analyst (Planning)

7/23/15 I met with Maureen Adams, Finance Director

7/23/15 I met with Dianne Collette, Director for Animal Services

7/23/15 I met with Katie Britt, Dispatcher

7/23/15 I met with John Filchak, Executive Director

7/27-7/31/15 Ms. Aguiar unavailable for interview/out of work

7/29/15 I met with Brianna Ford, Animal Control Officer

7/29/15 I met with Melissa Frink, Kennel Manager

7/29/15 I met with Rita Aguiar, Trap, Neuter and Return Director

7/29/15 I met with Jim Larkin, Associate Director

7/29/15 I met with John Filchak, Executive Director

- 8/3-8/7/15 Ms. Aguiar unavailable for interview/out of work**
- 8/5-8/7/15 Email Maureen Adams regarding return to work date for Ms. Aguiar for purposes of rescheduling interview; Ms. Adams anticipated Ms. Aguiar's return on 8/7/15 (Ms. Aguiar did not return on that date)**
- 8/8/15 & 8/13/15 Request via email and receive information from Maureen Adams regarding former employees identified by an interviewee as potentially having relevant information**
- 8/13/15 I spoke with Ms. Aguiar by telephone and scheduled an in-person interview for 8/17/15**
- 8/14/15 I received a voice mail message from Ms. Aguiar cancelling the interview on 8/17/15 and indicating that I would be contacted by her attorney**
- 8/19/15 I sent a letter to Ms. Aguiar indicating that I had not heard from her attorney and scheduling an interview on 9/11/15. See Attachment 1.**
- 8/27-9/25/15 Ms. Aguiar unavailable for interview/out of work**
- 9/11/15 I met with Chris Fafard, Animal Control Officer**
- 9/11/15 I met with Syl Pauley, Regional Engineer**
- 9/11/15 I met with John Filchak**
- 9/18/15 I spoke on the telephone with April Martin, former Dispatcher**
- 9/18/15 I sent a letter to Attorney Robert E. Scalise, identified as Ms. Aguiar's attorney in a CHRO complaint, to schedule an interview of Ms. Aguiar. I requested that Attorney Scalise respond to me on or before 9/23/15. I did not receive any response from Attorney Scalise. See Attachment 2.**

IV. Summary and Analysis of Information Gathered

In a typical investigation, the investigator receives a written complaint and/or interviews the complaining party in-depth to ensure a clear understanding of the nature of the allegations. Here, Ms. Aguiar refused and/or failed to participate in an in-depth interview. I have gleaned the nature of her complaint through a telephone discussion

with Mr. Gray to confirm that I would be investigating the allegations and two brief telephone discussions with Ms. Aguiar, where the focus was on scheduling an in-person interview. NECCOG is a relatively small employer, and allegations of misconduct against the Executive Director bear a particular urgency in addressing and resolving. As a result, I considered it important to investigate as thoroughly and efficiently as possible, anticipating throughout the process that Ms. Aguiar would ultimately meet with me and express her specific concerns. In the interest of maintaining Ms. Aguiar's anonymity as much as possible while also trying to understand whether Mr. Filchak engaged in behavior which could be deemed problematic or abusive to staff, I began each meeting with staff members (and prior staff member April Martin) by reciting the following:

I'm meeting with employees due to concerns raised to the Board of Directors regarding John Filchak's interactions with staff. More specifically, the Board Chair has been informed that Mr. Filchak at times uses vulgar or inappropriate language in the workplace or has been verbally abusive to staff.

I'm meeting with employees to get a better understanding of the work environment. I cannot tell you that everything you share will remain confidential, but I can tell you that your participation in this review cannot and will not serve as the basis for retaliatory conduct on the part of NECCOG. In other words, it is important that you be truthful and honest, with the understanding that your job cannot be impacted by what you share.

While I cannot be certain, the individuals I met and/or spoke with seemed at ease and willing to discuss the work environment at NECCOG, and in turn appeared credible. In general, no employee stated that Mr. Filchak swore or used vulgar language at them; no employee stated that Mr. Filchak called them names. Some employees indicated that Mr. Filchak swore at times, but none suggested that this was anything "regular" or "typical"; rather, on limited occasions, Mr. Filchak might swear out of frustration with a particular situation. Consistent with staff interviewed, Mr. Filchak stated that he does not swear or use vulgar language directed at anyone, and he acknowledged that on occasion he swears in the office. It is clear that Mr. Filchak, on limited occasions, has sworn in the office and has vented in this manner. I do not, however, find that this is frequent, demeaning to others in the office, takes away from the professional atmosphere in the office and/or otherwise violates NECCOG policy. To limit the behavior even further, I cautioned Mr. Filchak during the investigation to limit swearing in the office, and he agreed to make this effort.

