

Alliance for Community Transportation

General Membership Meeting

Minutes – July 13th 2016, 9:00 am

McConnell Center, Dover

Members Present: Scott Blair (TASC), Scott Bogle (RPC), Donna Fanny (NH Association for the Blind), Carol Gulla (TASC), Tory Jennison (Seacoast Public Health Network), Colin Lentz (SRPC), Margie Longus (Ready Rides), Rad Nichols (COAST), Rich Niemczyk (TASC), Christopher Muns (One Sky Community Services), Debra Perou (RNMoW), Pamela Thyng (Community Partners)

Others Present: Jeff Donald (COAST), Rebecca Harris (Transport NH), Patrick Herlihy (NHDOT Bureau of Air, Rail, and Transit), Bill Finn (NH Dept. of Education), Jean Tewksbury (Strafford County Community Action Partnership)

1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting began at 9:01

2. Approval of Minutes from meeting on May 4th 2016. {VOTE}

C. Gulla made a motion to accept the minutes,
Seconded by D. Perou
Vote: all in favor

3. Update of POS Amendment

J. Donald explained that the Executive Committee recently amended and voted on the SFY 2017 POS budget and that the full ACT committee had approved this action at the previous meeting in May. He said that the budget was submitted and approved by NHDOT, but they requested that the full committee vote on future budgets. NHDOT also requested that ACT review POS spending in December to track spending and revenues. J. Donald described the changes to the SFY 2017 budget:

- In general the budget was currently being underspent, so funds were shifted to Ready Rides because of their continued growth and spending.
- Shifted funds to TASC so they could begin accessing POS funds
- Shifted funds to regional non-emergency medical transportation to ensure stable funding

J. Donald noted that Ready Rides had been providing cash match for administrative fees, and had been using noncash match for mileage reimbursements. In SFY 2017 the noncash match from Ready Rides and TASC will provide all the necessary match.

- Ready Rides asked to confirm that they won't need to provide cash match.

R. Nichols summarized by saying that the budget shifted funds to where ACT partners were having success and to support observed growth.

4. Presentation from the State Coordinating Council – RCC Survey

R. Nichols introduced Rebecca Harris from Transport NH, who gave a presentation about current work by the State Coordinating Council (SCC) to develop a snapshot of regional coordinated transportation efforts. She said the SCC would be surveying RCCs with the goal to review regional coordination, but also to enable the SCC to provide greater support to RCCs and share lessons-learned between RCCs. R. Harris reviewed the questions in the survey, gave an overview of the data the SCC had collected through the survey so far, and asked ACT members how the SCC could most effectively use data collected through

the survey. R. Harris also said the SCC would be organizing a summit for RCCs and asked for input on the format.

R. Nichols noted that the ACT is in an urban area and that people often want longer trips to other urban areas (such as Boston) and preferred hospitals.

C. Gulla suggested that the data could be used for advocacy for regional agencies and to provide education for general public about what it is like to be dependent on others for transportation. R. Harris agreed and said the SCC would be working to improve outreach and education efforts.

R. Nichols said he thought an RCC summit would be a great opportunity for the many transportation providers around the state to meet, address shared challenges, and share lessons-learned. R. Nichols said he believed FTA region 1 (covering New England) was the only FTA region that required volunteer driver programs to provide accessible transportation. He said this was an added challenge for small programs and was a politically sensitive subject for regional and state agencies.

R. Harris asked for input on the format of an RCC summit. R. Nichols suggested that the results of the survey could be used to develop specific format pieces. R. Harris agreed and suggested that a traditional format (with large plenary sessions and break-out groups) might not be the best format in this case, but one that focuses on building inter-regional coordination. J. Donald said the summit should include lots of open networking time.

R. Harris asked when the last volunteer driver program forum took place. J. Donald said the most recent forum was in June and that the next one would be in September. R. Harris asked for recommendations about a date for the summit and suggested December. R. Nichols said December-January were not good periods for transportation providers.

