

Monadnock Region Coordinating Council for Community Transportation

MINUTES

December 6, 2016

Present: Michael Acerno, *Home Healthcare, Hospice Community Services (HCS)*; Susan Ashworth, *HCS*; Ellen Avery, *Community Volunteer Transportation Company (CVTC)*; April Buzby, *Keene Housing*; Liz Chipman, *Keene Housing Kids Collaborative*; Stephanie Fields, *Monadnock Developmental Services*; Bill Graff, *Monadnock At Home*; Jane LaPointe, *HumanKind Consulting, Inc.*; Bob Perry, *Volunteers Enabling Transportation (VET)*; Matt Waitkins, *Nashua Regional Planning Commission*; Chuck Weed, *Citizen*; Gary Welch, *Disabled American Veterans (DAV)*.

Staff members present were J. B. Mack, *Principal Planner* and Liz Kelly, *Planning Technician*.

I. Minutes of September 28, 2016

Bob Perry noted that “Volunteers Enabling Transportation” is written incorrectly on page 5 of the minutes. J.B. Mack said that he will fix this. The minutes of September 28, 2016 were approved by unanimous vote with Bob Perry’s amendment.

II. Co-Treasurers’ Reports

J. B. Mack referred to the October 5310 Purchase of Service report and October 5310 Formula report. There were no questions or comments from MRCC members on either report.

III. Subcommittee Reports

a. Data Collection Subcommittee

April Buzby reported that the subcommittee accumulated information on how each agency collects ridership data. Additionally, Raul Gonzalez from SWRPC conducted site visits to each agency to learn more about their data collection methods. The subcommittee then put together recommendations designed to create more consistency and uniformity between data collection methods.

The subcommittee recommends that the MRCC run a pilot program that incorporates the data collection recommendations from January 1, 2017 to June 30, 2017. Once the pilot is complete, the MRCC can review the results of the data collection effort to see what worked well and if any additional changes need to be made. A memo was distributed describing the pilot project.

Susan Ashworth asked if this information would be submitted to a depository. If so, she has concern about recording rider’s names if there’s risk that the depository isn’t secure. J. B. Mack mentioned that if an agency doesn’t want to record full names, they can provide an ID number. She also mentioned that they could just record last names. J. B. Mack thanked the subcommittee for putting this together.

b. Outreach Subcommittee

Ellen Avery explained that the goal of the outreach subcommittee is to develop outreach methods and materials that convey information about who the MRCC is and what they do. Ms. Avery referenced the

draft MRCC brochure that the group has been working on. The subcommittee would like to start making presentations about the MRCC to municipalities soon and will be distributing brochures during those meetings. Ellen Avery mentioned that the wording may change based on today's upcoming discussions.

Chuck Weed asked if the various agency's telephone numbers should be listed on the brochure. Currently, J. B. Mack's phone number is the only contact information listed. Ellen Avery responded that she could do this. Jane LaPointe suggested that the subcommittee add a reminder on the back of the brochure to use the community transportation directory to contact an agency.

J. B. Mack presented a "town transportation facts" handout that he and his colleague, Henry Underwood put together to accompany the brochures at meetings with municipalities. This handout will provide community transportation information specific to each town such as the number of rides MRCC providers have given in a community and data about the vulnerable populations living in their town from Census data (such as elderly, youth, and low income people).

Bob Perry asked if there was a timeline established for finalizing and distributing outreach materials. Ellen Avery responded that, ideally, the brochure and handouts will be finished by the end of the calendar year. Bob Perry said that Volunteers Enabling Transportation (VET) would like to join the MRCC and, once they're officially part of the group, can be added to the brochure. Ellen Avery suggested a deadline of 12/21/2016 for MRCC members to provide comments on the outreach materials.

J. B. Mack asked the MRCC to vote on the data subcommittee proposal.

Motion: To accept the Data Collection Subcommittee's recommendations for a data collection pilot project.

Motion by Michael Acerno, seconded by Ellen Avery. Approved by unanimous vote.

