

Monadnock Region Coordinating Council for Community Transportation

DRAFT MINUTES

June 21, 2017

Present: Michael Acerno, *Home Healthcare, Hospice Community Services (HCS)*; Susan Ashworth, *HCS*; Ellen Avery, *Community Volunteer Transportation Company (CVTC)*; Kathy Baird, *Monadnock RSVP*; Susan Bansley, *County of Cheshire*; Liz Chipman, *Keene Housing Kids Collaborative*; Bill Graff, *Monadnock At Home*; Bob Perry, *Volunteers Enabling Transportation (VET)*; Kelly Steiner, *Monadnock United Way*

Staff members present were J. B. Mack, *Principal Planner*; and Ali Gilleran, *Office Support Specialist*

I. Minutes of May 24, 2017

Kelly Steiner called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m. The minutes of May 24, 2017 were approved by unanimous vote with the exception of an abstention from Michael Acerno.

II. Co-Treasurers' Reports

Ellen Avery explained that CVTC is expecting to spend the entire amount of SFY 2017 FTA 5310 Formula grant. J.B. Mack asked if CVTC has ever had a year in which funding did not get entirely expended and Ellen responded that normally that does not happen. Ellen noted that she will report back on any changes and updates after the fiscal year ends. Kelly Steiner asked if the MRCC had any questions or comments for CVTC about their financial report. No one from the MRCC had any questions.

Kelly Steiner asked J. B. Mack if the MRCC should review the 5310 POS financial report in Suzanne Bansley's absence. J. B. explained that Suzanne is expected to attend the meeting, and suggested the MRCC begin reviewing the report. He said that SWRPC and 5310 operators can try to answer any questions. If there are any questions that can't be answered, they can be referred to Suzanne when she arrives. Kelly Steiner presented the 5310 Purchase of Service (POS) handout. J.B. stated that it is likely MRCC 5310 POS operators will draw down all the funds that are available and may even come close to going over the amount. Michael Acerno agreed that the HCS might have to draw out a little more money than they thought. J.B. Mack noted that the County of Cheshire was able to get approval from NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) to adjust the allocation of funds between the three 5310 POS operators, however, NHDOT expressed that they want to avoid any last minute allocations changes in the future.

Suzanne Bansley entered the room.

Kelly Steiner added that NHDOT would rather the MRCC manage the funds and project more accurate allocation numbers up front. The MRCC will be unable or discouraged to submit an amendment at the midpoint or end of the year. Suzanne Bansley stated that all the NHDOT rules are changing for the next contract. She noted however that it is impossible to fully estimate the exact amount of money for each funding period because we will always go over or under that amount. She recommended that the MRCC overestimate the funding amount so that we never go over the amount. Kelly Steiner asked if anyone had any questions and the MRCC members had none.

III. “Dead Head Miles” Policy

J. B. Mack stated that Suzanne Bansley has asked to bring the issue of “dead head miles” to the MRCC’s attention as a policy matter. “Dead head miles” or “dead head hours” refers to the distance or the number of hours in which a volunteer driver vehicle or bus is absent of passengers. For example, the distance between a volunteer driver’s residence and their trip pick up are “dead head miles”. Another example of this would be if the volunteer driver drives a patient one way to a hospital. The miles back from the hospital are considered “dead head miles” because there is no patient in the car. The time between a trip from HCS’ garage to its first passenger trip pick up are “dead head hours”. J. B. explained that currently the MRCC does not have a policy for this, and Suzanne Bansley suggested the MRCC adopt a policy. Suzanne Bansley noted that NHDOT has recommended that regional coordinating councils reimburse operators for “dead head miles” or “dead head hours”. She added that HCS will feel the biggest impact of this policy because they do not bill for “dead head hours”. Michael Acerno noted that the HCS has only dealt with this once in the past three years so it will not impact them too much.

Motion: To adopt a policy that the MRCC allow reimbursement for “dead head miles” and/or “dead head hours”.

Motion by Ellen Avery. Liz Chipman seconded the motion.

