

Monadnock Regional Coordinating Council for Community Transportation

MINUTES

November 17, 2015

Present: Michael Acerno, *Home Healthcare, Hospice and Community Services (HCS)*; Susan Ashworth, *HCS*; Ellen Avery, *Contoocook Valley Transportation Center*; Kathy Baird, *Monadnock RSVP*; Suzanne Bansley, *Cheshire County*; April Buzby, *Keene Housing*; Liz Chipman, *Keene Housing Kids Collaborative*; Karen Fabis, *American Red Cross – NH West Chapter ARC*; Eileen Fernandes, *Cheshire Medical Center*; Bill Graff, *Monadnock at Home*; Kelly Steiner, *Monadnock United Way*; Chuck Weed, *Cheshire County Commissioners*; Gary Welch, *ARC*.

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

Guests present were Jane LaPointe, consultant.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Kelly Steiner welcomed everyone and introductions were made. She introduced Jane Lapointe, a consultant who was asked to help with the MRCC visioning process. Jane Lapointe gave a brief overview of what she hopes the group will accomplish during this meeting. J.B. Mack added that the MRCC as a group has struggled to get people to the table to coordinate and improve transportation services in the region. He added that the point of the meeting today is to figure out how to include a broader cross section of stakeholders into the process by asking them to participate in reframing the vision of the MRCC.

II. MRCC Vision Discussion

Jane Lapointe began the discussion by going over what purpose an organization's vision serves. She used flipcharts to illustrate her points. The Vision is the enduring, or unchanging, part of the organization that includes the core values, purpose/mission, and ambitions of the organization. She reviewed the MRCC mission, which is "To create a sustainable community transportation network that provides all community members, specifically those most in need of transportation, access to service and opportunities inside the Region and to neighboring regions." The MRCC should look at its vision statement as a tool to determine who should be part of MRCC, how organizations can contribute to MRCC, what guides the MRCC's decisions and actions, and the MRCC leadership.

Jane Lapointe talked about the "Leadership Diamond," which illustrates the concept that people are inspired to commit to a purpose/mission for different and related reasons. Some people are driven by unmet needs or what isn't working (Reality node on the diamond), some people are driven by what could be (Vision node), some are motivated by what should be (Ethics node), and some are driven by the opportunity or need to take bold action (Courage node). The Leadership Diamond is a tool to understand where people are coming from and view potential conflicts, or "Either/Or" situations into polarities, or "Both/And" situations. She mentioned another tool called "polarity mapping management."

Jane Lapointe asked the group to think about the year 2020 or 2025. She asked what the group would see or would like to see. Bill Graff said that he would like to see that no person in the Region is denied access to anything due to lack of access to transportation. Ellen Avery added that everyone should be

able to work, heal, learn, and play. Kelly Steiner said that her vision is to have a circuit of transportation among all of the Monadnock Region towns. Michael Acerno said that everyone is able to live independently because of transportation. Liz Chipman said that it is a system that people would choose to use. Gary Welch said that another important component is getting rid of barriers between organizations so they are better able to work together, which was re-worded as “We’ve broken the limits of our silos.” April Buzby said that a person’s location should not be a barrier to them getting everything they want and need. Gary Welch said that the MRCC should have access to funding and resources to meet its goals. J.B. Mack said that transportation should be customer-service driven and easy/simple for people to use. Michael Acerno added that it should be efficient, in terms of energy conservation and convenience.

Next, Jane Lapointe asked the group who this is for. Susan Bansley said it is for people who live, work, and visit the Monadnock Region. Liz Chipman said that it would be great if there were a cultural shift so that it was the norm to ride public transportation. Ellen Avery said it is for businesses because it assures them a mobile workforce and customers who can access the businesses. Susan Ashworth said it is an essential part of the region’s economic engine. Ellen Avery added that Towns and Cities in the region should plan for housing/development with transportation in mind. Kelly Steiner said that she would like to see youth highlighted as a group that should be served. Eileen Fernandes noted that transportation can decrease isolation.

J.B. Mack continued the discussion, saying that the mission statement specifically addresses transportation for those who need it most. Kelly Steiner added that this has historically been funding-driven. Eileen Fernandes noted that another issue is the culture of transportation. For example, people are not car-sharing or sharing rides as much as they should be. April Buzby brought up the issue of late boomers and millennials, two groups that are not driving cars as much. She noted that millennials may be urbanizing because they aren’t able to access services, entertainment, etc., in non-urban areas. Ellen Avery brought up the issue of “aging in place,” and the situation that many people are facing where past decisions to live far from services have left people isolated when they can no longer drive. She noted that it would be good to have more options for people to live that have better access to services.

April Buzby brought up an example of a transportation system in Toronto that was designed to provide in-place services to retirement communities. Kelly Steiner noted that another issue is the loss of infrastructure over time; tracks, trails, roads, bridges are crumbling. J.B. Mack added that transportation agencies aren’t replacing their vehicles as often as they would like to.

Jane Lapointe asked the group another question: “If you were to achieve the vision that you just talked about, what would the highlights of your story be? How did you achieve your vision?” Susan Bansley noted that she commutes from Brattleboro to Keene, and she now recognizes many of her fellow commuters. She would like to say that she used to have to drive her car to work, but now she doesn’t have to. There was a cultural shift where everyone now uses public transportation first, and only people with wealth use cars as a privilege. Karen Fabis added that there needs to be an incentive to spark a cultural shift. Susan Bansley said that this time, we had a vision and members of the community came to the table and we worked together to make it happen.

