



ACT Annual Membership Meeting

Minutes – November 4, 2020 - 9:00am

Electronic meeting via Zoom

1) Introductions

Members Present: Colin Lentz (SRPC), Rad Nichols (COAST), Tahja Fulwider (Ready Rides), Fred Roberge (Easterseals NH), Scott Bogle (Rockingham RPC), Cheryl Robicheau (Strafford CAP), Sharon Reynolds (citizen member), Margi Longus (Ready Rides), Helen Kostrzynski (Rockingham Nutrition Meals on Wheels)

Guests Present: Casey Hopkins (Seacoast Learning Collaborative), Pamela Becker (Community Partners),

Staff Present: Jeff Donald (COAST)

2) Approval of Meeting Minutes {VOTE}

S. Bogle made a motion to accept the minutes as written,

Seconded by M. Longus

Vote: unanimous in favor via roll call vote

3) Vice Chair Election {VOTE}

R. Nichols noted that S. Bogle had volunteered to continue in the role as Vice Chair and no other nominations had been made.

C. Lentz made a motion to approve the nomination of S. Bogle to the Vice Chair

Seconded by F. Roberge

Vote: unanimous in favor via roll call vote (S. Bogle abstaining)

4) Updates & Statistics [Jeff]

J. Donald gave an update on recent ridership. Across the providers it has been recovering steadily since the drop early in the pandemic. Proportionately, RNMOV is down more than other providers because it isn't serving congregate meal sites (because they're not in operation due to COVID-19). Portsmouth Senior Transportation has been consistent throughout the pandemic, pointing to it being an essential new service.

J. Donald reviewed the ACT year-to-date income statement. Most items are on track; because of COVID-19 combined expenses and revenues are 16% below where they were expected at the start of the year.

S. Bogle asked about the potential impact of lower than expected Volunteer Driver Program match. J. Donald responded that each provider has unique challenges finding local match but there are some flexible options. He noted that he had reached out to NHDOT about using unspent VDP match from the prior year of the contract. NHDOT's suggestion was to return to quarterly billing cycles so there was a larger time period to spread out. J. Donald noted that that approach had left funds on the table in the past.

5) FY21 Meeting Schedule

J. Donald presented the proposed schedule for board and executive committee meetings in 2021. It is based on the current schedule.

6) Budget updates

J. Donald provided some budget updates:

- Area hospitals have frozen their discretionary grant programs so are no longer a source for match
- J. Donald has applied for a Rochester community development block grant for matching funds
- Delta Dental has some grant programs that may be suitable for and application from ACT
- J. Donald is going to reach out to the Counties for potential funding
- NHDOT is expected to release the solicitation for 5310 funds soon
 - It is possible that NHDOT will flex some funds from the Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement program (CMAQ) to support transit, which would benefit ACT as well

S. Bogle said he expected NHDOT to require any flexed CMAQ funds to be dedicated to mobility management; he wondered if that would free up FTA funds currently being used for mobility management to be dedicated to service expansion. J. Donald said he wasn't sure but most likely any additional funds would replace the FTA5307 funds COAST provides to fill gaps in ACT's local match (rather than mobility management or service expansion). R. Nichols agreed but noted that COAST is still able to act as a backup source of local match if necessary.

7) New Website & Common Application

J. Donald said the new website and common application are nearly ready for release; there are a few details to be finalized. Next step will be to work with transportation providers to make sure they're familiar with and promoting the common application.

8) SCC Updates

J. Donald said he had been discussing with other mobility managers about a coordinated approach to reporting – especially on unmet need. He added that mobility managers have a good handle on coordinating transportation service within and between regions. They're waiting to hear from NHDOT about requests and will be looking to provide input on a statewide coordinated transportation plan. F. Roberge said his work with the SCC had focused on inclusive practices. He said the NH Department of Health and Human Services had recently committed to returning to SCC meetings. He noted that he had reached out to NHDOT to get a clearer idea of their vision for the CMAQ funds. NHDOT is proposing contracting for a statewide mobility manager and requiring regions to hire regional mobility managers. Funding for certain projects would be contingent on the hiring of dedicated mobility managers. F. Roberge said he had explained to NHDOT that different regions have very different levels of demand, staff capacity, and sophistication. He had been talking with each region to assess their preparedness for and benefit from a dedicated mobility manager. There will be discussion about this at the SCC meeting tomorrow.