Michael Acerno suggested that the MRCC consider limiting this policy for medical trips only. Susan Ashworth asked if this policy would count if the drive was canceled and if the patient does not show up. Susan Bansley noted that if a driver makes a trip, no matter what the result or purpose is, it should be counted under the “dead head” policy. Susan said this might be hard to track and organize due to the need for another information column in the database. Susan explained that HCS does not get paid for “dead head miles” or no show cases in other funding programs such as Medicaid. Ellen Avery commented that she thought it was up to the grantor how the money was spent and to protect mileage reimbursement funds, “dead head miles” were not usually counted. J.B. Mack asked if the motion on the table would not force people to count “dead head miles” but would only allow them to if they wanted. Kelly Steiner asked if the committee should amend the motion to apply only to 5310 POS funds and Suzanne Bansley noted that this is a RCC policy and not a grant policy. Kelly suggested that the motion should be phrased so it is broad enough to include the 5310 grant. J. B. Mack advised the MRCC to refer to “dead head hour/miles” as non-revenue hours/miles, a common term used in the industry. Ellen Avery expressed an interest in amending her motion to account for these changes.

Liz Chipman suggested to add wording about local agencies and Bob Perry noted that they could include local agencies in the segment, “at the discretion of the vendor”. Bob added that the mileage reimbursement is only allowed when the funding allows for it.

Amended Motion: The MRCC adopts a policy that recognizes dead head hour/miles (also known as non-revenue hours/miles) are allowed for reimbursement by the MRCC at the discretion of the local agencies providing it is allowable for reimbursement by the funding source.

Ellen Avery made a motion to approve the amendment and Bob Perry seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Suzanne Bansley brought up a VET insurance matter for the VET contract starting July 1, 2017. Kelly Steiner suggested that this topic does not involve all the MRCC members so it should be discussed with specific vendors outside of the meeting.

IV. Mobility Management Discussion

Ellen Avery announced that she recently attended the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) conference in Detroit. She noted how it was a great event because she was able to connect with other professionals within the industry. She mentioned two presentations that she attended, “Mobility Rising” and “Mobility as a Service”. “Mobility Rising” focused on technology and related transportation apps. “Mobility as a Service” showed the importance of looking at call centers and different ways to have vehicle stops. She mentioned that Michael Acerno also attended the conference. Michael said he attended a good session about passenger sensitivity training and said he wanted to share this topic with HCS drivers. He noted that most of the conference attendees came from major cities so a lot of the conference content did not apply to rural communities. J.B. Mack asked if there was a national rural community transportation conference and Michael noted that there is one in Chicago but it requires a lot of funding. Kelly Steiner suggested that the MRCC should look for professional development grants and include the encouragement of professional development opportunities into the MRCC plan while encouraging MRCC members to share information from trainings and conferences. Suzanne Bansley suggested that the MRCC find a grant that would allow Michael Acerno to attend the fall conference in Chicago so he could present back to the committee about what he learned. Michael noted that he currently teaches a defensive driving class for truck drivers and would love to teach smaller vehicle drivers within the MRCC network.

Ellen Avery asked J. B. Mack to project a document that she had created showing CVTC’s FY18 5310 Formula scope of work and her plans to implement the scope of work up on the wall. She passed out the same document to all meeting attendees. Ellen noted that she has identified more than five transportation vendors to provide accessible and unmet need rides using the 5310 POS accessible and unmet needs ride set aside line item. The vendors included HCS, VET, Diluzio Ambulance Service, Merit Care, Adventure Taxi and Limo, Ideal Taxi and Sunshine Taxi. Ellen asked Suzanne Bansley if the MRCC can have contracts with those vendors and Suzanne replied that the MRCC cannot contract with them. The relationship would be with CVTC only, and CVTC’s use of 5310 POS funding would pay for unique trips from time to time when CVTC, HCS or VET cannot accommodate requests for eligible trips. Ellen mentioned that Adventure Transportation spoke to her about offering special service rates. Ellen’s handout showed the following rates for the providers:

- VET: no fee
- HCS: \$65/hour
- DiLuzio Ambulance Service: \$3 per mile and two-way trip base rate of \$50.
- Merit Care: \$2.50 per mile and two-way trip base rate of \$56.
- Adventure Taxi and Limo: Variable flat rates per trip and tip for driver. Wait time is \$.50 per minute.
- Ideal and Sunshine Taxi: Variable flat rates and wait time fees of \$15/hour.

