



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

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September 20, 2024

TO: Council Members

FROM: Melanie A. Bachman *NAB*
Executive Director

RE: **Proposed Fiscal Year 2026/Fiscal Year 2027 Budgets**

The Connecticut Siting Council (Council) is assigned to DEEP for **administrative purposes only**.¹

An agency assigned to a department for administrative purposes only prepares its budget and submits its budgetary requests through the department to which it is assigned. The Council prepares its budget. The department to which an agency is assigned includes the agency budget as a separate part of the departmental budget and exactly as prepared and submitted to the department by the agency. The Council's budget is a line item in DEEP's budget.²

Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) §16-50r and §16-50v, the Council's budget is financed by fees and assessments paid to the "**Siting Council Fund**."³

Over the last 5 fiscal years, the Council's expenses have averaged around \$1.7 million based on actual figures.⁴ This represents an average of 78% of its estimated budgets.⁵

Attached please find the proposed Council budgets for Fiscal Years (FY) 2026 and 2027 in summary form. A line-item spreadsheet is also attached for comparison purposes. It includes the Council's current budget for FY2025 and the Council's actual expenses for FY2023 and FY2024. FY2024 ended on June 30, 2024. The Council estimated FY2024 expenses to be \$2,313,946.52. It

¹ Conn. Gen. Stat. §4-38f (2023). (a) An **agency assigned to a department** for administrative purposes only shall: (1) Exercise any quasi-judicial, rule-making or regulatory authority, licensing and policy-making functions which it may have independent of such department and without approval or control of the department; (2) **prepare its budget, if any, and submit its budgetary requests through the department**; and (3) hire its own personnel or enter into contracts, if authorized by law, or if the general assembly provides or authorizes the expenditure of funds therefor.

(b) The **department to which an agency is assigned** for administrative purposes only shall: (1) Provide record keeping, reporting, and related administrative and clerical functions for the agency to the extent deemed necessary by the department head; (2) disseminate for the agency any required notices, rules or orders adopted, amended or repealed by the agency; (3) provide staff for the agency subject to the provisions of subdivision (3) of subsection (a) of this section; and (4) **include in the departmental budget the agency's budgetary request, if any, as a separate part of said budget and exactly as prepared and submitted to the department by the agency**. (Emphasis added).

² The Council's budget was not a line item in DEEP's budget for Fiscal Years 14, 15, 18, 19, and 22-25.

³ Conn. Gen. Stat. §16-50r(d) and §16-50v (2023).

⁴ \$1.4M in FY20; \$1.6M in FY21; \$1.8M in FY22; \$1.8M in FY23; and 1.8M in FY24 (all actuals).

⁵ 74% in FY20; 80% in FY21; 79% in FY22; 78% in FY23; and 77% in FY24 (all actuals).

spent \$1,786,042.62 of this estimated budget, which is approximately 77%. Accounts have been adjusted based on actuals from previous fiscal years and/or if increases in expenses are anticipated.

Increases in budget expenses from the Council's current FY2025 budget are as follows:

- 1. Inflation** (Accounts 53020, *et seq.*)
 - Increases of 2-2.5% are applied to these accounts based on the federal inflation rate.
 - Estimated expenses in these accounts are based on actual figures from prior years.
- 2. Salaries/Additional Staff** (Accounts 50110, 50120, 50160, 50170, 50190, 51970)
 - Cost of living and step increases are based on estimates for a 10-employee staff.⁶
 - Siting Analysts with 15 years' experience qualified for an increase from a 35-hour work week to a 37.5-hour work week as of July 2024 per union contract.
 - Due to a staff medical leave, the Council engaged part-time temporary administrative services in January 2024 for a 6-month period per state contract.
 - Succession planning and recent legislation effective October 1, 2024 require the Council to employ staff with sufficient expertise in engineering and fiscal analysis.⁷ On August 14, 2024, the Council's request for a Connecticut Career Trainee (CCT) position, which is entry level and requires a one to two year training period, was processed for this purpose.⁸
- 3. Statewide Capital Allocation Program (SWCAP)/Indirect Overhead** (Account 54720)
 - The SWCAP represents allocations to other "central service" state agencies for services provided, that include the Auditors of Public Accounts, Department of Administrative Services, Department of Public Works, Information Technology Department, Office of Policy Management, Office of the State Comptroller (OSC), Office of the Treasurer and Office of the Attorney General (OAG).⁹
 - In April 2024, OAG and DEEP sought to bind the Council to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) related to direct payment of the salaries for attorneys in the OAG Finance Unit that represent the Council, DEEP and PURA with the Council responsible for 50% of an annual salary, amounting to \$163,331.58.
 - From 2015-2025, the Council paid \$676,245.00 to the SWCAP for OAG costs. If the Council were responsible for 50% of an annual salary during the same period, the Council would have paid \$1,546,663.16, or 43% more.
 - The Council did not sign the DEEP and OAG MOU, and to date, the Council does not have a written instrument or agreement related to OAG salary payments.
 - The FY2026 SWCAP amount, which has doubled, was provided by OSC and is reflected in the FY2026 budget, but the FY2027 SWCAP amount remains unknown.

