

# **Monadnock Regional Coordinating Council For Community Transportation**

*Southwest Region Planning Commission  
37 Ashuelot Street, Keene, NH 03431*

**October 25, 2017**

**1:00 p.m.**

## **AGENDA**

- I. Minutes of September 26, 2017
- II. Election of Officers
- III. Continuation of MRCC Future Projects Discussion
- IV. Partner Updates
- V. Public Comment
- VI. Next Meeting
- VII. Adjourn

# Monadnock Regional Coordinating Council For Community Transportation

## MINUTES

September 26, 2017

2:00 p.m.

Present: Susan Ashworth, *Home Healthcare, Hospice and Community Services (HCS)*; Ellen Avery, *Community Volunteer Transportation Company (CVTC)*; Suzanne Bansley, *Cheshire County*; Kathy Baird, *Monadnock RSVP*; April Buzby, *Keene Housing*; Linda Diluzio, *R. J. Diluzio Ambulance Service, LLC*; Jim Duffy, *Cheshire Medical Center/Dartmouth Hitchcock Center for Population Health*; Bill Graff, *Monadnock at Home*; Terri Paige, *Southwestern Community Services (SCS) Sullivan County*; Bob Perry, *Volunteers Enabling Transportation (VET)*; Kelly Steiner, *Monadnock United Way (MUW)*; Matt Waitkins, *Nashua Region Planning Commission*; Chuck Weed, *citizen member*; Gary Welch, *VET*; and Dylana Wilson, *Cheshire County*.

SWRPC Staff present were J. B. Mack, *Principal Planner* and Mari Brunner, *Planner*.

### **I. Minutes of June 21, 2017**

Kelly Steiner welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for a round of introductions. She asked if any corrections need to be made to the minutes of June 21, 2017. April Buzby said that the minutes should say Liz Chipman is from the Keene Housing Kids Collaborative, not Keene Housing. The minutes were approved as amended by unanimous vote.

### **II. Co-Treasurer's Reports**

Dylana Wilson gave an overview of the co-treasurer's report on the use of FTA 5310 Purchase of Service funds, which was provided in the meeting packet. She noted that Suzanne Bansley will arrive late to the meeting. Kelly Steiner asked if the accessible trips for CVTC come out of the accessible/unmet needs fund. Ellen Avery responded that they do.

Kelly Steiner asked J. B. Mack to give an overview of the accessible/unmet needs fund. J. B. Mack explained that some of the 5310 formula funds were set aside for situations where CVTC, HCS, or VET are not able to provide a ride. In this situation, the providers refer the individual seeking a ride to CVTC, who then arranges for a third party to provide the ride. This could be a regular ambulatory ride if CVTC is unable to find another provider for the ride. Gary Welch asked if the accessible/unmet needs fund would cover trips to medical appointments in Lebanon or Boston, and J. B. Mack said it does. Medical and social service trips are prioritized under the accessible/unmet needs fund.

Chuck Weed asked if a return trip from a medical appointment should be classified as a medical trip. The group discussed this issue, and ultimately decided that it should be classified as a medical trip because it is part of the same trip that brought the individual to their appointment. Gary Welch asked if there could be an option in the drop-down menu to classify a trip as a return trip home. J. B. Mack said that Suzanne Bansley is managing the database, so he will follow up with her to add the return trip as a category.

Ellen Avery presented the FTA 5310 Formula funds report. She reported that the FTA 5310 Formula Funds support the two transportation management coordinators at CVTC and a portion of Ellen's salary. All of the funds go towards salary, with the exception of \$1,000 that is reserved for travel and outreach.

### **III. Mobility Management Activities**

Ellen Avery summarized the mobility management activities conducted since the beginning of SFY2018. She reported that accessible rides have gone up. CVTC has a goal of building relationships with at least five third-party providers to work with for the accessible/unmet needs fund. Currently, CVTC is working with R. J. Diluzio Ambulance Service LLC, and Merit Care to provide rides, and they are in conversation with Adventure Taxi. Ellen Avery noted that some riders have transitioned from ambulatory rides to accessible rides.

Ellen Avery reported that the first MRCC outreach meeting will take place on October 26, 2017 at the Peterborough Town House, time to be determined. She plans to invite town staff, state legislators, county commissioners, and anyone else who is interested in supporting community transportation. She noted that the original plan was to hold outreach meetings throughout the year, however, she would like to try and have the outreach meetings earlier in the year so that interested stakeholders who hear about the MRCC at these outreach meetings have a chance to attend upcoming MRCC meetings before the year is over. Ellen Avery has met with the Cheshire County Commissioners and confirmed that they are interested in attending the municipal outreach meetings. She has been focusing on the message that transportation is everyone's business and isn't limited to one organization. Kelly Steiner asked Ellen Avery to share information about the outreach meetings with the MRCC so that membership can help out and attend the meetings. Chuck Weed asked if Hillsborough County Commissioners will be invited, and Ellen Avery responded that they would.