Jane LaPointe then asked the group “How does the MRCC get the right people to the table?” April Buzby mentioned awareness as an issue. Gary Welch noted that people need to know what they will get out of being part of the group. Ellen Avery noted that one way to see if the MRCC is being successful would be if transportation was no longer showing up on the hospital’s needs assessment. Gary Welch noted that the MRCC has always intended to be inclusive, but perhaps it needs to do a better job of marketing the group.

The group took a short break at 2:30 p.m.

J.B. Mack brought up the Monadnock Alliance for Sustainable Transportation (MAST), which is also focused on creating a sustainable transportation system in the Monadnock Region, but is more broadly focused than the MRCC. He said that there was a meeting about a year ago when both groups, the MRCC and MAST, met and discussed the possibility of merging. Suzanne Bansley noted that, at that time, the groups had different focuses and therefore, they decided not to merge. Jane Lapointe noted that there might be an opportunity for the two groups to do strategic planning together. This is called shared governance.

Kelly Steiner asked the group how people feel about meeting with MAST. Ellen Avery noted that the group still hasn't finished the visioning discussion, and this should be completed first. Jane Lapointe offered to come back to continue the visioning discussion at another meeting. She would type up her notes from this meeting, and the group could collectively decide what to pull out from this discussion to create its vision. Kelly Steiner asked for a show of hands to see who would be interested in continuing the visioning discussion. Everyone present raised their hands.

Susan Ashworth asked if it would make sense to involve more members from MAST in the visioning discussion for the MRCC because that group has a broader set of stakeholders. Kelly Steiner said that this sounds like a good idea, and she asked if the four MAST members present would be willing to reach out to that group. J.B. Mack said he would send out the MAST vision, mission, and strategic plan to the MRCC.

The group took a 2 minute break.

III. Minutes August 18, 2015

The minutes of August 18, 2015 were approved by unanimous vote.

IV. Brief Updates

a. Co-Treasurer's Reports

J.B. Mack gave a brief overview of the DOT 5310 report, which provides information about volunteer hours, trips denied, ambulatory trips provided, and accessible trips provided. J.B. Mack noted that HCS is above budget for the ambulatory one-way trips provided, which he thinks is good. He asked for more clarification about this item on the report.

Ellen Avery gave an update on the formula funding. She noted that the Red Cross and CVTC are the two groups that are drawing down funds. J.B. Mack asked if the blank spaces indicate zero; Ellen Avery answered that it does.

b. Status of Allocation Subcommittee

J.B. Mack said that the former by-laws subcommittee recommended the formation of an allocation subcommittee so that there would be enough people without a conflict of interest to make funding allocation decisions that would be brought before the MRCC for adoption. J.B. Mack reached out to the SWRPC Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and MAST, and there were two volunteers: Rhett Lamb representing TAC and Will Schoefmann representing MAST. He has also asked Kathy Baird of Monadnock RSVP who has agreed, and has also

reached out to Chuck Weed representing Cheshire County. Kelly Steiner reached out to two people on the board of the Monadnock United Way, Kathy Gross and Rob Harris. The MRCC will need to vote to approve the members of the allocation subcommittee.

c. Conflict of Interest Policy

Kelly Steiner noted that another recommendation of the by-laws subcommittee was to create a conflict of interest policy. J.B. Mack created a sample policy, which was handed out to all members present. Kelly Steiner asked the group to provide feedback to J.B. Mack before the next meeting. J.B. Mack will include a reminder in an email.

Chuck Weed asked what non-financial conflicts of interest there might be. J.B. Mack noted that he left the language open in case there are unforeseen situations that arise. Kelly Steiner asked Chuck Weed to give his feedback to J.B. Mack via email.

d. American Red Cross and Contoocook Valley Transportation Company (CVTC) Partnership

Kelly Steiner gave a brief background on the transfer of services from the Red Cross to the CVTC. The MRCC will have to make decisions about how funding will be allocated for the last 6 months of the current fiscal year.

Karen Fabis gave a brief overview of the partnership between CVTC and the Red Cross. The Red Cross is making a nationwide shift away from transportation in order to focus more on their core mission. They decided to transfer transportation services over to CVTC. They have two programs, the Rural Ride program, which uses volunteer drivers, and the local and long-distance transportation program, which uses Red Cross vehicles. Phase I of the transfer will begin in January with the Rural Ride program, and Phase II will begin in April with the local and long-distance transportation program. They hope to finish by June 30, 2015 with transferring all services.

Ellen Avery added that the two different Red Cross programs have different timeframes and geographic distributions. CVTC is hoping to bring other partners to the table, such as HCS, to help them determine how they could be more successful.

Kelly Steiner asked if the Red Cross has a specific request of the MRCC. Karen Fabis replied that yes, they are asking the MRCC to respond to a request to transfer funds later in the year to the CVTC. J.B. Mack noted that they had a conference call with the NHDOT Bureau of Rail and Transit, and they requested that the MRCC provide meeting minutes that show the group approved the transfer of funds from the Red Cross to the CVTC. Kelly Steiner added that the group may need to have a process for determining who will receive the funds, because it is possible that another group will request them. She added that this is why having an allocation sub-committee in place is important.

J.B. Mack noted that the issue of allocating funds is more time-sensitive than the visioning meeting, and he asked the group if the next meeting in December should be focused on this issue. The visioning discussion could continue in January. The group agreed with this plan.

V. Next Meeting

The group decided to send out a poll to schedule the next MRCC meeting in December.

VI. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mari Brunner
Planner