The vast majority of employees generally described the work environment as good, and identified Mr. Filchak as approachable. Some stressed, when describing a workplace problem that may have cropped up with Mr. Filchak, that such a problem was an aberration, and that they had no issue with Mr. Filchak. A few noted that Mr. Filchak might retreat to his office if frustrated, stated that they knew it was best not to approach him at that point, and described that when Mr. Filchak then came out of his office he would be in a better or more positive mood.

Some noted that Mr. Filchak has strong or firm opinions regarding operations which may clash with those of other employees, with the result that some employees feel that he is not open to their ideas or input. A couple employees described Mr. Filchak's position on operational issues at times as "his way or the highway". Various employees described Ms. Aguiar as someone with strong opinions or ideas as to how to do things, that she frequently shared those opinions with Mr. Filchak, and that she might become frustrated or upset if Mr. Filchak chose not to accept her opinions.

A longtime employee described that over the course of an 11 year career, there have been a few instances where the employee has clashed with Mr. Filchak, causing the employee to cry, but nothing in the last couple years, at least. The employee stated that the employee had seen Ms. Aguiar cry on a couple occasions, but that Ms. Aguiar did not say why she was crying. The employee described that Mr. Filchak is strong minded regarding his opinions on operations, and that the employee rarely argues an operational issues with him anymore. The employee stated that Mr. Filchak has caused stress at times; the employee also acknowledged the employee's own performance issues, but felt that Mr. Filchak addressed performance issues more harshly with the employee than with others.

I provided this longtime employee with the opportunity to offer additional written information, which I have reviewed; the documentation included performance related information (e.g., investigation, fitness and/or discipline documents) as well as a list of prior employees who might have relevant information and/or who left due to issues with Mr. Filchak. The performance related documentation appears appropriate in tone, nature and content. The list of employees included three who left employment in 2005, two who left employment in 2007, and one who left in approximately 2009 and returned in 2015. Given the length of time that had passed since their employment, I did not attempt to contact those individuals who separated in 2005 and 2007, as I did not consider any information they might share to be relevant to allegations in 2015. I did meet with the employee who returned in 2015, and the employee indicated that the employee left previously for financial reasons and has no problems with Mr. Filchak. In addition, and given some suggestion that an employee, who had worked as a dispatcher, left employment in 2014 for reasons related to Mr. Filchak, I contacted that

former employee. The former employee clearly indicated she enjoyed her work, thought the world of Mr. Filchak, and left NECCOG to take care of her grandchild.

The information gathered indicates that while a few employees on a limited number of occasions have described interacting with Mr. Filchak to be difficult, primarily due to what they view as Mr. Filchak's unbending positions on operational issues, employees have not found that Mr. Filchak engages in abusive and/or demeaning behaviors towards them. No workplace is perfect for everyone all the time. Here, some employees feel that Mr. Filchak does not always listen to their opinions on operations and they do not like how he delivers the message that a matter will be handled as he has outlined; this (rejection of employee opinions and exercise of managerial prerogatives) happens in a workplace, but does not mean that the workplace is permeated with abusive behavior. The information gathered suggests that Mr. Filchak's interactions with employees are generally consistent and positive, and otherwise does not support a finding that Mr. Filchak has created a hostile work environment on the basis of any protected class status and/or violated NECCOG policy.

V. Conclusion

Without more detailed input from Ms. Aguiar regarding her complaint, I completed the investigation as thoroughly as possible. On the basis of the information gathered and the application of state law, federal law and NECCOG policy to the same, I find that Mr. Filchak has not violated state law, federal law and/or NECCOG policy. Nonetheless, as Ms. Aguiar and one longtime employee have expressed difficulty, at times, in interacting with Mr. Filchak, I suggest that these two individuals be afforded the opportunities to participate (separately) in a mediated meeting with Mr. Filchak, with the emphasis on fostering open and productive lines of communication. Such meetings may occur with the assistance of an attorney in my office or through the use of a clinician affiliated with an Employee Assistance Program.

Suisman Shapiro

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In Memoriam

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James F. Brennan

James J. Courtney

L. Patrick Gray, III

Michael V. Sego

Alex M. Shapiro

Charles J. Sufman

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Of Counsel

Hinda K. Kimmel

Richard A. Schatz

Thomas B. Wilson

August 19, 2015

Sharon Aguiar
Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments
P.O. Box 759
Dayville, CT 06241

Re: Investigation of Complaint

Dear Ms. Aguiar:

I am writing as a follow up to the verbal complaint you made to NECCOG Board Chair Russell Gray in July 2015. The complaint, in general, alleges that, during your employment with NECCOG (and particularly while you served as a dispatcher in the front office), Executive Director John Filchak has made comments or statements to you which you have found to be verbally abusive, vulgar and/or intimidating. On July 21, 2015, Mr. Gray requested that our firm investigate your complaint.

