

**Monadnock Regional Coordinating Council
For Community Transportation**

Minutes

May 16, 2023

Present: Ellen Avery, Chair, *Community Volunteer Transportation Corporation (CTVC)*; Charlie Pratt, Vice Chair, *Home Health Care, Hospice & Community Services (HCS)*; Suzanne Bansley, Treasurer, *Cheshire County*; Mary Jensen, Secretary, *Keene Senior Center (KSC)*; Frank Dobisky, *Thomas Transportation (TT)*; Sally Malay, *Keene Housing Kids Collaborative (KHKC)*.

SWRPC Staff Present: Terry Johnson, *Senior Project Manager*; Rich Clough, *Office Support Specialist*.

Guests Present: Erika Alusic-Bingham, *Southern New Hampshire Services (SNHS)*; Teri Palmer, *NH Statewide Mobility Manager*; Candy Reed, *Sullivan County Mobility Manager*; Jennifer Robinson, *Cheshire County*.

I. Welcome

Chair Avery called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m., introductions were made.

II. Approval of April 18, 2023 Minutes

Motion: To approve the minutes of April 18, 2023.

Motion by Frank Dobisky, seconded by Suzanne Bansley. Approved by unanimous vote.

III. Treasurer's Report

Suzanne Bansley reported on budget drawdowns for April, noting that CTVC has spent more funds than anticipated and that HCS usage has dropped. Charlie Pratt stated that HCS had to use other funds for April but there would be an increase in drawdowns in coming months. Suzanne Bansley noted that a budget revision is needed to reallocate \$50,000 from the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) budget to address shortfalls. She also stated that she would contact the NHDOT about the revision and she will share the outcome of the discussion with the MRCC. Terry Johnson asked if there was a need to reconcile the NH Department of Health and Human Services (NHDHHS) budget. Suzanne Bansley noted that there was no change and it would not be necessary. She stated that she would need an estimate from HCS on expected spending for the Tuesday and Thursday Shopping Shuttle service to help with budget planning for the next fiscal year. Terry Johnson noted that expenditures to date on many line items are running higher than anticipated. Teri Palmer stated that Section 5311 funds might be available to help cover shortfalls and help sustain current projects. She recommended that transportation providers contact Fred Butler of NHDOT for information. Suzanne Bansley noted that with the additional trips being charged to the NHDHHS budget, providers will need additional funds by November or December of this year. Terry Johnson noted that multiple organizations have indicated interest in soliciting NHDHHS Transportation Equity funds including the Keene Senior Center. Suzanne Bansley stated that they should still apply even if the funds have run out. It is important to demonstrate need in applications. She said the NHDOT budget revision would need to be approved by the MRCC.

Motion: To reallocate the amount of \$20,000 from the Regional Mobility Manager line item in the NHDOT Enhanced Mobility budget to Purchase of Services as follows: \$3,000 for HCS scheduled

and demand response services, \$15,800 for CVTC volunteer driver services, and \$1,200 for Keene Senior Center volunteer driver services.

Motion by Suzanne Bansley, seconded by Mary Jensen. Approved by unanimous vote with Ellen Avery, Charlie Pratt and Mary Jensen abstaining.

Sally Malay asked about the duration of funds for current Transportation Equity projects and whether there is any carry over. Suzanne Bansley explained that Cheshire County will de-obligate funds on May 31, 2023 and that unexpended funds will be reallocated to new agreements to be effective on June 1, 2023.

IV. Community Transportation Collaborative Discussion

Terry Johnson provided an update on the background of the Community Transportation Collaborative (CTC) workgroup and its purpose. He stated that the group is exploring multiple strategies for creating a transportation service, the management and cost of which would be shared by multiple organizations. The purpose is to reduce the costs and challenges of providing transportation services to youth from low-income families and other transit-dependent groups. The workgroup is exploring multiple strategies. One strategy involves shared use of underutilized vehicles. This would entail surveying agencies that provide transportation services to create a regionwide vehicle inventory, establishing agreements with agencies that participate in the network, developing an operating model for scheduling of vehicles and financial management, securing funding to support the network, and recruitment of drivers. A second strategy involves establishing a centralized scheduling/dispatch center, or one call-one click system, in which multiple transportation agencies participate, including human services agencies that provide transportation services. The system would be funded through federal and other sources and financial contributions from agencies in the network.

