

# **Alliance for Community Transportation**

## **General Membership Meeting**

### **Minutes – March 2, 2016, 9:00 AM, McCConnell Center, Dover**

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**Members Present:** Scott Bogle (RPC), Carol Garlough (Goodwin Community Health), Carol Gulla (TASC), Colin Lentz (SRPC), Margie Longus (Ready Rides), Rad Nichols (COAST), Debra Perou (RNMoW), Sharon Reynolds (Citizen), Meri Schmalz (Ready Rides),

**Others Present:** Scott Blair (TASC), Jeff Donald (COAST), Rich Niemczyk (TASC),

#### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting began at 9:06 with no quorum.

#### **2. Membership Update**

R. Nichols explained that Meri Schmalz recently joined the ACT Executive Committee and One Sky Community Services joined ACT. He added that One Sky's executive director Chris Muns would be attending ACT Executive Committee meetings and is hoping to find an alternate to attend general membership meetings.

J. Donald discussed the potential for updating the membership list and possibly removing inactive members in order to make it easier to reach a quorum at meetings. He explained that there is no mechanism in the bylaws for this. Additionally, because the bylaws specify 7 members as a quorum, not 51% of membership, simply removing inactive members would not solve quorum challenges without amending the bylaws to reduce the quorum requirement. J. Donald noted that ACT hasn't missed a quorum in several years, but members who were regular meeting attendees had recently become unavailable.

S. Reynolds asked whether any part of the bylaws prevented ACT from switching to a 51% quorum requirement. J. Donald replied that there wasn't, but that switching to 51% would actually make it more difficult to reach a quorum, and that reducing the number from 7 to 6 would make more sense.

D. Perou asked whether requiring people to RSVP to meeting notifications would ensure that a quorum would be reached. J. Donald reiterated that most recent meetings had reached a quorum.

S. Bogle said that it didn't seem like a change was needed at this time.

R. Nichols said that he saw the quorum and inactive membership as 2 separate issues. He encouraged members to RSVP to meeting notifications to ensure that a quorum would be reached, and suggested that inactive members should be contacted about their continued participation and the possibility of removal from membership.

J. Donald said that warning inactive members of removal would be ineffective since the bylaws don't grant ACT the power to remove members. S. Bogle said he didn't see the downside to amending the bylaws to enable ACT to remove inactive members after their attendance falls below a specified threshold.

C. Gulla suggested that ACT could ask partners to renew their MOUs and update them to include responsibilities regarding meeting attendance. S. Reynolds added that ACT could send inactive members a letter asking about their intentions to continue participating.

D. Perou said the ACT should have a formal process laid out in the bylaws to address membership attendance issues.

M. Longus suggested that inactive members should still be contacted in some way to reiterate responsibilities.

R. Nichols asked what the bylaws say about the status of a member organization that doesn't have an appointee. J. Donald said there wasn't anything specified in the bylaws.

R. Nichols asked if anyone had a problem with the Executive Committee drafting language to address the problem under discussion.

S. Reynolds said that a formal letter or email should be sent to the directors or head staff of inactive member organizations.

R. Nichols asked for recommendations about the specific level of attendance that would warrant a warning letter or email.

C. Gulla suggested that the Executive Committee could propose that first. She emphasized that the goal should be to encourage increased participation, not penalize organizations and potential partners.

J. Donald summarized the conversation: that the bylaws shouldn't be amended at the current time, but rather the goal should be to reactivate absent members and increase participation at meetings.

R. Nichols said he understood that a formal change to the bylaws was also needed and that the Executive Committee could draft a bylaw amendment.

### **3. Approval of Minutes from meeting on January 6<sup>th</sup> 2016). {VOTE}**

S. Reynolds arrived, giving the meeting a quorum.

- S. Bogle asked that the word "young" (describing a client he had mentioned) be removed from the minutes.

- S. Reynolds moved to approve the minutes with requested changes, M. Schmalz seconded the motion

-Vote: all in favor

### **4. SFY 17 5310 Formula Fund Grant Application**

J. Donald explained that ACT had submitted an application for formula funds for administrative operations under the FTA 5310 program – the application was approved by the Executive Committee prior to submission to the state. The application requires approval by the Governor and Council, but he saw no reason why the application would not be approved as it was very similar to previous applications. J. Donald also reported that NHDOT is apparently reading ACT meeting minutes carefully because they said 5310 planning funds cannot be used to support Rockingham and Strafford Regional Planning Commissions in updating the Regional Coordinated Plan.

J. Donald handed out the draft 5310 budget for the 2017 federal fiscal year.

### **5. SFY 17 5310 POS Amendment**

J. Donald reported that last year ACT applied for 2 years of 5310 funds that support operations and POS.

J. Donald said that the Community Rides program was well below budget, that Ready Rides was spending down its budget somewhat quicker than expected, and that TASC might be interested in accessing POS funds. The Executive Committee will discuss changing how the funds are allocated.

NHDOT will need to approve any changes, but it will not need to go before Governor and Council.

All members are invited to attend these meetings.

Carol explained that TASC's new minivan (purchased through 5317 funds) was being used to transport patients. She described several challenges of meeting clients' needs, managing transportation services, and coordinating with the medical facilities.

