



**General Membership Meeting**  
**Minutes – September 4<sup>th</sup> 2019 - 9:00am,**  
**McConnell Center room 305**  
**Dover, NH**

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The meeting was called to order at 9:05

**1) Introductions**

**Members Present:** Colin Lentz (SRPC), Rad Nichols (COAST), Debbie Perou (Rockingham Nutrition MoW), Sharon Reynolds (Citizen Member), Fred Roberge (Easterseals NH), Scott Bogle (Rockingham RPC), Betty Smith (Ready Rides)

**Staff Present:** Jeff Donald (COAST)

**2) Approval of Meeting Minutes (7/10/19 meeting) {VOTE}**

S. Reynolds made a motion to approve the minutes from July 10<sup>th</sup>.

Seconded by B. Smith

Vote: all in favor (F. Roberge abstained)

**3) Updates & Statistics**

J. Donald handed out graphs of recent ridership through July 2019 (Ridership by service, by owner, trips booked in Triplink, and unduplicated riders), with proportional volumes of riders. He noted that services were steady across the board.

S. Reynolds asked about the proportion of COAST's budget that goes to ADA service. R. Nichols answered that it's around 25%. S. Reynolds asked if there was any way to level the ADA ridership off since it's so much more expensive for COAST than fixed route (such as finding other ways to encourage ADA users to take fixed route). R. Nichols said COAST was trying to do just that by talking to ADA clients when they sign up, increasing the efficiency and trip pairing through Triplink staff.

J. Donald added that COAST can shift some trips and pair riders to increase efficiency. They also provide a financial incentive: \$1 off the ride if clients are willing to shift their trip to group shopping time. This is helping some.

R. Nichols said COAST and ACT are working to adjust standards for ride scheduling to maximize flexibility and efficiency. Clients can prioritize their pick-up or drop-off trip but not both. For instance, if they have a medical appointment at a specific time, they could say "I need to be dropped off at 10:00". Their return trip may be scheduled for 12:00 but COAST currently flexes that time by 1 hour.

S. Reynolds asked how the Rt. 7 On-Demand service is working. R. Nichols said it's meeting the need and much more efficient for COAST because they only run the bus when rides are scheduled.

J. Donald handed out a chart comparing FTA 5310 funded trips across the state by State FY from 2012 to 2019. He said it's difficult to do apples to apples comparison because federal funding organization has changed over time, but the chart shows trends across the state.

#### **4) Budget Update**

J. Donald handed out a budget update. He noted that ACT is 6% over budget in FTA5310 funding and 19% under budget for FTA5307. This is because 5310 funding is spread across two state fiscal years and the 5307 funds fill in the middle when state funds run out around April.

##### Revenues

J. Donald noted several specific items in revenues.

- Triplink services is a little underbudget but in a good place.
- Foundations appear well under budget because the funding wasn't lined up at first, but now it's all set
- There were held funds left over at the end of FY19 so it is slightly over budget
- There was a deficit in coordination funds and COAST had been filling that hole in the budget, but now foundation grants (e.g. Tufts, Exeter Hospital) have been obtained and added to the budget
- There was a Triplink deficit but a grant from Wentworth-Douglass Hospital took care of it.
- Non-cash match is pretty much where it should be expected at this time.

##### Expenses

J. Donald noted several specific items in expenses.

- A substantial increase in the wages line was due to shifting R. Nichols' time from "contract services" to "wages"
- Materials is 74% underspent but this is a small line item and there are a few relatively expensive items coming up (e.g. a replacement laptop, and new dispatch radios)
- The utilities line (\$600) will be going away because it won't be needed any more
- Planning & Marketing is slightly underspent
- Overall administrative expenses are 6% under budget

J. Donald noted that Purchased Transportation is underspent because it was drafted two years ago and a few initiatives (e.g. the Tri-city VDP) didn't pan-out. Several providers were over budget in July but that may have been due to three extra service days; the numbers may be comparably normal for August.

J. Donald noted the income statement by month which shows where the budget switched from FTA 5310 to FTA 5307. He noted that purchased transportation will be switching to monthly reporting rather than quarterly.

J. Donald added that ACT received grants from Tufts and regional hospitals, but they still have to wait for the state budget to get finalized. He asked members if they had any problems reading the budget since he had put it back on one page due to COAST being the single lead agency again. D. Perou said it was good and presented a more wholistic picture of the budget. R. Nichols agreed.

#### **5) FY20 Budget {VOTE}**

J. Donald reminded members that he applies each year through the state for FTA5310 funding – the most recent application covers July 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 through June 30<sup>th</sup> 2020. He noted that the last three months of next year's budget had to be estimated based on previous years due to the overlap between state and federal fiscal years.

J. Donald noted that there are separate lines for FTA5310 RCC funds for 2020 and 2021. 2020 is for 9 months; 2021 is for 6 months. He reviewed funding amounts from Tufts and area hospitals. In partner support, all ACT providers will be using non-cash match (generated by Ready Rides) for FTA5310 purchased transportation.

Members discussed budget development and management details.

J. Donald reviewed budgeted expenses. Most items were similar to last budget, purchased transportation is slightly lower due to an adjustment at the state level. He noted that he had tried to balance the amount of purchased transportation funding for the providers that used it based on trends in ridership. Ready Rides had experienced an unexpected increase in ride requests in the past, which can change the funding availability and the amount of match. He noted that ACT had hired a new part-time Triplink staff member so wage expenses saw an increase.

The FY2019 budget totaled \$196,000, and the FY2020 budget was for \$180,000.