J.B. Mack said that part of the reason for asking CVTC to set up relationships with 5 vendors is to expand the capacity of the MRCC to address ride requests that the current 5310 POS providers are not able to accommodate. J.B. said that it will be important to create some kind of agreement with each vendor about the costs of trip rates in order to limit surprises. Part of the MRCC scope of work for CVTC was to determine the rates up front in order to establish MRCC concurrence. Suzanne Bansley suggested that because 2 of the 5 vendors are already on the fund program, they should be considered backups. Susan Ashworth asked if there is an accessible ride request outside of HCS’s serve area, would they refer it to Ellen Avery? J. B. Mack confirmed that this is the purpose of the unmet need fund.

Michael Acerno noted that when HCS subcontracts with a company they make the subcontractor sign off that they are responsible for their own drivers. He recommended CVTC have a similar arrangement.

Suzanne Bansley noted that by purchasing one-time service form transportation services, it allows for a looser relationship that does not focus on FTA regulations. Michael stated that he is concerned about contracting with some of the mentioned vendors as they may not have standards for their drivers. Kelly Steiner suggested Michael, Suzanne and Ellen could get together to further discuss this topic.

Bob Perry noted that in Ellen's document the VET description should be changed from "veterans" to "senior citizens" because VET has more resources to focus on a wider range of customers than when it started. Bob also suggested to remove the mention of White River Junction under the VET description.

Ellen Avery noted that part of the scope of work had CVTC developing trip purpose limitation or other rules associated with using the 5310 POS line item for unmet need and accessible rides. Ellen explained that she would like to limit trips to medical or social service trips. For medical trips she listed examples as doctor, dentist, chiropractic, physical or occupational therapy appointments and dialysis and cancer treatments. For social services she gave examples of behavioral therapies and appointments with supporting agencies for basic needs. Bob Perry asked if the committee is allowed to only focus on medical or social service rides and Michael said that we could say that they are priority trip purposes.

Ellen explained that her scope of work involves setting up a set number of meetings with municipalities to provide information about the MRCC. Ellen proposed four meetings (one per quarter) with municipalities broken down into the following town groupings:

- Dublin, Jaffrey, Rindge, New Ipswich, Greenville, Temple, Sharon, Peterborough
- Stoddard, Antrim, Nelson, Harrisville, Hancock, Bennington, Greenfield, Frankestown
- Westmoreland, Hinsdale, Winchester, Richmond, Fitzwilliam, Troy, Marlborough, Swanzey
- Roxbury, Keene, Westmoreland, Sullivan, Gilsum, Surry, Walpole, Alstead and Marlow.

The document recommended Jaffrey, Keene, Westmoreland and Winchester to be the meeting locations, preferably in town halls. It suggested meetings be held in the evenings with refreshments. The intended audience would be Boards of Selectmen, Town Welfare staff, appropriate Town Committees and other staff, as well as citizens from the towns. She said that she would be looking for the Town Outreach Committee to help shape the agenda and she would ask members of MRCC and staff to participate in the presentation and to help out as greeters and scribes during each meeting.

Ellen Avery also explained that she will be working with Cheshire and Hillsborough Counties to try and access state legislators to hold meetings. She is considering piggy-backing on County delegation meetings to present information about the MRCC. All state legislators would be invited to meetings, the MRCC membership would be invited to attend, and the meetings would last no more than 90 minutes.

Ellen Avery explained that the MRCC had asked CVTC to propose performance measures associated with the 5310 Formula Mobility Management contract. Ellen noted that she spoke with J. B. Mack about a performance measure for the number of rides using the unmet/accessible needs line item. Based on their conversation she proposed that the performance measure be that CVTC uses at least 25% of the unmet need/accessible ride fund. J. B. explained that he recommended that all the funds be expended and was actually proposing a performance measure of trying to book 25% of all unmet need ride requests until the funding is expended. Ellen agreed to this performance measure. She proposed that the performance measure be to achieve a maximum of four meetings with towns. Kelly Steiner suggested the performance measure should be to have a minimum of four meetings. Ellen proposed that her performance measure for legislators is to have a minimum of two meetings, one with the delegation from Cheshire and Hillsborough County each.