We spoke briefly by telephone initially on July 22, 2015. I reviewed that NECCOG had requested that my firm investigate your complaint and you provided some additional information (e.g., Mr. Filchak acted like a tyrant; Mr. Filchak's behavior caused you to cry on more than one occasion and ultimately resulted in your request to transfer from dispatch back to transit/driving). We scheduled an in-person interview for July 23, 2015, at 10 a.m. In the early evening on July 22, 2015, you left me a voice mail message that you appreciated my call, but were declining to be interviewed at that time.

Given the seriousness of your allegations, and in the interests of you and NECCOG, it was necessary for the investigation to proceed. As a result, I have interviewed several individuals over the course of two days, and the information gathering portion of the investigation is almost complete. I contacted you by telephone on Thursday, August 13, 2015, and scheduled an in-person interview with you on Monday, August 17, 2015. On Friday, August 14, 2015, however, you contacted my office, canceled the interview, and indicated that I would hear from your attorney. I have not heard anything to date from an attorney on your behalf. Your participation in the investigation is critical to ensuring that your concerns have been fully reviewed and that NECCOG takes the necessary steps to address any inappropriate conduct that the investigation reveals. As a result, I am rescheduling your interview for Friday, September 11, 2015 at 11:00 a.m.;

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Sulsman, Shapiro, Wool, Brennan, Gray & Greenberg, P.C.
2 Union Plaza, Suite 200 • P.O. Box 1591, New London, CT 06320

Sharon Aguiar
August 19, 2015

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should you have any notes or other documentation related to your allegations, please bring them with you. Should you choose not to participate in the interview, the investigation, regrettably, will be completed without the benefit of further input from you.

I trust that you understand that NECCOG has taken your complaint seriously and intends to address any inappropriate conduct that may be identified in the investigation. Your further participation in this process is desired, and I look forward to meeting with you on September 11, 2015.

Sincerely yours,


Eileen C. Duggan

Suisman Shapiro

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In Absentiam

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Michael V. Sage

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Of Counsel:

Hinda K. Kimmel

Richard A. Schatz

Thomas B. Wilson

September 18, 2015

Robert E. Scalise
150 Main Street, Suite 7
PO Box 205
Putnam, CT 06260

Re: Investigation of Complaint filed by Sharon Aguiar

Dear Attorney Scalise:

At the request of the Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (NECCOG), our office has been investigating a verbal complaint made by Sharon Aguiar to NECCOG Board Chair Russell Gray in July 2015. The complaint, in general, alleges that, during Ms. Aguiar's employment with NECCOG (and particularly while she served as a dispatcher in the front office), Executive Director John Filchak made comments or statements to her which she found to be verbally abusive, vulgar and/or intimidating. My efforts to meet with Ms. Aguiar have not been successful, and I am writing you for the purpose of providing her again with the opportunity to offer further input before I complete my investigation and report.

Of note, after speaking with Mr. Gray on July 21, 2015, I spoke with Ms. Aguiar briefly by telephone on July 22, 2015, and scheduled an in-person interview with her for July 23, 2015 at 10 a.m. In the early evening on July 22, 2015, Ms. Aguiar left me a voice mail message that she appreciated my call, but was declining to be interviewed at that time. The investigation proceeded and I contacted Ms. Aguiar by telephone on Thursday, August 13, 2015, and scheduled an in-person interview for Monday, August 17, 2015. On Friday, August 14, 2015, Ms. Aguiar canceled the interview, and indicated that I would hear from her attorney. When I did not hear further from Ms. Aguiar or an attorney, I sent the enclosed letter to her on August 19, 2015, rescheduling her interview for Friday, September 11, 2015 at 11:00 a.m. On September 4, 2015, NECCOG received a CHRO complaint filed by your office on behalf of Ms. Aguiar; the CHRO complaint, however, does not in and of itself halt the ongoing investigation. Ms. Aguiar otherwise was out of work and unavailable for the scheduled interview on September 11, 2015.

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**Attorney Robert Scalise
September 18, 2015**

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In short, when Ms. Aguiar made a verbal complaint alleging misconduct by Mr. Filchak, NECCOG took the complaint seriously and immediately initiated an investigation. Ms. Aguiar has been provided multiple opportunities to participate further in the investigation and has declined. Please kindly advise by Wednesday, September 23, 2015, whether Ms. Aguiar will participate further in this investigation; in the absence of your reply and/or the scheduling of an interview with Ms. Aguiar, the investigation, regrettably, will be completed without further input from her.

Sincerely yours,



Eileen C. Duggan

Enc: August 19, 2015 Letter to Ms. Aguiar