

Alliance for Community Transportation Annual Meeting Minutes - November 2, 2016, 9:00am McConnell Center, Dover

Members Present: Debbie Bartley (Lamprey Healthcare), Scott Bogle (RPC), Mary Cook (Seacoast Public Health Network), 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), Debra Perou (RNMOW), Sharon Reynolds (citizen), Cheryl Robicheau (Strafford CAP), Meri Schmalz (Ready Rides)

Others Present: Jeff Donald (COAST), Michael Campbell (Grace Limousine),

1) Welcome and Introductions

2) Approval of Meeting Minutes (9-14-16 meeting) {VOTE}

C. Gulla made a motion to approve the minutes from July, seconded by S. Reynolds.

Vote: Unanimous in favor

3) Vice Chair Election {VOTE}

Scott Bogle had been nominated for Vice Chair at the previous ACT meeting; no other nominations have been made. S. Reynolds made a motion to approve the nomination of Scott Bogle for the position of Vice Chair, seconded by C. Gulla.

Vote: Unanimous in favor

4) Other Updates

J. Donald explained that the SCC had hosted a volunteer driver peer-to-peer forum on September 30th which generated good feedback from volunteer driver programs throughout the state. He said another forum was tentatively scheduled for April of 2017.

J. Donald said the SCC is currently working on a statewide Coordinated Plan and had been holding public meetings and having one-on-one phone conversations with staff from RCCs and Regional Planning Commissions. He noted that the plan is scheduled for potential completion in Mid 2017.

J. Donald said he would be conducting four travel trainings at the Rochester housing authority on November 17th. He encouraged members to reach out to him to schedule travel trainings in their service areas and promote training opportunities among their clients and stakeholders, saying the trainings could be adapted to fit specific needs.

5) Coordinated Plan & Coordination Plan Discussion

R. Nichols explained that the main agenda item was discussion of the 2017 Coordinated Plan. He said the plan was important for applying for grant funds from FTA to support operations and services.

J. Donald said the coordinated plan is updated every 5 years and he is working with S. Bogle and C. Lentz to draft the 2017 update. He noted that chapter 8 will contain important findings, goals, and recommendations for improved coordination and service expansion in the region. He specified that Chapter 8 is important because it is used to support requests for funding through federal and state grant applications. J. Donald highlighted the two funding sources for ACT's activities: POS for direct transportation services; and formula funds for administration and organizational development. He explained that the coordinated plan update process was an opportunity to review how ACT is investing

POS funds in direct transportation services, and how formula funds should be used to support organizational development efforts (such as community rides, implementation of TripLink, and Travel Training).

J. Donald asked members to review the executive summary of the existing findings and recommendations from the 2012 Coordinated Plan, and the ACT action plan (provided at the meeting) to discuss how they wish him to focus ACT's efforts to address gaps in service and coordination.

J. Donald reviewed questions geared for transportation providers to inform the development of the draft 2017 Coordinated Plan:

1. What work can we undertake to help your agency save money?
2. How can we help you provide more service using the same amount of money?
3. What kind of coordination would you most benefit from? What can you most easily implement? Shared vehicle maintenance or driver training? Group fuel purchasing? Shared rides?
4. What would prompt you to move your call-taking and/or manifest building to TripLink?
5. What would prompt you to participate in the Community Rides or provide accessible trips for Ready Rides or TASC?
6. What obstacles do you stand in the way of your program's growth or your ability or willingness to participate in various aspects of coordination?

S. Reynolds asked how rider eligibility is determined. J. Donald responded that eligibility is determined through agency-specific requirements and by state and federal regulations. R. Nichols added that TripLink could help manage eligibility processing.

In response to question 3, C. Gulla suggested that an agency that is already established as a 501(c)3 non-profit (such as TASC) could take on administrative tasks to support a new satellite volunteer driver program (VDP). In response to question 4, C. Gulla said joining TripLink was difficult because TASC doesn't currently have neighboring partners to refer riders to, so keeping ride scheduling in-house is currently the most effective option.

S. Reynolds suggested that expanding VDPs was a low-cost option for improving access to regional transportation services. J. Donald agreed, but noted that it was up to TASC or Ready Rides if they were interested in expanding. Additionally, at this meeting he wanted to focus on improving coordination between existing service providers to reduce costs and ensure more clients' needs are met.

R. Nichols explained that that it was important to show consistent growth in the number of agencies joining TripLink because it would be a compelling metric for future grant applications for state funds. He promoted TripLink's success for COAST and Ready Rides (and RNMOW soon), and said the more agencies join TripLink, the more cost-efficient it will be for everyone.