⁶ Since May 1, 2013, the staff attorney has also fulfilled the Executive Director position. This consolidation reduces salary expenses by about \$91,000 to \$166,000 per year.

⁷ Public Act 24-144.

⁸ To date, the Council's CCT position has not been posted to the state jobs website.

⁹ Conn. Gen. Stat. §16-50n(d) (2023). The Attorney General shall appoint an assistant attorney general to act as counsel for the Connecticut Siting Council.

4. Reserves (Accounts 51230, 53740 and 53755)

- The Council budgets annually for Management Consultant services referenced under C.G.S. §16-50n(e) as it may employ independent consultants at its discretion.
- The Council budgets annually for licenses associated with telecommunications coverage software to complete assessments referenced under C.G.S. §16-50ff.

Decreases in budget expenses from the Council's current FY2025 budget are as follows:**1. Venue Costs and Reimbursements (Account 51800)**

- Council members are entitled to meal, mileage, and parking reimbursements associated with evening agency business. Staff are entitled to meal reimbursements associated with evening agency business. From 2015-2019, mileage/meal reimbursements averaged around \$12,310.00. From 2020-2024, mileage/meal reimbursements were reduced to a \$708 average.¹⁰
- The largest hearing room at the Council's office building has a capacity for 150 people. In the past, the Council has rented an auditorium at CCSU for largely attended and controversial public hearings with fees between \$300-\$400 per day. The Council's Zoom license accommodates 500 attendees and costs \$75 per month.

2. Visual Media Services (Account 52050)

- This account represents audio technician services provided to the Council for microphone management at hearings per the state contract rate of \$195 per hour.
- From 2015-2019, Council expenses associated with audio technician services averaged around \$11,390.66. From 2020-2024, Council expenses associated with audio technician services were reduced to a \$9,416.78 average.
- As of January 2024, the Council employs its own staff to manage microphones at hearings in lieu of audio technician services, which has resulted in an actual savings of \$5,476.95 in FY2024, or \$4,56.41 per hearing.

Remote operations in general have reduced costs significantly. For example, the 2019 per hearing cost was approximately \$3,242 and the 2021 per hearing cost was approximately \$1,728. Copy charges, ink cartridge purchases and postage costs have also decreased.¹¹

The Council anticipates staff review and other proceeding-related expenses will increase as of October 1, 2024 due to the voluminous amount of additional information required to be submitted for complete facility applications and petitions pursuant to Public Act 24-144.

¹⁰ Fiscal Year 2020 operated from July 1, 2019 to March, 2020 with meetings held at the Council's office building and hearings held in the host municipalities where facilities were proposed. Fiscal Year 2020 operated from March 2020 to June 30, 2020, with meetings and hearings via Zoom remote conferencing. Fiscal Years 2021 - 2023 did not have any expenditures in Account 51800 (non-employee reimbursements) because of remote operations.

¹¹ Despite the increase in U.S. Postal Service fees.