IV. Discussion Regarding Coordinated Community Transportation Plan Goals, Objectives and Strategies

J. B. Mack reintroduced Jane LaPointe to the MRCC and summarized the timeline for the MRCC to update its Coordinated Community Transportation Plan. He mentioned that at the last MRCC meeting, he asked the group to take some time to provide feedback on how much progress has been made on all of the goals, objectives, and strategies listed in the plan. Before the meeting, he sent out a homework assignment asking MRCC members to define how much progress has been made on each of the Coordinated Community Transportation Plan's goals, objectives and strategies. Jane LaPointe began facilitating a discussion by stressing the importance that the group keep going back to the MRCC mission statement to see if all of the goals listed support that statement. Is the MRCC actively leading and engaging the region to build a transportation network that's innovative, coordinated, and resilient? Chuck Weed mentioned the importance of communicating the MRCC's vision and mission to citizens. He also mentioned that he wasn't aware of some of the objectives listed in the plan, which could mean more internal communication within the group is needed.

Jane LaPointe went through each of the four goals in the Coordinated Community Transportation Plan and their associated objectives and strategies listed in the plan. A chart was shown next to the goals that showed MRCC responses to how much progress they think has been made on each objective. Respondents chose one of three answers: little to no progress, moderate progress, or a high amount of progress. Jane Lapointe then asked the group to provide any other comments or feedback they have on each goal. Is the MRCC concentrating on the right projects? Does the MRCC need to revise its goals, objectives and strategies or recommit to them? The group began discussing each goal individually.

Goal 1: Improve general awareness about community transportation resources, needs, and the benefits of coordination.

April Buzby noted that it seemed like the group has already accomplished a few of its objectives related to how they function as a committee. Jane LaPointe observed that many of the objectives that are listed fell under two categories: “operational” and “strategic”. Ellen Avery suggested that the completed objectives could have a “Completed By” date next to the objective. Bill Graff voiced support for this idea. Jane LaPointe noted that the MRCC will need to identify completed objectives as a group at a later date. Susan Ashworth voiced that, though some items can be checked off, there are a number of objectives that are ongoing or require somewhat regular follow up (such as keeping the Community Transportation Directory up to date) and that it will be important to identify those. Matt Waitkins noted that objective 5C mentions coordination with neighboring regions. He noted that this is an important task to highlight and that the MRCC might want to focus on identifying opportunities to collaborate.

April Buzby noted that engaging citizens is not reflected as much in this goal, despite its importance. Ellen Avery articulated that those objectives identified by respondents as making little progress were more labor intensive and time consuming than some of the others (such as creating a marketing plan). Jane LaPointe asked the group whether they felt like there was still a lack of infrastructure and available resources within the committee. Ellen Avery said that many of these larger objectives cost money, which is a limited resource. SWRPC plays a large role in helping create and distribute materials, but the capacity might not be present to complete some of the objectives, whether that’s due to lack of time, money, or skills. J. B. Mack observed that, though these are challenges, the MRCC is making a lot of progress in developing outreach materials and that the group is now starting to identify sources of funding to make these objectives happen.

Goal 2: Improve and maintain governing framework.

Liz Chipman pointed out that 2E and 2F objectives, which focus on outreach to stakeholders, should be under Goal 1. She said that to effectively reach out to the public, the MRCC needs to get all key players in public transportation at the table. J. B. Mack asked what can draw other transportation players into this group. What is in it for new members? Why *isn’t* everyone at the table? What would it take to influence them? Jane LaPointe considered this to be a topic that the group should revisit in the future. Ellen Avery mentioned that the MRCC has a vision statement, but not a shared and tangible picture of that vision. Jane LaPointe said that the most successful organizations and collaboratives have that shared vision.

Bob Perry pointed out that newcomers attending an MRCC meeting might not want to come back if that meeting is solely focusing on 5310 funding, which only impacts a select few transportation agencies. Agencies want to be part of something that is of relevance to them. Jane Lapointe echoed that meetings should be structured accordingly if newcomers are expected. Meetings should focus on giving newcomers information on what the organization does and how it can benefit them. She also said that there is a fundamental difference between an operational meeting and a strategic meeting, and that if there are new individuals present at a meeting, it should be focused on the latter. Bill Graff pointed out that many respondents identified very different levels of progress for the same objective, reflecting the need for better communication within the MRCC to ensure everyone is aware of the group’s ongoing efforts. Stephanie Fields noted that many respondents who rated low progress for an objective may not know about what efforts are underway to accomplish that objective. Jane LaPointe recognized that this is an important distinction. This process reflects people’s different understanding of the same objective.

Jane LaPointe mentioned that an Action Plan can help provide more details related to implementation such as identifying project leaders, timeframes, and prioritizing strategies. This way, tracking progress can be less subjective and more efficient. J. B. Mack said that the formation of the three subcommittees (allocation subcommittee, data subcommittee, and the outreach subcommittee) was a way to help implement the Coordinated Community Transportation Plan and free up general meeting time.