S. Reynolds made motion to accept the draft budget.

Seconded by B. Smith

D. Perou asked if there was any money left on the table because of the difference between the FY19 and FY20 budgets. J. Donald said there wasn't any leftover funding (that would have been reabsorbed by the state). The FY2018 budget had unexpected unspent funding because of TASC leaving. Those funds were distributed among the other providers and the budget was artificially high.

Vote: all (Rad Abstain)

## **6) FY20 Workplan {VOTE}**

J. Donald presented the draft workplan for FY2020. He said he was still working on getting more detailed data from providers, for each town, and from hospitals, but that the workplan has not changed that much from the 2019 version. Members reviewed the draft workplan for a couple of minutes. J. Donald noted that several items did not have a specific implementation date identified because he wanted to get them on the plan but the timing was unsure.

50:44 – D. Perou noted that there has been a push to change the organization of medical care and the provision of services. Potentially healthcare providers and insurance companies would pay more for community and home-based care such as transportation and meals. The timing is important and things could be happening in next 2-3 years. She said some states (e.g. Massachusetts) are already doing some things like this. It would be good to incorporate those changes into the workplan. R. Nichols asked where members can learn more about the proposed changes? D. Perou said she wasn't sure. She'd been hearing about it through contacts, but the state isn't leading the way. F. Roberge said this made sense with staff from the NH Health and Human Services increasing their engagement with other human services agencies and groups such as the NH Alliance for Healthy Aging.

R. Nichols suggested that this should be a topic for a second healthcare community roundtable. J. Donald agreed, saying it could focus on a shift to outcome-based care from fee-for-service approach.

S. Reynolds added that effective September 1<sup>st</sup>, members of Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) through Medicaid must either use the *family and friends mileage reimbursement program*, or take available public transportation for non-emergency medical transportation unless they qualify for a different transportation service. She noted that there are no specifics about what the new rule means

by "qualifies". J. Donald said it sounds like there are bigger loopholes than the language makes it sound because those people will likely qualify for a specific non-emergency medical transportation service. This is most likely an effort to encourage people to use public transit rather than a specific service to be more cost effective (e.g. people who live in downtown Dover and need to get to Wentworth Douglas Hospital should take the bus because it's so close). S. Reynolds said the rule came from the state level. R. Nichols said some MCOs had contacted COAST about buying tickets and possibly monthly passes. He said he would look into this and discuss incorporating into the workplan with J. Donald.

#### **7) FY20 Meeting Schedule**

J. Donald supplied a list of the scheduled meetings for FY2020. He noted that the closest upcoming date that is close to a holiday is the January meeting which falls right on January 1<sup>st</sup>, so that one will be shifted to the second Wednesday.

#### **8) Nominations for Chair and Secretary**

J. Donald said he had talked with the current Chair (R. Nichols) and Secretary (C. Lentz) and they had volunteered to continue in their roles if nominated.

B. Smith nominated R. Nichols for Chair and C. Lentz for Secretary

Seconded by S. Reynolds.

Vote – Unanimous in favor

Official vote will be in November at the annual meeting.

#### **9) Information Exchange**

J. Donald and S. Bogle will be presenting at the Center on Aging and Community Living (CACL) conference at UNH on November 6<sup>th</sup>. They will be presenting about transportation challenges. J. Donald Noted that The Endowment for Health contacted him about joining their Advisory Council since S. Bogle will be moving to their Board.

R. Nichols explained that part of Portsmouth senior transportation is a volunteer driver program. It has struggled a bit to get volunteers and take off. He said he wasn't sure if that was because it's in an urban environment instead of a rural area (where people may be better acquainted with their neighbors). There's only been one consistent driver and the cost of insurance for the program has exceeded the value of the service. All the same service will be provided, but the Portsmouth volunteer driver program will be discontinued at the end of the month.

R. Nichols announced that NHDOT had awarded \$4.9 million in funds for COAST to implement its new service concept. He thanked members who sent letters of support. COAST will be holding several public forums in October and November to present and discuss the service concept. S. Reynolds – can some public forums be during an afternoon. R. Nichols said there are not going to be as many events as for the initial outreach, but they will have one afternoon event.

J. Donald noted that Exeter hospital had recently merged with Massachusetts General and the Exeter board is soliciting feedback about the management of the organization (e.g. community programs and endowment development). He sent emails to all ACT members with the information.

R. Nichols noted that there is a series of public hearings being held for the draft Statewide Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan (Ten Year Plan). They're being hosted by GACIT (the Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation) and lay out transportation improvements over the

next ten years. R. Nichols said the presentation is heavily focused on pavement and bridges, with no attention on the public transit needs across the state. He encouraged ACT members to attend the meetings and promote the inclusion of public transit into the Ten Year Plan. S. Bogle said he had discussed developing a snapshot of statewide public transit unmet need with Stephen Workman from Transport NH. D. Perou asked if people can submit comments separately from the meeting. S. Bogle confirmed that they could.

**10) Clients in Need**

Members did not have any clients in need.

**11) Public Comment**

D. Perou said she had received a request for comment from the state regarding the federal service block grant which focuses on children, childcare, and some home-care services for seniors. She said she expressed concerns about discrimination in what counted as a “family” for the block grant program (which focused on income). She had expressed that different people need different kinds of support during their lives. When you’re young you might need a bus to get to school, and when you’re older you might need a bus to get to the doctor. This is independent of income.

**12) Adjournment**

B. Smith made a motion to adjourn

Seconded by S. Reynolds

The meeting was adjourned at 10:36