Ellen Avery discussed the last part of the handout which showed the various responsibilities of CVTC as the lead agency for 5310 Formula funds. The list included:

- Management of the grant, including monthly invoicing and reporting to NHDOT and MRCC
- Working with CVTC Bookkeeper
- Supervision of two Transportation Coordinators in their day-to-day work:
 - Registering new passengers;
 - Booking ride requests;
 - Recruiting, training and supervision of volunteer drivers;
 - Marketing to towns in service area;
 - Preparing volunteer driver monthly mileage logs for invoicing of 5310 POS funds
 - Making arrangements for region-wide accessible and unmet need trips with agreed upon outside vendors either as a referral or a fee for service.
- Serve as chair of outreach subcommittee of MRCC matching activities with goals stated in updated Coordinated Plan
- Serve as chair of community transportation provider meetings (quarterly)
- Serve as coordinator for MRCC outreach events, utilizing other member of MRCC and outside experts to assist in presentations or other roles to ensure effective and informative programs or materials
- Provide administrative support for MRCC outreach events, including preparing invitations, handling RSVP's, and producing event materials
- Serve as advocate for MRCC and community transportation in the region and across the state
- Serve as a recruiter for new members to MRCC

Ellen also explained that she plans to provide a mobility management report at a minimum of every MRCC quarterly meeting.

V. Coordinated Council Transportation Plan Presentation

J.B. Mack noted that he will be sending the final draft Coordinated Plan to members of the committee when it is finalized. He proceeded to go through a presentation showing the project scope of work and progress to date. J.B. went through the goals and objectives from the 5303e Grant. He discussed plan contents, introduction and presented on some of the relevant community transportation documents that are documented in the plan. These documents are a combination of community transportation related documents that J.B. is aware of from the past 10 years. He also discussed a chapter that includes demographic and socio-economic information. Kelly Steiner asked if J.B. has seen the 2 and 1 data and J.B. responded that he had not. Kelly Steiner said she would send him more information. J.B. explained that another chapter documents the needs, goals and moving forward information which was adopted by the MRCC at the previous meeting. He reminded the MRCC that the Coordinated Plan would have goals and objectives, but strategies would be addressed in an annual or biannual work plan. This will allow the MRCC to be more responsive to new grant opportunities or policy and funding changes. J.B. noted that he hoped to have a priority projects section be part of the plan. He distributed a self-assessment tool handout and suggested that members should do this before the next meeting. The first page of the handout focused on the purpose of the handout and the second page lists project ideas that were in the previous Coordinated Plan and have been brought up at meetings. Most of these project ideas would require new funding. For each project idea, the handout gauges each MRCC's partner's level of interest/willingness to participate in the project as well as whether the project is high or low priority for that agency. J.B. noted that this handout

could be added into the plan and that the committee members should fill it out and return it to SWRPC by July 6th, 2017. Suzanne Bansley suggested adding a column for members for rank each project idea from the perspective of the MRCC as a whole based on the level of importance. J.B. responded that he will make those changes and send it out to the MRCC.

VI. Partner Updates

Ellen Avery announced that CVTC was given the opportunity to participate in the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) safe driver program and if committee members are interested or know anyone who is interested to be a part of the program to let Ellen know before July 15th. Kelly Sterner asked if Ellen could send out a reminder to the MRCC. Bob Perry announced that VET currently has 4 vehicles but one is a volunteer who had his own car and only is on the road a few times a week. Michael Acerno mentioned that HCS is adding 2 more buses that were supposed to have arrived a month and a half ago. He noted that they have plenty of drivers due to the summer. HCS is also working closely with Keene State College to have a live feed on their buses to let riders have more information about bus locations. Kathy Baird noted that she is still looking for a volunteer coordinator that would include a 21 hour a week schedule and a Keene based office. She asked the MRCC if they could ask around for anyone that is interested. J.B. Mack announced that SWRPC wrote a grant to look at the feasibility of an intermodal transportation center in greater Keene. J.B. will keep the MRCC updated when the project begins. Ellen Avery mentioned that the CVTC will begin a surveying process since they have been providing services to the entire Monadnock Region for a whole year. She has been in contact with a lady from Cheshire Medical Center that is helping her out on the survey and asked if the MRCC would like to be a part of the surveying process. This will occur around fall so the committee has time to respond.

VII. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

VIII. Next Meeting

Next meeting will be determined through an online poll and will occur in late August or early September.

IX. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ali Gilleran
Office Support