R. Harris asked if there were any more thoughts about how to use the SCC survey data. P. Herlihy asked if any agencies gave specific examples of competition and challenges between transportation providers. R. Harris said she had observed friction between providers over the allocation of FTA5310 funds, and added that building trust between agencies utilizing a limited resource would take time.

D. Perou said the statewide conversation needs to include a discussion about the different challenges for providers in Northern and Southern regions in NH. She noted that limited resources and different geographic challenges between northern and southern communities require trade-offs.

R. Harris asked for clarification from P. Herlihy whether FTA5310 funds are allocated by population. P. Herlihy said funds were allocated based on a formula that included population.

B. Finn asked whether any providers in the Strafford/Rockingham RCC had discontinued Title 3B funding because it impacted overall funding resources. J. Donald said the issue had come up in conversation. C. Gulla said Lamprey Health Care's transportation program was running at a loss because the title 3B funding was insufficient. D. Perou said 3B funds are calculated based on a "person-day", not a per-ride basis, which does not reflect the actual cost of providing transportation. Providers get paid the same when a rider goes to one destination as when the rider going to five destinations.

D. Perou noted that BEAS funds are only for elderly clients, whereas other funding sources are for elderly and disabled clients.

5. Transportation Services Update from Jean Tewksbury, Community Action Partnership of Strafford County

J. Tewksbury introduced herself as the Self-Sufficiency Manager for Strafford County Community Action Partnership. She said office manages fuel and electric assistance to make sure residents are getting

services. She said they have seen falling numbers of clients across the state and they're engaging people to fully assess their needs for heating and electricity.

P. Thyng asked if Eversource refers clients to the fuel/electricity assistance program. J. Tewksbury said they only refer clients to Strafford CAPs program for seniors 65 and older. She said Strafford CAP is working with Eversource to build more support for clients struggling with energy costs.

D. Fanny asked if the program provides transportation services for clients to get to Strafford CAP offices. J. Tewksbury said they are not able to, and it is a huge barrier to providing services for clients, but staff have gone to municipal offices and welfare departments, and sometime go directly to clients' homes. She said the small program is challenged to meet all the needs of clients in the region.

6. Membership Update

J. Donald explained that Pam Thyng would be joining ACT to represent Community Partners, Tory Jennisson would be returning to ACT to represent the Seacoast Public health Network, and Donna Fanny would be representing the NH Association for the Blind. J. Donald clarified that T. Jennisson would be joining ACT and adding Seacoast Public Health Network as a new member. T. Jennisson explained that the Seacoast Public Health Network is one of three public health networks in the region tasked with coordinating public health emergency preparedness, community health improvement, and substance abuse prevention, treatment, and recovery. D. Perou asked where their office was. T. Jennisson said the network's fiscal agent was Lamprey Health Care, and that their office was in Raymond.

J. Donald added that D. Perou would continue on the executive committee, and that Scott Bogle would be continuing as Vice Chair. He noted that there would be an official nominating process at the September ACT meeting and members would vote on nominations at the December meeting.

7. Purchased Transportation Update (April – June)

J. Donald updated the committee on POS activities over the previous fiscal year. He noted that the first quarter was strong, saw a decrease in ridership when Community Partners left ACT, but has grown again and ridership is higher than when it started in the first quarter. He explained that an RCC can't be a transportation provider and since Rockingham Planning Commission became the lead agency for ACT, as of July 1st 2016, COAST has recently begun providing purchased transportation. He said Ready Rides and TASC had both done very well over the year, with TASC seeing new growth due to their new accessible vehicle. J. Donald said COAST has been providing accessible transportation for Ready Rides.

J. Donald told the committee that when a long-term client of Ready Rides recently passed away, their obituary asked for friends and family to donate to Read Rides instead of buying flowers. This showed the large impact Ready Rides has already had in a short period.

J. Donald noted that the North Bus has seen a slight increase in recent ridership but it likely the same group of riders just riding more often. He said Strafford CAP is currently working to find transportation services for clients in their service area who currently use the North Bus. A committee member recommended that J. Donald reach out to the Tri-County CAP to find transportation services for current North Bus clients. He said he would reach out and noted that all the current riders are ambulatory.

