

Alliance for Community Transportation (ACT)

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

MEETING OF THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2023

9 – 10:30AM

McCONNELL CENTER, 61 LOCUST ST, ROOM 305 DOVER, NH

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85710910029?pwd=OGtsb2xMd20rT0JyQ1RDdFVLZUxw>

[dz09](#)

MINUTES

1) Welcome & Introductions

Members in-person: Colin Lentz (Strafford Regional Planning Commission), Rad Nichols (COAST), Tahja Fulwider (Ready Rides), Emelia Poehlman (NH Disability and Health Program), Helen Kostrzynski (RNMOV), Lisa Ludwigsen (Easterseals), Kate Sullivan (Community Partners)

Staff: Jeff Donald (COAST)

Members Online: Scott Bogle (Rockingham Planning Commission), Teri Palmer (Statewide Mobility Manager)

2) Approval of September 6, 2023 Meeting Minutes {VOTE}

T. Fulwider made a motion to approve the minutes as written; seconded by E. Poehlman

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

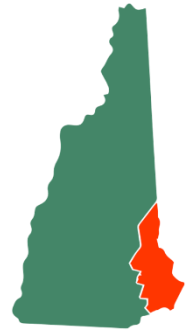
3) Updates & Statistics

J. Donald reported on recent ridership and service trends. Most provider ridership is tracking up or steady. For some services, it appears as though riders are coming back post pandemic but not riding as much. The Common Application is seeing continued growth – 159 applicants just in first FY quarter.

J. Donald also provided a brief update on ACT financials. No questions were raised.

4) Partner Update: Raude Raychel, Indonesian Community Connect (ICC)

The ICC representative was unavailable, so L. Ludwigsen gave an update on Easterseals. Ludwigsen is the business manager, but she has taken on some of the engagement tasks since Fred Roberge retired. Easterseals is working on hiring a new transportation director. They're also a partner on a project to build a new multi-family housing development in Rochester. The new facility will supplement the Rochester adult day center.



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NEWFIELDS
NEWINGTON
NEWMARKET
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WAKEFIELD

5) Statewide Updates

J. Donald explained that the SCC is working on uniform RCC bylaws. The draft bylaws will be presented for review at a future ACT meeting.

J. Donald said he was part of an Alliance for Health Aging (AHA) effort to improve advertising of VDP's around state. GSIL has verbally committed to a media buy to aid promotion of services.

VDP's need to give their drivers 1099 forms if they make over \$600 – this took some VDP's by surprise. A bill has been introduced in the U.S. House that would match the tax deduction for volunteer mileage reimbursements to the business deduction rate.

The SCC is launching its own website, which will include subpages for all RCC's to use as their websites. This includes a statewide transportation directory. J. Donald is expecting to shift most of ACT's website over, but that won't be feasible for the Common Application. It will need to be determined if the Common Application could be hosted at COAST's website.

T. Palmer noted that she'll be working with the SCC and RCCs to develop the directory. She's also working with RPCs to publish meeting times on future statewide SCC site to improve access to transportation-related meetings. T. Palmer is also working on efforts to improve transportation services for people emerging from prison. Prisoners are usually just given bus passes to leave the prison; there needs to be follow-up support to reduce recidivism. T. Palmer is also working on another program teaching inmates to build and fix bicycles.

J. Donald will be serving on a panel for the Transportation Research Board to research VDP's in rural communities. He will be serving as an in-field expert, develop an RFP for research, and review consultant's research.

J. Donald and T. Palmer reported that the SCC is updating a "blueprint" for setting up a new full-time mobility manager in new areas. The current understanding is that a new mobility management program costs over \$1M.

6) Information Exchange

T. Fulwider noted that someone had reached out asking if Ready Rides could provide rides for women who are victims of trafficking. Ready Rides rider is for people 55 or older or people with a disability (using FTA 5310 funds). Jeff noted that Ready Rides could raise separate funds to develop a separate service.

T. Fulwider explained that a random transportation service using name "Ready Rides Transportation" is providing Medicaid trips in the same area as Ready Rides, but the service is reportedly terrible. People are complaining because they associate "ready rides transportation" with the original Ready Rides. T. Palmer said she talked to NHDOT staff but there's nothing they can do about the name at this point.

R. Nichols said COAST is back to full weekday service. Saturday service is also returning. He added that 5310 and 5339 funding programs will be launching soon. These programs can help providers get new vehicles.

7) Miscellaneous

J. Donald noted that a restaurant in Portsmouth recently converted their second story to apartments and got a variance from the city planning board, exempting them from building additional parking. The city is reviewing ordinance to increase flexibility in requirements for new parking. R. Nichols also reached out to the city to discuss giving developers the option or requirement to purchase bus passes for apartment residents rather than parking spaces.

J. Donald reminded members that he does in-person travel training. He has recently been contacted by two schools to do travel training for students with learning disabilities transitioning toward independence. J. Donald is developing travel training videos to post on web so potential riders can learn independently. He's looking for funding to support this work – potentially GSIL funds.

J. Donald reiterated that at the annual meeting he recommended incremental growth as an approach to service improvement/expansion, rather than focusing on single, large, costly projects. He said he wants to focus more at ACT meetings on ways to incrementally improve services. Combating social isolation is one such task that requires immediate action.

8) Adjournment

K. Sullivan made a motion to adjourn; seconded by C. Lentz