

# Alliance for Community Transportation (ACT)

Working to expand affordable and efficient community transportation in southeastern New Hampshire

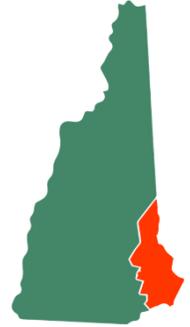
## MEETING OF THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2021

**9 – 10:30AM**

**MCCONNELL CENTER ROOM 305**

**DOVER, NH**

### Minutes



#### 1. Introductions

##### Members Present:

Fred Roberge (Easterseals - Homemakers), Colin Lentz (Strafford Planning Commission), Rad Nichols (COAST), Betty Smith (Ready Rides), Margie Longus (Ready Rides), Sharon Reynolds (citizen member), Cheryl Robicheau (Community Action Partnership of Strafford County), Tahja Fulwider (Ready Rides).

##### Members attending virtually:

Debbie Perou (Rockingham Nutrition & Meals on Wheels)

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

#### 2. Approval of September 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 Meeting Minutes {VOTE}

S. Reynolds made a motion to approve the minutes as written.

Seconded by F. Roberge

Vote: unanimous in favor

#### 3. Chair & Secretary Nominations

J. Donald reminded members that the current Chair was Rad Nichols, and the Secretary was Colin Lentz. F. Roberge nominated the current Chair and Secretary to continue in their roles; Seconded by S. Reynolds.

J. Donald explained that the nomination would be voted on at the next meeting.

#### 4. Updates & Statistics

J. Donald reviewed recent statistics and budgeting. Ridership on most providers is rising. He also reviewed year-end income statement from FY2021.

- Revenues are 18% under budget
- FTA5307 mobility management funds were replaced with FTA5310 Administrative funds and STBG
- Local match is far under what was originally budgeted
- Non-cash match for volunteer driver programs is 69% under budget because of the pandemic
- In expenses, planning and marketing funds are 84% primarily because of the lack of printing costs.

J. Donald noted that the FY22 budget is in good shape because the STBG funds require no local match. The budget is also matched with several smaller grants.

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EAST KINGSTON  
EPPING  
EXETER  
FARMINGTON  
FREMONT  
GREENLAND  
HAMPTON  
HAMPTON FALLS  
KENSINGTON  
KINGSTON  
LEE  
MADBURY  
MIDDLETON  
MILTON  
NEW CASTLE  
NEW DURHAM  
NEWFIELDS  
NEWINGTON  
NEWMARKET  
NEWTON  
NORTH HAMPTON  
NORTHWOOD  
NOTTINGHAM  
PORTSMOUTH  
ROCHESTER  
ROLLINSFORD  
RYE  
SEABROOK  
SOMERSWORTH  
SOUTH HAMPTON  
STRAFFORD  
STRATHAM  
WAKEFIELD

## **5. Community Rides Updates**

J. Donald explained that the Community Rides program is small, and there is a limit of 10 rides per month per client as well as a total monthly limited based on the annual budget. Lower ridership at the beginning of the pandemic resulted in surplus funds and the total monthly limit was lifted between April and July 2020 until the surplus funds were used. J. Donald showed the resulting increase in trip denials. The short lift of the limit inadvertently showed the unmet ridership need. He said he reached out to the people who were denied rides to find out if they were able to find alternative transportation for their trip. Some were able to use telehealth, some were driven by a spouse (even if that spouse was sick themselves), some had family who took time off from work to drive them to their appointment. J. Donald said most of the Community Rides trips are for dialysis appointments. There are more trips to Fresenius dialysis centers than all other trip destinations combined. J. Donald said some riders had asked if they could just pay for additional rides above the 10 per month cap. He proposed allowing clients to pay for additional rides per month at the fully allocated rate (approximately \$60.00 each way), pending approval from FTA. This would allow other people to take additional rides beyond the cap. He said the executive committee had recommended also starting a suggested donation from riders, which would increase the overall budget.

J. Donald said he applied to the Endowment for Health and received a one-time \$8,000 grant to support community rides in providing additional rides to people based on the service need and recent observed trip denial. This allowed the trip cap to be raised. J. Donald recommended introducing the suggested donation on “Giving Tuesday” on November 30<sup>th</sup>.

J. Donald suggested that additional focused outreach could help boost ridership again because people. S. Reynolds recommended posting information on COAST buses because COAST riders are in contact with people who use different services.

## **6. New Website & Common Application**

J. Donald said the website was almost ready to launch and would hopefully be online at the end of the week. It will include the common application which will allow new clients to apply for all providers participating with TripLink through one process (including COAST ADA and Portsmouth Senior Transportation, Ready Rides, Strafford CAP, Rockingham MOW, Community Rides, and TASC).

## **7. National Center for Mobility Management Program Sustainability Tool – Pilot**

J. Donald explained that the state is pushing for each RCC region to have a dedicated mobility manager. They are asking RCC regions to use the sustainability tool to complete a self-assessment and participation comes with \$10,000. The tool and assessment could be useful for updating the regional Coordinated Transportation Plan, which Scott Bogle and Colin Lentz are currently working on.

J. Donald asked if members would be interested in participating. The assessment would require them to meet two times for two hours each, for what is essentially a strategic planning exercise. Members said they would be interested in participating.

## **8. SCC Updates**

J. Donald said the SCC had been working on a plan for how mobility managers were going to coordinate across the state – that plan is being finalized and should be implemented soon. F. Roberge added that the SCC had supported a NHDHHS in getting a \$3 million grant from the CDC for rural community transportation. He said SCC members were still discussing how a statewide mobility manager would operate in NH. Ideally, they wouldn't be a sort of overseer of the regional mobility managers, but more of a dynamic coordinator within state agency partners. F. Roberge said the SCC had contacted Shelly Winters from NHDOT send the SCC a draft of the mobility manager scope of work so they could review prior to finalization.

## **9. Information Exchange**

J. Donald noted that the GACIT hearings on the statewide Ten Year Plan were concluding soon. C. Lentz said he would send J. Donald information on the last two hearings so he could distribute to members. He said the final hearing would be an all-virtual event.

J. Donald said the Wentworth Douglas Hospital grant program had been restarted and he had let them know ACT was interested in applying for funds in the next solicitation round. He noted that one of the federal infrastructure packages includes \$500,000 for the Wentworth Douglas Hospital CareVan. He added that the Greater Rochester Community Health Foundation was stipulated in the sale of Frisbee Memorial Hospital to HCA. The board of that charitable foundation will include Betsy Andrews Parker from Strafford CAP so ACT would have a good contact on the board.

J. Donald said work was progressing on a statewide volunteer driver recruitment campaign through a partnership with the Alliance for Healthy Aging.

C. Robicheau said Strafford CAP's financial assistance programs for heating fuel, electricity, and rental costs was now open.

R. Nichols said COAST would shortly be announcing more service cuts because of a lack of CDL drivers. COAST would be cutting route 14 on the turnpike but that would let them bring back other routes that had been suspended earlier.

#### **10. Public Comment**

No public comments were brought forward to the board.

#### **11. Adjournment**

F. Roberge made a motion to adjourn

Seconded by B. Smith

Vote: Unanimous in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:10am