

Alliance for Community Transportation General Membership Meeting Minutes - January 4, 2017 - 9:00am, McConnell Center, Dover

Members Present: Debbie Bartley (Lamprey Health), Scott Bogle (RPC), Donna Fanny (NH Association for the Blind), Steve Goodspeed (Ready Rides), Carol Gulla (TASC), Linda Howard (Homemakers), Tory Jennison (Region 6 Integrated Delivery Network), Colin Lentz (SRPC), Margie Longus (Ready Rides), Rad Nichols (COAST), Debra Perou (RNMOW), Cheryl Robicheau (Strafford CAP), Meri Schmalz (Ready Rides),
Others Present: Jeff Donald (COAST),

1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting began at 9:02

2. Approval of Minutes from meeting on December 7th 2016). {VOTE}

-S. Bogle moved to approve the minutes as written, C. Robicheau seconded the motion

-All in favor

3. Purchased Transportation Update (October - December)

J. Donald reviewed draft numbers for recent ridership for purchased transportation. He noted increased ridership for Ready Rides and The Community Rides in December. T. Jennison asked what usually causes a “denial” of service. J. Donald explained that the term “denial rate” really refers to unmet need, not that specific clients are being denied service. T. Jennison asked if ACT had exact numbers of clients. J. Donald said those numbers could be determined for agencies using TripLink, but he would have to look into how to get those numbers from others and would add it to the quarterly report.

J. Donald said he had received NH DOT’s funding notice for 5310 POS funding. He explained that the amount is slightly higher than last year, but due to the continued growth of POS providers, it essentially covers that growth over the previous year and doesn’t allow for anything additional. He added that he’s waiting for two-year draft budgets from Ready Rides, Rockingham Nutrition Meals on Wheels, and TASC. J. Donald said that the notice for 5310 Formula funding has not been released yet so he’s unsure what it will look like. He said he anticipated it to be slightly lower than in past years, when ACT had both 5310 and 5317 funds. As 5317 funds are phased out at the federal level they will no longer be available. He said he was hoping to hear about the Formula Funds at an upcoming SCC meeting. D. Perou asked for clarification on the three pots of funding. J. Donald explained that some 5317 remain, but the funding really comes from FTA5310 for Formula and POS.

J. Donald proposed meeting in February to discuss the budget. He proposed either February 1st or 15th.

S. Bogle suggested that both dates be reserved in case members wanted extra time to discuss issues.

J. Donald said he would reserve both dates and proposed having a first workgroup discussion on February 1st and a final discussion and approval on the 15th

4. Coordinated Plan

J. Donald said the draft Coordinate Plan was still in development. He described the draft recommendations that would be included in chapter 8 of the Coordinated Plan and asked members to take a few minutes to review the recommendations (which were included in a handout at the meeting).

S. Bogle explained that the language of the recommendations was purposely broad because the final

plan will be used to apply for FTA funds to accomplish a wide range of goals. If plan language is too specific it can restrict funding availability for future planning and implementation efforts.

[Meeting attendees spent several minutes reading the draft recommendations]

S. Bogle and R. Nichols both commended J. Donald on the recommendations, saying they would be great for future grant applications.

S. Bogle asked if Ann Rugg [manager of the regional Transportation Management Association] would be interested in starting a van-pool. R. Nichols responded that sustainable funding for van-pools was a concern.

J. Donald said he would be working with S. Bogle and C. Lentz to develop a full draft plan to bring to the membership soon for approval.

5. Service Standards & Contract Template

J. Donald explained that it had been difficult to resolve contracts with new POS providers because of complicated legal requirements and multiple insurance structures. He said COAST was working with their attorney to create a clear contract and insurance template for future POS agreements. J. Donald explained that they were also working with the COAST attorney to update service standards, particularly the drug and alcohol testing protocol. He said he wanted to have a discussion with the membership to review drug and alcohol policy because requirements were complicated depending on the type of transportation provider. J. Donald explained that there are essentially two types of drug and alcohol policies: DOT and non-DOT policies. If a provider receives DOT funds for transportation services, they are required to use the DOT-approved drug and alcohol policy; if they do not receive DOT funds they are required to NOT use the DOT-approved policy, and use a complete separate policy. J. Donald explained that the variability in regulatory and funding requirements among ACT providers prohibits everyone from using the same level of stringency when it comes to drug and alcohol testing. He said it had been suggested that ACT members use a non-DOT drug and alcohol policy that is as similar as possible to ensure consistency and make it easier for providers to accept DOT funding if it became available without making drastic changes to their drug and alcohol policies.

J. Donald asked the members for their thoughts on whether it made more sense to implement a standardized drug and alcohol policy for all providers in the RC (regardless of their funding source), or let non-DOT-funded providers wait until they had access to DOT funds to adopt a drug and alcohol policy.