Terry Johnson provided additional background information and stated that he is seeking input from the MRCC on behalf of the workgroup. He noted that the workgroup's efforts fit into a larger effort to establish a new transit and community transportation operations and governance model for the region, a recommendation that emerged from the Microtransit and Fixed-Route Transit Study recently completed by a consultant on behalf of SWRPC and HCS. He said that SWRPC has secured NHDOT funding to support the latter project which is scheduled to begin in July of this year.

Terry Johnson said the CTC workgroup has begun to look at case studies and examples of one call-one click models being implemented elsewhere. He highlighted TripLink as an example of a one call-one click type system being operated by the COAST transit agency in the New Hampshire seacoast area. Terry Johnson recently interviewed the individual who oversees TripLink. Seven transportation programs participate in TripLink, which features a central call center for booking and dispatching rides and a common rider application for all transportation services.

Frank Dobisky, a CTC workgroup participant, asked if it would be possible for workgroup members to visit the operations. Terry Johnson replied he had asked the same question of his TripLink contact who would welcome a visit. Frank Dobisky asked if there was sustainable funding currently available for such a program. Terry Johnson replied that TripLink is funded through federal transportation grants, private foundation grants, donors, and contributions from participating transportation providers. Teri Palmer said that NHDOT has funding available through its Section 5307, 5310 and 5313 programs. She also reported that other programs in the state have centralized ride coordination services. Coordination of rides from the volunteer driver program and other on-demand services in the Mid-State Region all goes through the Community Action Program. In terms of shared vehicle use, she noted that Plymouth State University student buses allow public access from shopping centers, and they receive some municipal assistance.

Teri Palmer recommended it will be helpful to build community and funding support through a public outreach campaign. She said other regions have had success engaging local Chambers of Commerce to sponsor forums. Sally Malay reported that she tries to expand awareness of youth transportation issues at interagency meetings. Terry Johnson reported that the upcoming transportation operations and governance model study will include a public engagement component to be launched during the early phases of the project after it begins in July. Chair Avery asked if there is a time constraint regarding the need to establish a Community Transportation Collaborative model. Terry Johnson replied in the affirmative. He said current funding for the KHKC youth transportation and other Transportation Equity funded projects ends in May 2024.

V. MRCC Officers

Chair Avery noted that it is time for the MRCC to select officers for the upcoming two-year term beginning July 1, 2023. She announced she will be stepping down as Chair after serving for two terms. She thanked the MRCC for its good energy around improving community transportation and SWRPC for its staff support. Frank Dobisky agreed to accept the nomination for Chair, Charlie Pratt as Vice Chair, and Mary Jensen as Secretary. Suzanne Bansley indicated that a representative from Cheshire County is able to serve as Treasurer. The officer slate will be put before the MRCC for an official vote at the June meeting.

VI. Partner Updates

Teri Palmer reported that the NH Council on Aging had indicated support for transportation initiatives to improve outreach, decrease social isolation, provide a resource to participate in a variety of activities, and that NH House Bill 2 included one-million dollars of funding to support transportation initiatives. Mary Jensen noted that KSC has submitted a Transportation Equity project solicitation for \$8,850 to recruit more Cheshire Village at Home volunteer drivers and members, in particular targeting people 50-60 years of age and older. She stated that if the number of drivers increased it would improve services and thus increase membership. Teri Palmer recommended that outreach and education include community forums, expos, and other public events. Mary Jensen reminded the MRCC of a volunteer fair today from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. at the Keene Ice Arena. Chair Avery said that the fair would be a good place to network. She also reported that the Monadnock Community Hospital was celebrating its 100-year anniversary on Saturday, June 3rd in Peterborough.

VII. Mobility Manager Update

Terry Johnson reported on outreach to municipalities and that the town of Jaffrey and Winchester signed a resolution in support of the NH Public Transportation Coalition's efforts to secure more funding for transit and community transportation in the State budget.

VIII. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for June 20, 2023.

IX. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 10:34 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rich Clough
Office Support Specialist