J. B. Mack asked Ellen Avery where she sees the trend of ambulatory rides going with the accessible/unmet needs fund. Ellen Avery said she is still waiting for referrals. HCS and VET have not reached out to CVTC to request any ambulatory rides. She noted that CVTC currently has a low unmet need rate of less than three percent. J. B. Mack asked Susan Ashworth and Bob Perry if HCS and VET are comfortable with the system for referring unmet need rides, and they both responded that they are.

Chuck Weed said he used to drive an individual with mobility challenges, and he would sometimes push the person's wheelchair to the door because the person was unable to get from the vehicle to the building. Susan Ashworth said that HCS will do door-to-door rides, however, they do not do door-through-door rides where the volunteer assists clients with exiting or entering their home to get to and from the vehicle. She mentioned that groups such as Monadnock at Home could be good partners to work with on this issue. Bob Perry said that VET is curb-to-curb, and Ellen Avery said that CVTC is door-to-door. Kelly Steiner suggested that the group put this topic on a future agenda to brainstorm solutions. J. B. Mack suggested that providers may want to track any requests they receive for "door-through-door" rides.

Discussion continued about the need for door-through-door service in the region. Gary Welch said that part of the issue is that the people requesting the ride aren't always aware of their own limitations. Ellen Avery said that CVTC will call the doctor's office to confirm whether or not the person has a medical appointment in cases where the person has been confused in the past. Bob Perry said there might be issues with this approach due to doctor-patient confidentiality laws. Kelly Steiner asked Jim Duffy to look into the viability of calling ahead to see if a client has a scheduled appointment.

Linda Diluzio noted that the Diluzio employees will go into the house with the client. Gary Welch said that if he is aware of the client's needs in advance, he will work with the volunteer office at the hospital to line up a volunteer ahead of time. Kelly Steiner said that she will add this topic to the next meeting's agenda, and she will invite another MUW staff person to help facilitate the discussion. She asked the providers to track rides and requests for rides that fall under the "door-through-door" category. She also asked everyone to think about who should be at the table for this discussion and to send the name and contact information for these people to J. B. Mack. Ellen Avery suggested that an insurance expert should be present, and J. B. Mack suggested that a lawyer attorney may be needed for this discussion.

#### **IV. MRCC Future Projects Discussion**

J. B. Mack gave an overview of a self-assessment tool that was sent out to all MRCC members which examines each MRCC member's interest and potential capacity to participate in new MRCC projects. The goal of this exercise was to collect information to include in the updated Coordinated Community Transportation Plan as well as to prioritize non-5310 projects that the group could potentially implement using grant money. He mentioned that Suzanne Bansley from Cheshire County has made it known that she is available to seek out funding opportunities and write grants. Some MRCC members would like more guidance on how to fill out the form, so he would like to go through the form together as a group.

J. B. Mack explained that the first column of the tool lists project ideas from previous Coordinated Community Transportation Plans. The second through the fourth columns are where agencies should indicate whether they have a low or high probability of partner participation, and how they might be able to participate. Column five is where agencies prioritize the project ideas, and column six is for comments. It is important that everyone fills out the form the same way, however, this did not happen.

Ellen Avery said that from CVTC's perspective it was frustrating to fill out the form because CVTC is interested in all of the project ideas, but it is difficult to know to what extent CVTC could participate. Bill Graff said he didn't want his input to affect other organizations whose work he isn't familiar with. Kelly Steiner said it seems as if there are multiple purposes for the same form, and it may be helpful to split the form up into sections based on the purpose of each section. J. B. Mack noted that it seemed like people struggled with articulating their organization's potential role with a specific project idea. Also, he is curious to know why people indicated a "high" or "low" probability for project ideas.

Kelly Steiner suggested that the group fill out the form together in a facilitated process. April Buzby agreed that it would be helpful to have a facilitated conversation about capacity of different partners to contribute to the project ideas. Chuck Weed suggested adding an option to say "not relevant." J. B. Mack said that he would set up a facilitated discussion and split the chart into two sections, one to answer as an MRCC member and one to answer as a representative of each person's respective agency. He added that, to April's point about knowing what capacity is out there, it would be helpful if people think about this exercise more as alignment with their organization's mission rather than signing up for a particular project.

