

**Monadnock Regional Coordinating Council
For Community Transportation**

AGENDA

**January 17, 2023
9:00 a.m.**

**Home Healthcare, Hospice and Community Services
312 Marlboro Street, Keene, NH**

- | | | |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| I. | Welcome | (9:00 a.m.) |
| II. | Minutes of December 20, 2022 | (9:05 a.m.) |
| III. | Treasurer's Report | (9:10 a.m.) |
| IV. | Partner Updates | (9:20 a.m.) |
| V. | Transportation Equity Project Updates and Discussion | (9:30 a.m.) |
| | A. HCS Shopping Shuttles | |
| | B. CVTC Advancement | |
| | C. KHKC Youth Program Transportation | |
| VI. | Mobility Manager Update | (10:15 a.m.) |
| VII. | Next Meeting | (10:25 a.m.) |
| VIII. | Adjourn | (10:30 a.m.) |

**Monadnock Regional Coordinating Council
For Community Transportation**

Minutes

December 20, 2022

Present: Ellen Avery, Chair, *Community Volunteer Transportation Company (CVTC)*; Charlie Pratt, Vice-Chair, *Home Healthcare, Hospice and Community Services (HCS)*; Suzanne Bansley, *Cheshire County*; Kathy Baird, *RSVP Volunteer Center (RSVP)*; Sandra Faber, *Monadnock at Home (MAH)*; Mary Jensen, *Keene Senior Center*; Sally Malay, *Keene Housing Kids Collaborative (KHKC)*.

SWRPC Staff Present: Terry Johnson, *Senior Project Manager*; J. B. Mack, *Principal Planner*; Andrew Smeltz, *Planner*.

I. Welcome

Chair Ellen Avery called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m.

II. Approval of August 16, 2022 Minutes and Summary Notes of October 18, 2022

Motion: To approve the minutes of August 16, 2022.

Motion by Charlie Pratt, seconded by Sally Malay. Approved by unanimous vote.

No questions were presented on the October 18, 2022 meeting notes.

III. Treasurer's Report

Suzanne Bansley stated that approximately \$50,000 is available for SFY23 in funds for mobility management from the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) grant, which will be accessed when funds from the NH Department of Health and Human Services (NH DHHS) have been spent. Suzanne Bansley also stated that the Keene Senior Center, which has been providing an increased number of rides to members, has expended its SFY23 NHDOT Purchase of Service funding allocation and that NH DHHS funds can be used to cover the remaining deficit. She also stated that NH DHHS is in the process of executing contract extensions with lead agencies, including Cheshire County, for an additional year through May 31, 2024. The contract for Mobility Management services should be extended once the extension between NH DHHS and Cheshire County occurs.

Suzanne Bansley stated that approximately \$150,000 in unallocated funds remains available for transportation equity projects.

Motion: To move the remaining balance of all allocated but unused project funds to a reserve for future project funding.

Motion by Mary Jensen, seconded by Charlie Pratt. Approved by unanimous vote.

Suzanne Bansley stated that a large amount of funding remains available for the Mobility Manager. Terry Johnson responded that Mobility Manager expenditures have increased and that this funding source should be monitored to determine whether an extension will be necessary.

Chair Avery stated that CVTC has seen a significant increase in demand for rides. She also stated that CVTC is unable to provide rides for approximately 20% of ride requests. Chair Avery said that CVTC has new volunteer drivers coming on board, including some in Winchester and Hinsdale, that will help to reduce the number of unmet ride requests, which is too high in her opinion. New drivers were recruited as a result of a joint CVTC-MRCC exhibit at the September 2022 Monadnock Business Expo.

IV. Supplemental Funds Request for Keene Senior Center

Mary Jensen stated that the Keene Senior Center (KSC) has been providing a higher number of rides than expected to members during recent months. As a result, KSC's allocation of NHDOT Purchase of Service funds has been depleted. She requested that MRCC allocate supplemental funds from NH DHHS to cover the deficit through the remainder of the fiscal year.

Motion: To allocate \$3,000 in NH Department of Health and Human Services Transportation Equity funds to supplement SFY23 NH Department of Transportation 5310 Enhanced Mobility Purchase of Service funds allocated to the Keene Senior Center through May 31, 2023.

Motion by Charlie Pratt, seconded by Sally Malay. Approved by unanimous vote with Mary Jensen abstaining.

V. FTA 5310 Capital Letter of Support

Terry Johnson stated that Southern New Hampshire Services has requested a letter of support from the MRCC for a SFY23 Section 5310 Capital Funds application it submitted to NHDOT. The funds will be used to purchase a new wheelchair-accessible vehicle to replace an existing vehicle so that critical transportation services can continue to be provided to older adults and individuals with disabilities. The vehicle will be used primarily to provide non-emergency medical transportation and meet other essential needs such as grocery shopping for the tenants of the Ronald A. Philbrick Elderly Housing facility in Greenville, NH. The vehicle will also be used for occasional trips for their Greenfield Commons facility tenants in Greenfield, NH. The NHDOT requires a letter of support from the MRCC to be included with the application.

Motion: To approve Chair Avery to submit on behalf of the Monadnock Regional Coordinating Council a Letter of Support for the SFY23 Section 5310 Capital Funds application submitted by Southern New Hampshire Services.