T. Jennison asked about specific differences in the DOT and non-DOT testing protocol. J. Donald said he wasn't familiar with the details of the separate protocol, but that R. Nichols and COAST's new Director of Operations were very familiar with various protocol. R. Nichols explained that COAST is the only entity in the RCC currently required to have an FTA drug and alcohol testing protocol, but others may be required to use one from the Federal Motor Carriers Safety Association (FMCSA) because they have CDL vehicles. He said there aren't theoretically supposed to be differences between the two, but there are. He added that if an agency uses a DOT testing protocol, they have to follow the specific regulations but can go above and beyond if they specify how they are exceeding them.

J. Donald reiterated that the question was whether to ask all ACT member agencies to use a "non-DOT" drug and alcohol testing protocol that is just as stringent so they are able to smoothly transition to using federal funding for operations. What would be the best approach to ensure drivers and clients are safe?

L. Howard asked if it would be an option for ACT to form its own consortium. R. Nichols responded COAST uses NH Motor Transport Association which allows the agency to avoid additional administrative burden and scrutiny. He said it would be possible to form a new consortium, but he wasn't sure how difficult it would be to implement. He suggested that J. Donald could enquire with the SCC about the process. J. Donald pointed out that the current discussion does not apply to Volunteer Driver Programs.

J. Donald said that there would be future opportunities to continue the discussion about drug and alcohol testing and encouraged members to contact him with questions and suggestions.

D. Fanny asked if any agencies do drug and alcohol testing on clients as well as drivers? She said her drivers had asked in the past because they don't necessarily know a passenger's background. J. Donald said some agencies do simple background checks on clients.

T. Jennison made sure everyone knew they could get a background check from the state performed on someone on for \$10 as a non-profit.

D. Perou said having testing and background checks on drivers and clients helps ensure safety for both.

T. Jennison said she would put together a packet of information for providers about best management practices for drug and alcohol incidents and testing.

R. Nichols asked about the timing for finalizing service standards and the drug and alcohol policy.

J. Donald said the discussion would continue with the executive committee and he would come back to the general membership with an updated policy for the March meeting. He said it was likely the updated policy would specify that if an ACT transportation provider is not required to use the official DOT drug and alcohol screening protocol, but they wish to use FTA5310 funds through ACT, they will be required to use a non-DOT drug and alcohol screening protocol in place.

6. SCC Report

J. Donald explained that the State Coordinating Council is still working on the statewide Coordinated Plan and he would be attending an SCC meeting the following day when they would be reviewing the draft plan with the consultant.

7. Information Exchange

S. Bogle said TASC will be meeting with Exeter Hospital to redesign and expand marketing materials.

S. Goodspeed announced that Ready Rides had recently added Newfields to their service area. D. Perou congratulated Ready Rides on their continued growth throughout the region. S. Goodspeed said they had had good results marketing through churches.

8. Clients in Need

S. Bogle noted that seasonal service to Hampton Beach is one of the region's potential service expansion priorities. He said 5310 funding doesn't work in this case because most of the population is generally not elderly or disabled, but they have lower income levels and many need transportation assistance. He asked members if they thought there could be enough of a senior population to justify implementing a service in the area. D. Perou said Rockingham Nutrition Meals on Wheels has a meal location in Hampton Beach and that she would contact the staff there to ask.

9. Other

J. Donald said he was working on an update of the printed provider directory. He said he had considered just including the non-profit agencies in the printed directory (and keeping others like taxi companies online) since they are the focus for potential clients.

J. Donald said the ACT provider workgroup would be meeting and was continuing to identify ways to improve service and save money for agencies.

J. Donald explained that at the December meeting, the membership voted to increase POS budgets for Ready Rides and TASC. He said NHDOT had not approved the change yet, but he wasn't sure why because NHDOT staff who were at the meeting said it wouldn't be a problem. He said he would let TASC and Ready Rides know as soon as he heard from NHDOT.

R. Nichols explained that UNH had recently been required to begin providing ADA service to the general public within their fixed route area, but he had heard that the service had not started yet. He said he was trying to set up a meeting with FTA and UNH to discuss service area overlap with COAST. R. Nichols explained that the change would be good for the region because UNH can provide ADA service in areas where COAST doesn't operate fixed route service.

J. Public Comment

J. Donald explained that a client in Somersworth uses Community Rides for medical appointments asked if she could get a ride for grocery shopping, but Community Rides can't provide shopping trips. J. Donald said the client lives too far outside COAST fixed route service for ADA service from her house, but she may qualify for ADA transportation. He said they had come up with a potential solution: If the client is eligible for ADA service and can schedule her shopping trips around her medical appointments, Community Rides could pick her up from her home for medical appointments and the same driver could take her to the grocery store afterwards as a COAST driver. He added that Community Rides could opt to change its rules to include shopping trips, but one-time trips were not very practical or financially feasible.

R. Nichols added that the situation had generated discussion at COAST about how to cover the first and last mile for ADA riders. He said they had discussed incentivizing ADA clients to go on shopping trips in groups; this would be more financially efficient for COAST and provide a social outlet for shoppers.

D. Perou emphasized that successful regional coordination will require a centralized ride-scheduling system; that Rockingham Nutrition Meals on Wheels joined Triplink for this reason.

K. Adjournment

C. Robicheau made a motion to adjourn, seconded by M. Longus

Vote – Unanimous in favor

Meeting was adjourned at 10:23am