Goal 3: Develop new funding sources and continue to maintain existing funding streams.

Under this goal, respondents identified the many objectives as achieving little progress. Ellen Avery noted that objectives 3C and 3N are basically the same thing. Bob Perry distinguished the two by pointing out that 3N is specific to transportation providers, whereas 3C is pertinent to the whole group. April Buzby noted that 3I and 3J are very similar to objectives listed under Goal 1. She also remarked that many of the objectives under Goal 3 cannot be accomplished until significant marketing has been done. Jane LaPointe explained the benefits of having a strategic marketing plan for the group. This plan includes targeting specific segments of populations, investors, or partners, identifying how to market to them specifically, and developing strategies to engage them. Susan Ashworth mentioned that we need the data ready to be successful in marketing to various groups.

Matt Waitkins asked if additional direction from the State Coordinating Council (SCC) might be helpful to develop these objectives. He said that the SCC is currently writing the Statewide Coordinated Plan which will be finished by January 31, 2017. Jane LaPointe mentioned that this could be a good resource. It's helpful if a group doesn't have to reinvent the wheel. If another RCC has developed a robust marketing plan that the MRCC could learn from, then that saves time. Ellen Avery mentioned that the SCC recently held a Volunteer Driver Summit and is planning on coordinating this event on a yearly or bi-annually basis. Jane LaPointe asked if the problem of getting everyone to the same table is a problem throughout the state. Matt Waitkins noted that the SCC did meet with all the RCCs to collect feedback and information pertinent to the statewide coordinated plan. He also noted that the SCC is planning a rollout of the new document and will be providing presentations once it's finished.

Jane LaPointe redirected the conversation to focus on attacking the problem of having a lack of funding for public transportation. Liz Chipman noticed that there appeared to be little collaborative effort in searching and applying for funds together, as a group, and that it's largely done on an individual basis. She asked the group whether the wording should change for this goal if individual providers indeed are largely seeking funding themselves. Ellen Avery stated that the group needed to identify what the needs for funds are. Jane LaPointe mentioned that many of the bottom strategies display gaps. The MRCC needs to identify the amount of funds that will be needed to operate new services. She also noted that understanding who is willing to participate in new projects is important. The group shouldn't go after funds if no one is willing to put the work into drafting a proposal or application. Susan Ashworth pointed out that the MRCC could play a larger role in advocating for federal funds that are more flexible. It was noted that the group might want to revisit objectives 3G-3N to determine if they are relevant to the MRCC's work, considering the lack of capacity in some areas.

Goal 4: Implement regional coordination activities.

Ellen Avery recognized that many of the objectives under Goal 4 were taken from the old SCC requirements and may not be relevant anymore. Jane LaPointe asked the group to consider tabling this goal until the MRCC receives the new SCC statewide coordinated plan, to see if there's any implications related to this goal. The group agreed.

After reviewing the MRCC's responses to each of the goals, Jane Lapointe referred to goal recommendations that were made by respondents as part of the homework assignment. She said that she

would go back to the drawing table and work on developing materials to help the group identify priority strategies for their Action Plan. She also said that she will work with J. B. Mack to come up with thoughts and ideas for how the group should progress from here.

V. Other Business

J. B. Mack announced that NH DOT has released grant solicitations for 5310 and 5311 funding. He recommended that the Allocation Subcommittee prepare to meet to discuss a process for evaluating any grant proposals to the MRCC and bring back recommendations to the full committee at the next MRCC meeting. NH DOT's deadlines for submitting grant applications will occur in late February and early March 2017.

Michael Acerno and Matt Waitkens provided an update on the SCC's activities. The SCC Coordinated Plan's recommendations are most likely going to be more broad and general. The plan will be completed by the end of January, 2017.

VI. Partner Updates

Bob Perry and Gary Welch provided an update on VET. The new group is slowly growing but is in need of financial resources to build on its operational capabilities. They also noted that VET is officially a 501(c)3 organization now.

Michael Acerno spoke about HCS' three new buses. He explained that two are for the Friendly Bus line and the other is for the Keene State College Campus Shuttle line. He also noted that the updated community transportation directory has been useful thus far.

VII. Next Meeting

The next MRCC meeting will be Wednesday, January 25, 2017 from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Kelly
Planning Technician