8. FY 2017 Budget

J. Donald reviewed the budget for the Federal fiscal year 2017 and reminded committee members that there would be a formal vote on the budget at the September meeting. He said that the cancellation of the North Bus eliminates certain revenues from local funds and advertising revenues, but it also eliminates associated costs for insurance, maintenance, etc.

J. Donald gave details on budgeted funds for partner support: funds for call center services are covered by 5310 formula funds (80%) and local match (20%); 10% of local match is covered by ACT's foundation money, and the other 10% is covered by non-volunteer driver agencies which use the call center. He said

TASC has been using 5317 mobility management funds, including cash match.

9. Call Center Rebranding

J. Donald explained that he wants to rebrand the COAST Call Center in order to highlight its information & referral services and provide a direct number to reduce confusion by callers about the difference between COAST and the call center. He heard the name TripLink being used by a small agency out west. C. Gulla said she liked the new name and the idea of a unique call center brand because some clients call COAST call center and get confused.

P. Herlihy asked if J. Donald is doing outreach for the new call center. J. Donald responded that he was as he was working out details.

D. Perou asked if there was a timeline for implementing the rebranding. J. Donald responded that he was hoping to finalize the effort by the end of August.

10. SCC Report

J. Donald noted that the July SCC meeting has been canceled, and that a volunteer driver forum was scheduled for September 30th.

P. Herlihy explained that the SCC is rewriting the state coordination plan and has selected RLS Associates as contract consultants to write the plan. He said the plan is scheduled to be completed by January and will include an examination of the specific roles of transportation provider agencies (such as the SCC and RCCs).

P. Herlihy said NHDOT had submitted an application for a grant through the "Rides to Wellness" program of FTA. The goal of the program is to bring Medicaid and non-emergency medical transportation more fully into the coordination process, and New Hampshire's proposal includes a plan to connect the HBSS system with CTS (Coordinated Transportation Services) in order to improve connections between riders and providers.

11. Information Exchange

R. Nichols explained that COAST is in the process of hiring a Director of Operations and asked for committee members to pass the word to potential candidates.

P. Thyng explained that the state is building a program to improve services for mental health and substance abuse. The program will be dividing the state into regional or independent delivery networks to provide services for substance abuse recovery, primary care, and mental health support; Strafford County will be taking the lead for its region. She said Strafford County will be working on six specific projects, three of which are mandated by the state (integrated information technologies, attracting and retaining a workforce of mental and physical health professionals, and integrated care services) and three which will be based on a regional needs assessment. P. Thyng said federal funds will be used to start the program over the next five years and continued funding will be contingent on progress made on projects and tasks.

T. Jennisson said the program is known as the 1115 Medicaid waver program. Get help coordinating care for Medicaid patients who are having trouble transitioning from primary care, substance abuse care, or mental health services. The goal is to change the way people experience care throughout the state, and the federal program requires grantees to provide evidence that at the end of five years, 50% of patients are receiving care under an alternate payment model (e.g. transitioning from fee-for-service) to focus on value for clients rather than volume of clients. T. Jennisson said the county's program is being led by former Dept. of Health and Human Services Commissioner Nick Topus. She said the program is in the planning phase, which should wrap up in mid-October, and will be increasing engagement throughout the region over the next 3-4 years, including transportation providers.

12. Clients in Need

S. Bogle described his recent experience with using the services of Ready Rides and TASC while recovering from an injury that kept him from driving for several months.

13. Other

J. Donald said that the formula grant contract had been signed, and that the Endowment for Health grant funds had been spent down. He explained that surveys had been sent out shortly to Human Services agencies, transportation service providers, and local welfare offices to gather input for updating the regional Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan. He noted that he was working on a survey specifically for consumers – clients already using the services of providers in the region.

14. Public Comment

No public comments were brought before the committee.

15. Adjournment

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

Vote – All in favor

Meeting was adjourned at 10:36 am