J. Donald asked members for verification that transitioning ride scheduling and call taking away from people who only performed those tasks as one component of their work was a primary barrier for joining TripLink.

D. Bartley said the Lamprey Health Care schedules clients' medical appointments as well as their transportation, so losing that functionality would be challenging. She asked if it would be possible to add medical appointment scheduling into TripLink. J. Donald said it was possible to add it to TripLink but wasn't sure how healthcare providers would respond. D. Bartley explained that hospital transportation services communicate directly with doctors to coordinate rides for patients with specialized medical needs (such as cataract surgery).

M. Schmalz explained that before Ready Rides shifted their ride scheduling to TripLink, much of her time was spent scheduling rides with clients and drivers. Now she spends that time on building the business and communicating with clients.

D. Fanny noted that in her experience, clients call around to multiple agencies until they find a ride that best suits their needs.

S. Reynolds said she regularly schedules her own medical appointments and it would be helpful to have one place to call to set up a ride, and then schedule medical appointments around ride availability.

C. Gulla observed that there are distinct generational differences when it comes to self-advocacy (that older seniors are more likely to accept offered appointment times, and younger generations may be more accustomed to asking for more convenient appointment times).

D. Perou said that it should be an overall goal to make ride scheduling easier for clients.

C. Gulla said joining TripLink would be possible for TASC if it didn't create new steps or challenges for volunteer drivers as far as selecting rides (some embrace technology, some do not). She also noted that any transition to TripLink would take several months to implement. R. Nichols suggested that technology could help with the transition (e.g. setting up the phone service to separate medical appointments and ride requests).

D. Fanny said joining TripLink was difficult because any clients using her transportation services would have to be members of the NH Association for the Blind. J. Donald said TripLink was more flexible than she assumed: NH Association for the Blind would have its own module in TripLink with private access for its drivers, so that only clients who are members of the organization would schedule rides. R. Nichols added that any agency-specific rules can be customized into the TripLink system.

M. Cook asked if anyone was using the United Way of Caring volunteer action center for recruiting volunteer drivers. Many said they were currently using the action center, and J. Donald said he had posted advertisements through the center.

S. Reynolds noted that AARP has a volunteer service webpage (createthegood.org) that could be tapped for volunteer recruitment. She also suggested that a demo of QRyde and RydeLog and how it could help agencies would be useful.

D. Perou said currently her drivers primarily schedule rides, and there is inconsistency driver to driver in their efficiency for scheduling rides. She said joining TripLink was going to be good for RNMOV and its clients.

R. Nichols asked how many providers take advantage of state procurement contracts for needs like tires, fuel, and maintenance for vehicles. RNMOV and Lamprey Health Care said they did.

D. Bartley said getting their buses washed was practically challenging; staff had to hand-wash them because specialized washing facilities are unavailable or too expensive. Several members suggested contacting local fire departments for help with vehicle washing.

M. Campbell introduced himself and briefly described the services provided by Grace Limousine.

M. Schmalz asked if Grace Limousine has a taxi service. M. Campbell said they do not, but they contract for shuttle services with hospitals, school districts, and municipalities.

J. Donald asked for any other specific coordination challenges experienced by providers.

D. Perou said consistent vehicle maintenance was challenging and expensive.

J. Donald asked for suggestions on ways to improve information sharing.

D. Bartley asked about an email distribution listserv. J. Donald said there was a google group functioning as a listserv that had never really been used by providers.

C. Gulla asked if a Google group had the capacity to send notifications via smartphones.

J. Donald explained that it would be possible to set up a private Facebook group that could be internally managed and that could send out information to members.

D. Fanny asked if there was an opportunity to develop a best practices resource guide for maintenance and operations based on collective expertise of member providers.

Members described the need for a diverse, affordable, and sustainable mix of services that serve a greater number of clients.

J. Donald reviewed the upcoming schedule for development, review, and publication of the Coordinated Plan. He said the ACT Executive Committee would be continuing discussion about the draft Coordinated plan at their November and January meetings, and that the January general membership meeting would focus on drafted plan chapters. He asked if committee members would be available for an additional workshop meeting about the Coordinated Plan. A meeting was scheduled for Wednesday December 7th at 9:00am.

6) Public Comment

S. Reynolds said the Dover Public library was having a book sale through November 13th.

7) Adjournment

C. Gulla made a motion to adjourn, seconded by D. Fanny

Vote: unanimous in favor