Kelly Steiner asked the group if they would be willing to meet in a special session to do the exercise as a group in a facilitated setting. Ellen Avery said she would be willing to meet next month, and would like the group to meet on a monthly basis going forward in order to leave more time for planning and addressing issues that are not related to FTA 5310 funding. Kelly Steiner added that monthly meetings could be helpful for consistent communication and addressing "red flags" that come up, such as the "door-through-door" discussion from today. The group decided to meet in October. J. B. Mack will send out a doodle poll to schedule this meeting.

Suzanne Bansley said that an example of how this exercise could help bring in funding is the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant offered through the U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT), which will release a notice of funding soon. The County has explored the possibility of applying for the TIGER grant in the past, but they were not strategically ready to propose a project. US DOT wants to see proposals that are supported in existing plans. If a project were listed in the Coordinated Community Transportation Plan, that would increase its chances of getting selected. One project idea the County is considering is a transportation center. J. B. Mack said that the TIGER grant can be used for transit services as long as the project affects more than one community and has an economic development component.

## **V. Partner Updates**

City Express: Susan Ashworth reported that the City Express has a new bus stop on Winchester Street in front of Randall Hall with a bus that stops two minutes after the hour. HCS has been working with Keene State College to expand opportunities for students to volunteer and access health services. She also announced that next week is transit week and October 5, 2017 will be a “free ride day.”

SCS Claremont: Terry Paige said that SCS Claremont is celebrating their first year of service in Claremont on October 11<sup>th</sup>, including a “passport to independence” program. Gary Welch asked if they are still doing a volunteer driver program, and Terry Paige said that they are.

NHDOT GACIT Hearings: J. B. Mack said that the Governor’s Advisory Council on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT) had a hearing last week in Keene and another one will take place on October 18<sup>th</sup> in Peterborough. The State proposes a continuation of “flexing” surface transportation funds to the FTA 5310 purchase of service funds in the amount of \$1,000,000 per year. Eighty percent (\$800,000) of this is federal money with a 20% (\$200,000) state match. Ellen Avery, Michael Acerno, and Susan Ashworth testified at the GACIT hearing in Keene and talked about the importance of community transportation. Ellen Avery said that it is important to attend these hearings even if you do not testify. Susan Ashworth said that there was good representation from public and community transportation. Terry Paige said that Rebecca Harris from Transport NH has a great resource with talking points for the GACIT hearings.

NH Statewide Strategic Transit Assessment: J. B. Mack gave an overview of the NH Statewide Strategic Transit Assessment (SSTA). The state held a small focus group listening session in Keene in July at SWRPC. The focus of the study is on transit and park-and-ride lots, however they are gathering input and data on demand-response transportation services as well. If anyone is interested in learning more, contact J. B. Mack. The consultant facilitating the SSTA process has expressed interest in having larger listening sessions in 2017 and 2018.

### Other Updates:

- Terry Paige said that Fred Butler from NHDOT is interested in hearing if there is any interest in funding 8-passenger vehicles through the 5310 program. Currently, the smallest vehicle they will fund is a 12-passenger vehicle. If there is a need/interest in smaller vehicles, they could allow these funds to be used for that purpose.
- Chuck Weed asked if one of MRCC’s functions should be to advocate for fixed transit in the region, for example between Troy and Keene. J. B. Mack gave an overview of the fixed routes that currently exist in the region and past studies that looked at the possibility of fixed routes, such

as the Route 10 corridor study and the Route 12 north corridor study. Terry Paige added that the fixed transit routes they have in Charlestown, Newport and Claremont were created when there were 5311 funds available. The only revenue currently available for transit service is for commuter runs, which is geared towards workforce services. SCS Claremont is currently having difficulty getting riders on the bus in Charlestown and Newport because it requires a culture shift. People don't want to wait one or two hours for the bus, however, more frequent service is not possible in many cases. Susan Ashworth said that HCS used to run a bus to Winchester, but people were not using it. The issue is that people have to shift from a car-centric culture, where they can go anywhere at any time, to transit service, which requires waiting and limitations in where you can go.

- Terry Paige said she would like to partner with HCS to offer rides between Keene and Lebanon on HCS' Wednesday service. The goal of this partnership would be to make routes between Keene and Lebanon more efficient and convenient for riders. Ellen Avery asked if there is enough ridership to do more than one trip to Lebanon. Susan Ashworth said that HCS is currently able to meet the need for trips to Lebanon. Terry Paige said that a transit service to Lebanon would free up many of their volunteer drivers and help them meet their unmet needs in other areas. Kelly Steiner noted that this is a good opportunity to leverage partnerships to meet rider's needs.

#### **VI. Public Comments**

There were no public comments

#### **VII. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be scheduled approximately a month from now through a Doodle poll.

#### **VIII. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Mari Brunner  
Planner