

# Alliance for Community Transportation (ACT)

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

## MEETING OF THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

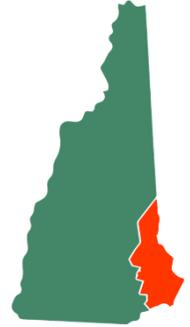
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5, 2022

9 – 10:30AM

HYBRID MEETING:

IN-PERSON LOCATION: MCCONNELL CENTER ROOM 305, DOVER, NH

REMOTE PARTICIPATION VIA ZOOM



## Minutes

### 1. Introductions

#### Members Present:

Fred Roberge (Easterseals - Homemakers), Rad Nichols (COAST), Betty Smith (Ready Rides), Margie Longus (Ready Rides), Scott Bogle (Rockingham Planning Commission), Debbie Perou (Rockingham Nutrition Meals on Wheels), Cheryl Robicheau (Community Action Partnership of Strafford County), Tahja Fulwider (Ready Rides).

#### Members attending virtually:

Colin Lentz (Strafford Planning Commission)

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

### 2. Approval of November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2021 Meeting Minutes {VOTE}

B. Smith made a motion to approve the minutes as written.

Seconded by S. Bogle

Vote: unanimous in favor

### 3. Chair & Secretary Election

Nichols reviewed the nominations for Chair (Rad Nichols nominated to continue in the role) and Secretary (Colin Lentz nominated to continue in the role).

S. Bogle made a motion to accept the nomination of R. Nichols as Chair; seconded by B. Smith.

Vote: unanimous in favor

C. Robicheau made a motion to accept the nomination of C. Lentz as secretary; seconded by B. Smith.

Vote: unanimous in favor

### 4. Updates & Statistics

J. Donald reviewed recent statistics and budgeting.

Strafford CAP now appears in the ridership dashboard as they joined TripLink in October.

There was general growth in ridership in December.

#### Income Statement

- Revenues

- J. Donald noted that ACT was 4% over budget overall so far. This isn't a concern at this point. The primary reason is that the Paid Time Off buy-back that happens in November/December skews the budget.

BARRINGTON  
BRENTWOOD  
BROOKFIELD  
DOVER  
DURHAM  
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

- Purchased transportation is slightly over budget which is actually a good thing because providers are giving more rides than initially anticipated.
- 5310 Mobility Management is also over budget slightly but that is expected because of the way the budget is developed and the transition from federal to state fiscal year.
- Partner support is also slightly over because of the way COAST and other contributions are distributed over the year.
- Expenses
  - Rent and utilities went up, but other office costs went down.

J. Donald explained that additional STBG funds from the state were anticipated, and the understanding was that they would not require local match because the state was going to use turnpike toll credits. However, a recent change will require \$3,000 in local match. This isn't a problem for the ACT region because of recent success securing partner support grants, but the change was a surprise and may be a problem for other regions. Members discussed the issue that other federal funds will likely be left on the table because of a lack of matching state funds if NH to participate more significantly in providing match. Originally, federal STBG funds were going to be matched entirely with turnpike toll credits. R. Nichols emphasized that this was not an issue from NHDOT or other agencies, it was because of a lack of generation and investment of state revenues by the legislature.

### **5. Community Rides Updates**

J. Donald explained that the Giving Tuesday didn't earn us any donations and so far there has only been one suggested donation. Wentworth Douglas Hospital's charitable giving program has started again and they have traditionally supported Community Rides and TripLink. Community Rides ridership picked up in December and there were only two denials (drivers were all busy serving rides). J. Donald said staff always encourage clients to schedule rides at non-busy times to avoid conflicts with other trips.

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

J. Donald said the new website and common application have launched and all but one glitch has been resolved. Members discussed issues around ride coordination and promotion of TripLink services

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

J. Donald told members that ACT has been asked to participate in a sustainability tool pilot being developed by NCMM. Steve Workman from Transport NH is working on the tool, which is a self-assessment tool completed through a live meeting. Participation comes with \$10,000 and the ACT Executive Committee has recommended that the whole board participate. The process will also be useful for updating the regional Coordinated Transportation Plan, which Scott Bogle and Colin Lentz are currently working on. The assessment would require them to meet two times for two hours each, or more likely one long meeting for what is essentially a strategic planning exercise.

### **8. ACT Workplan Check-in**

J. Donald said wanted to add workplan check-in as regular agenda item to track progress. He has been working to ensure municipalities and other entities know about ACT when they're looking to purchase vehicles. He has also been working on regular driver training for agencies and continuing outreach to groups like Rotary clubs to ensure they know about ACT and its role.

### **9. SCC Updates**

J. Donald explained that the state has finalized a contract with RLS Associates to facilitate the process for hiring a statewide mobility manager. He said the RFP includes language for the mobility manager to not only look at RCC regions for coordination improvements, but also state agencies who manage funding. F. Roberge added that the SCC would be in close contact with agencies and RLS regarding the hiring process and strategic planning for the next five years of work by the SCC.

## **10. Information Exchange**

D. Perou said the state had cited RNMOV because the fire extinguishers on their vehicles were not certified annually. She asked about how others accomplish that. T. Fulwider said the local fire department; F. Roberge said there are private companies as well.

J. Donald said statewide volunteer driver recruitment is progressing and multiple ACT providers are participating in the peer-to-peer workgroup. The workgroup has a marketing specialist helping with promotion and recruitment efforts. T. Fulwider noted that Ready Rides originally had 64 registered drivers; about half of them drove regularly. Now Ready Rides is down to 15 active drivers which is not enough. She said driver availability trends with COVID concerns; spikes in infection rates depress participation. Drivers tend to be more concerned with potentially infecting their passengers rather than concerned for themselves.

R. Nichols announced that COAST had started a 6-month pilot of free transfers between buses. They're going to track if it improves ridership and fares but if there isn't much change, the pilot may be canceled. R. Nichols explained that COAST staff had recently discussed what will happen if the Omicron variant of covid-19 impacts operations. Four COAST operators have had to quarantine with covid since service returned after the holidays. COAST is debating whether it will follow the new CDC guidance that a five-day quarantine is adequate with proper mask-wearing, rather than ten days.

C. Robicheau said Strafford CAP is starting voluntary weekly testing for staff in partnership with UNH for equipment and expertise. Members discussed organizational voluntary vs. mandatory mask and vaccination requirements.

## **11. Public Comment**

No public comments were brought forward to the board.

## **12. Adjournment**

B. Smith made a motion to adjourn

Seconded by S. Bogle

Vote: Unanimous in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:30am