Motion by Charlie Pratt, seconded by Mary Jensen. Approved by unanimous vote.

VI. FTA 5305e Planning Grant Opportunity

J. B. Mack of SWRPC, presented a project idea that SWRPC recommends undertaking based on experience with a current transportation planning project. The project will involve applying for NHDOT 5305e funding to support research on a governance and cost-sharing structure to support transit expansion in Southwest New Hampshire.

As background, J. B. Mack explained that SWRPC was awarded funding during the prior 5305e grant round for a microtransit feasibility and fixed route transit service plan design study to examine ways to improve transit services in Keene and expand the transit system in the Region. The study, undertaken in partnership with HCS, involves services provided by the consulting firm Via Mobility, LLC (Via). In addition to examining opportunities to improve transit service in the City of Keene, the study examined expansion opportunities to towns surrounding Keene, the eastern Monadnock Region, and high-need areas such as the

Town of Winchester. The project involves conducting research and gathering input from project advisory committee and two phases of public meetings on different transit alternatives. Possible ideas for transit expansion include expanding transit services in the Greater Keene area, establishing bus routes between Keene and Winchester, Keene and Peterborough, and Keene and Brattleboro, VT, and establishing microtransit service for eastern Monadnock communities.

J. B. Mack stated that SWPRC recently met with the HCS Board of Directors and key staff members to discuss implementing priority projects identified in the Study and securing funding to implement them. During the meeting, HCS representatives expressed concerns about expanding their existing transit system and adding microtransit. Concerns include: 1) transit is not part of HCS's core mission; 2) expanding transit services would greatly increase HCS's financial and liability risks; and 3) key local partners including municipalities and anchor institutions are not participating or contributing local match funding.

Terry Johnson added that one scenario proposed by Via is a hybrid microtransit and north-south bus route with a projected cost of \$2.1 million per year. He also stated that the meeting with the HCS Board included discussion on HCS applying for NHDOT Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding as a potential source for implementing this or other scenarios.

J. B. Mack provided additional information about SWRPC's 5305e planning grant proposal idea. The goal of the grant proposal would be to establish a transit operating model that is capable of implementing the vision inspired by the recently completed study. The study proposed implementation of successive phases of transit provision subject to available funding and successful implementation. This grant proposal will require outreach and building a coalition of organizations, beyond HCS, to support a shared transit vision.

J. B. Mack stated that \$350,000 is available under this grant round and activities can be carried out within a two-year time frame. The application for funding is due January 18, 2023. He stated that MRCC would be an advisory body for the grant, if awarded, along with HCS and other key partners.

Terry Johnson added that partnership building is a task in the Mobility Management work plan which would align with the partner engagement activities of the 5305e grant. He stated that the MRCC Outreach Subcommittee has prioritized partnership building as part of its work.

Chair Avery asked whether match for the grant can come from in-kind volunteer hours. J. B. Mack said that he would have to research that question, but he believed that there must be a nexus between the work associated with the volunteer hours and the study.

Suzanne Bansley stated that she is in support of the proposal.

Chair Avery recommended that partner development focused on the Eastern Monadnock Region will be beneficial.

Terry Johnson asked what match funding was used for the current 5305e transit study. J. B. Mack stated that funds from HCS and SWRPC municipal dues are being used.

Motion: To support SWRPC in submitting an application for 5305e funding to examine operating models and governance structure to support increased transit services in the Region.

Motion by Suzanne Bansley, seconded by Mary Jensen. Approved by unanimous vote.

VII. MRCC Structure

Chair Avery stated that partner organizations that participate in the MRCC are sometimes not able to attend monthly meetings. She initiated discussion on whether the MRCC should continue to meet monthly. Terry Johnson added that it is sometimes difficult to achieve a quorum at meetings. He noted that the bylaws permit the MRCC to meet no more frequently than once per quarter. He said the bylaws also state that the Executive Committee can make certain decisions without the entire Council present which could help alleviate the lack of quorum that sometimes occurs during monthly meetings. He suggested that MRCC could opt to meet every other month or quarterly rather than monthly. Chair Avery requested that a survey be conducted of all MRCC members about their preferences for meeting frequency.

Mary Jensen stated she is in favor of every other month meetings. Charlie Pratt noted that MRCC subcommittees and work groups often meet in-between MRCC meetings. Suzanne Bansley stated that fewer meetings could make it more difficult to achieve a quorum. She said that during the past several years, there has been an increase in participation and number of MRCC partners.

Sandra Faber recommended that increasing the visibility of what the MRCC does would be beneficial to organizations that may choose to participate.

Sally Malay suggested that member organizations might be more incentivized to attend meetings if there are regular opportunities during meetings to solicit input from community transportation experts around the table. She said that the Keene Housing Kids Collaborative is currently sponsoring transportation services for youth, however, the organization does not specialize in providing transportation services. She said that she would benefit from technical assistance and advice from MRCC members that specialize in providing transportation services.

Terry Johnson stated that the MRCC will continue monthly meetings for the time being and that opportunities for sharing knowledge, advice and lessons learned will be included more frequently on agendas. He also informed the group that election of new MRCC officers will need to occur before the end of the fiscal year.

VIII. Mobility Manager Update

The Mobility Manager Update was deferred due to lack of time.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for January 17, 2023.

IX. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 11:14 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrew Smeltz
Planner