The Council is cognizant of its duty to issue a utilitarian budget. Accordingly, the budget consists mainly of salaries, building/operation costs, and statutorily required expenses.¹²

If you have questions, please contact me or Lisa Fontaine so that any additional adjustments can be made and incorporated prior to the September 26, 2024 energy/telecommunications meeting.

The FY2026 and FY2027 budgets are an agenda item that requires a Council vote for an initial approval for presentation to the energy and telecommunications industries for a 30-day comment period. After the 30-day comment period, the FY2026 and FY2027 budgets will be an agenda item again for Council adoption and discussion of comments, if necessary. The adopted FY2026 and FY2027 budgets must be sent to the General Assembly by December 31, 2024.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

¹² Statutorily required expenses include, but are not limited to, Council member per diem payments and reimbursements under to Conn. Gen. Stat. §16-50j; publication of hearing and final decision notices under Conn. Gen. Stat. §16-50m; management consultant services for applications, if necessary, under Conn. Gen. Stat. §16-50n; transcription services for hearings under Conn. Gen. Stat. §16-50o; and the SWCAP under Code of Federal Regulations, Title 2, Subtitle A, Chapter II, Part 200.

CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL REVISED BUDGETS FOR FISCAL YEARS 2026 and 2027

Summary of Expenditures

(Fiscal Year 2026 - July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 - Fiscal Year 2027 - July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027)

Summary of Expenditures Description	FY2023 Actuals	FY2024 Actuals	FY2025 Approved	FY2026 PROPOSED BUDGET	FY2027 PROPOSED BUDGET
Personnel Expenses					
Salary & Wages	\$ 825,862.17	\$ 777,479.86	\$ 830,150.44	\$ 954,138.60	\$ 994,539.21
Fringe	\$ 722,479.69	\$ 677,394.60	\$ 784,576.23	\$ 881,395.62	\$ 918,741.94
Docket/Project Related Expenses	\$ 52,269.20	\$ 73,162.10	\$ 358,500.00	\$ 353,300.00	\$ 353,300.00
Consultants/Advertising/Transcription/Audio/Hrg.Expenses					
Council Member Per Diem & Expenses					
Operational Expenses					
Building Expense	\$ 75,866.13	\$ 99,052.13	\$ 105,828.14	\$ 103,920.75	\$ 105,984.44
Motor Vehicle - Lease/repairs/fuel	\$ 5,088.93	\$ 2,788.27	\$ 6,928.00	\$ 7,431.00	\$ 7,433.46
Membership/Subscriptions	\$ 3,301.88	\$ 3,063.48	\$ 3,840.00	\$ 1,320.00	\$ 1,320.00
Computer/Copier/Mail Machines	\$ 2,336.64	\$ -	\$ 13,726.84	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 6,600.00
Office Supplies/Assets	\$ 13,717.05	\$ 19,090.25	\$ 16,200.00	\$ 20,125.97	\$ 20,738.49
Staff Training/Travel	\$ 176.84	\$ 76.84	\$ 4,100.00	\$ 1,100.00	\$ 1,350.00
Temporary Services	\$ 538.65	\$ 6,083.04	\$ -	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 12,500.00
Indirect Overhead SWCAP	\$ 115,150.00	\$ 127,852.00	\$ 174,090.00	\$ 305,260.00	\$ 325,000.00
Grand Total	\$ 1,816,787.18	\$ 1,786,042.57	\$ 2,297,939.65	\$ 2,646,491.94	\$ 2,747,507.54

CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL PROPOSED BUDGETS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 and 2027						
Account Code	Expenditures Description	FY2023 Actuals	FY2024 Actuals	FY2025 Budget	FY2026 Proposed	FY2027 Proposed
50110	Salaries&Wages, FT	773525.80	769280.03	819868.60	945093.10	984482.96
50160	Longevity	4755.49	4429.00	4755.49	4885.50	5646.25
50170	Overtime	1449.11	3220.83	3000.00	3500.00	3750.00
50190	Accumulated leave	45691.77	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
50410	Group life insurance	884.12	796.92	950.00	1048.83	1093.27
50420	Medical insurance	115020.94	152450.55	167253.20	181160.93	188837.05
50430	Unemploy. compensation	1382.47	0.50	1489.72	1048.83	1093.27
50441	FICA	48774.81	46228.10	51312.69	59115.67	61620.51
50442	Medicare taxes	11407.00	10811.40	12000.55	13825.44	14411.25
50460	Workers comp. awards	4990.28	3962.36	5338.17	6102.26	6360.83
50471	SERS	540020.07	463144.77	546231.90	619093.65	645325.77
50710	Employee allow. & rpt. Pay	440.00	550.00	550.00	660.00	660.00
50750	Educ & Training for Employees	0.00	0.00	1100.00	1000.00	1250.00
50780	In-state travel	0.00	0.00	500.00	0.00	0.00
50790	Out-of-state travel	0.00	0.00	2500.00	0.00	0.00
50800	Mileage reimbursement	0.00	59.63	0.00	100.00	100.00
51155	Other Settlements - Reportable	0.00	0.00	1976.35	0.00	0.00
51230	Mgt. Consultant Services	0.00	0.00	250000.00	250000.00	250000.00
51510	Advertising	6817.97	12830.77	18000.00	18000.00	18000.00
51540	Board member fees	29800.00	36200.00	55000.00	67200.00	67200.00
51620	Fees and Permits	176.84	76.84	500.00	100.00	100.00
51672	Court reporting services	10191.23	16756.20	18000.00	18000.00	18000.00
51675	Subscriptions	1263.88	882.48	1340.00	1320.00	1320.00
51764	Regular postage	7500.00	10541.25	7500.00	12000.00	12240.00
51780	Membership Dues	2038.00	2181.00	2500.00	0.00	0.00
51800	Non-employee reimbursements	0.00	100.50	0.00	0.00	0.00
51970	Temporary Services	538.65	6083.04	0.00	12000.00	12500.00
52050	Visual Media Services	5460.00	7215.00	17000.00	0.00	0.00
53011	Motor vehicle rent	5008.00	2669.73	5808.00	5808.00	5808.00
53015	Motor Veh Parts-Repair & Maint	0.00	0.00	1000.00	1500.00	1500.00
53020	Motor vehicle fuel - gasoline	80.93	118.54	120.00	123.00	125.46
53331	Utility, electric	11088.74	10932.35	11800.00	11485.80	11715.52
53334	Utility, water	437.27	492.47	463.51	517.40	527.75
53335	Utility, sewer	129.68	118.54	184.37	124.54	127.03
53338	Natural gas	1961.11	1299.18	2078.78	1364.95	1392.25
53401	Premises Repair/Maint Services	0.00	0.00	25000.00	0.00	0.00

Account Code	Expenditures Description	FY2023 <i>Actuals</i>	FY2024 <i>Actuals</i>	FY2025 Budget	FY2026 Proposed	FY2027 Proposed
53405	Premises Property Mgt Serv	61605.17	85369.66	65301.48	89691.50	91485.33
53740	IT Hardware Main & Support	2336.64	0.00	2476.84	0.00	0.00
53755	IT Software Licenses/Rental	0.00	0.00	4250.00	0.00	0.00
53760	IT Software Maint & Support	0.00	0.00	5000.00	5000.00	5100.00
53820	Cellular Communication Srvcs	644.16	839.93	1000.00	736.56	736.56
53920	IT supplies	0.00	0.00	2000.00	1500.00	1500.00
54060	General office supplies	986.45	1947.04	1500.00	2000.00	2250.00
54149	Long-Term Non Capital SBITA	0.00	625.40	0.00	0.00	0.00
54151	Minor Equipment - Non Controllable	0.00	0.00	500.00	0.00	0.00
54180	Printing Supplies	0.00	0.00	500.00	0.00	0.00
54190	Publ. & Books (maps)	246.75	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
54720	Indirect Overhead-SWCAP	115150.00	127852.00	174090.00	305260.00	325000.00
55302	LT-Office Equip lease/Rental	4983.85	5976.56	6200.00	6125.97	6248.49
	Total	1,816,787.18	1,786,042.57	2,297,939.65	2,646,491.94	2,747,507.54