D. Perou asked S. Blair about his perspective as a new driver for TASC. He said it was very rewarding work, but a big responsibility taking care of clients.

C. Gulla described the practical challenge of getting clients from vehicles to the receiving area of a medical facility and ensuring that the client reaches their appointment. Drivers are required to stay in sight of their vehicles, but many clients are physically unable to get from the vehicle to the waiting room, and many facilities do not have staff able to assist or move clients.

#### **6. Inclusive Planning Impact Grant**

J. Donald explained ACT had been considering applying for an Inclusive Planning Impact grant, which would help increase public involvement. He realized that the application would require much time and effort in a short time period – including holding public meetings – and that the work it would support can be done without the additional funding.

S. Reynolds said she liked the idea of holding a public hearing for interested citizens and public feedback regardless of the grant. She added that a lot of people are hungry for transportation to improve their quality of life and asked J. Donald if there was a plan to hold a public event in the near future. J. Donald responded that there wasn't a current plan, but that it is a goal of his. He also referenced the upcoming regional survey that will be distributed.

S. Reynolds reminded everyone that getting to meetings is a challenge for people who do not have a car, and that many locations are inaccessible by bus.

#### **7. Vehicle Procurement**

R. Nichols informed everyone that COAST will be receiving 5 new buses from Alliance Group. Three mini buses will update the COAST ADA fleet and are scheduled to arrive on June 1<sup>st</sup>. Two mini buses for Rockingham Nutrition & Meals on Wheels are scheduled to be delivered in late June.

#### **8. Software Update**

J. Donald explained that major software updates are on hold as a result of Community Partners deciding to leave ACT, as managing trips among multiple providers was one of the primary. ACT will continue to focus on maintenance and improvement of current software used by major partners like COAST and Ready Rides. J. Donald said Community Partners had purchased a software module and 6 tablet computers before they left, and that ACT is working on rededicating them to another purpose.

#### **9. Travel Training Update**

J. Donald explained that the Strafford County ServiceLink held a travel training event at the Tri-City Consumer Alliance – they have held them in Somersworth and will continue to hold them in the region through the next fiscal year. He added that they will be re-contacting Seacoast ServiceLink who had recently lost the staff person he had been working with.

S. Reynolds asked for details on what travel training entails. J. Donald explained that it can take multiple forms: from simply informing people how to use the various transportation services available, to helping people with extreme disabilities learn how to ride the bus comfortably, to working directly with service organizations to help them match clients with transportation options. The overall goal is to help as many people understand public and community transportation as possible.

M. Schmalz notified the group that Ready Rides will be holding a free defensive driving training course for new volunteer drivers on March 18<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 to 11:30am and invited other ACT member organizations to sign up their volunteers and employees as well.

#### **10. SCC Report**

J. Donald said he would be working with Scott Bogle on an SCC subcommittee to develop volunteer driver program workshops, likely to be scheduled for the summer and fall. He also reported that the SCC recently supported a bill that would have given municipalities the option of raising the local option fee from \$5 to \$10, but the bill was voted down in committee.

### **11. Information Exchange**

S. Reynolds said she was a member of the Tri-City Consumers Action Cooperative of Strafford County, and invited people to join. The Cooperative operates a facility to provide support for residents of Strafford County with mental health disabilities who are 18 or older. S. Reynolds explained that the facility operates 8:30 to 4:30 Monday to Friday and a half day on Saturday, and is located at 54 Summer Street in Rochester.

M. Schmalz said Ready Rides is working to expand volunteer driver service to Farmington. They need drivers and she encouraged members to contact any potential volunteers.

D. Perou informed the group that on Saturday (3/5/16), the Margaritas Restaurant in Exeter will be donating 20% of its proceeds to RNMOV. She said that there will also be a raffle for tickets to regional professional sports teams.

R. Nichols - described COAST's new campaign: "We're on the Route" designed to benefit regional businesses, their employees, and consumers. He also described the results of COAST's recent "Day it Forward" event which raised over \$1,800 for the NH Foodbank through donations and farebox revenues. R. Nichols mentioned that the next engagement campaign will focus on the benefits of taking public transportation: "why ride COAST?"

D. Perou mentioned an interesting article she heard on NPR about a dementia care facility that built an imitation bus stop on the grounds as a source of comfort for elderly patients who grew up waiting for and riding public transportation.

M. Longus said Ready Rides is currently planning an event to thank their volunteer drivers and acknowledge all of their work - scheduled for March 18<sup>th</sup> at noon.

### **12. Clients in Need**

1:09:45 – M. Schmalz described the challenge of providing rides for dialysis patients that have appointments early in the morning (e.g. before 6:00am). Members discussed the challenge of not only finding drivers willing to get up that early, but also coordinating with hospital staff to provide enough appointments throughout the day. R. Nichols said they have experience addressing clients' personal preferences for appointments, and that the client usually has a good reason for wanting to have their appointment early in the morning. J. Donald suggested determining whether the client would qualify for Community Rides and said he would talk with M. Schmalz after the meeting.

### **13. Other**

No other business was brought before the membership.

### **14. Public Comment**

No members of the public were present.

### **15. Adjournment**

C. Gulla made a motion to adjourn, seconded by S. Reynolds

Vote – All in favor

Meeting was adjourned at 10:17am