S. Bogle said he felt NHDOT should focus on expanding service rather than hiring mobility managers. Coordination is a way to expand service but not an effective use of funds by itself. He noted that the state plan and justification for proposing hiring dedicated mobility managers were based on case studies from other states that invested 3 times or even 300 times as much state funding in public transit as NH does. S. Bogle said coordination was needed (and the ACT region is a great example of how mobility

management can improve service, when there are a lot of providers) but service expansion should be prioritized for additional investment.

9) Information Exchange

J. Donald explained that Frisbee Hospital had ended their Care Van service. This will possibly push regular riders to ACT providers. He noted that a recent hospital merger agreement required Frisbee to develop a community foundation that could possibly support regional transit.

J. Donald said he was working on increasing communications to reach more Limited English Proficiency residents in the region and was participating on a Community Healthy Aging Taskforce (CHAT) in the Strafford County area. J. Donald said the NH Public Health Association was hosting a conference “Team Up and Take Action” related to COVID-19 recovery and adaptation.

R. Nichols said the COAST board had voted to implement a requirement that passengers wear masks on all COAST buses (starting Monday November 9th). The messaging includes language discouraging passengers to approach other passengers who still choose to comply with the requirement. He added that COAST provided free rides to the polls on November 3rd but he hadn’t seen the ridership data yet.

C. Lentz noted that SRPC had recently hired a regional economic recovery planner to help communities in their recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

J. Donald noted that Ready Rides ridership was down but they were still getting most rides done. He asked if T. Fulwider knew whether clients are getting rides elsewhere, using telehealth, avoiding trips all together, or something else. T. Fulwider said ridership is coming back up slowly; most riders are still too concerned about COVID-19 and are not taking trips unless it’s critical. She said she would be distributing a survey to assess clients’ concerns and how they were adapting. Most of their recent riders have been social workers. Ready Rides is down from 60 drivers, to only 12 so even if demand climbed back up quickly, they wouldn’t have the drivers to accommodate demand.

C. Hopkins introduced himself and the work of Seacoast Learning Collaborative (SLC). He explained that SLC provides numerous education programs for various age groups. They have a transportation program with about 70 drivers and a wide range of vehicles. SLC’s focus is on providing special needs transportation for students through high school; they have several contracts with school districts. During the pandemic they’ve been able to help out with some on-call trips for medical and shopping. J Donald asked where funding for the on-call trips comes from. C. Hopkins said it comes from school district contracts or directly from customers. They have special rates based on a per-mile or per-hour rate for those cases. He added that SLC is governed by a board of directors mostly made up of school superintendents. S. Bogle asked what challenges SLC has had recruiting drivers. C. Hopkins said they’ve been struggling to recruit new drivers and their current drivers are predominantly seniors who have been unable to work due to concern about COVID-19.

F. Roberge noted that SLC may be able to coordinate with ACT to use SLC vehicles to provide rides through TripLink.

S. Bogle noted that the statewide coordinated transportation plan lists several priorities for mobility managers to implement. Promoting services to more people who don’t know about it is one of the top ones. Obviously COVID-19 has changed things and he asked member providers whether they thought awareness of services or provider capacity was a greater issue currently (an in the recovery). R. Nichols said capacity may be the biggest constraint at this point. J. Donald said one of the main issues is where new clients are. If there are five new clients who all live at the same assisted living facility and shop at

one grocery store, that's easy to accommodate. But if each new person is in an isolated location and wants to go to individual destinations it may be impossible to serve all of them.

10) Public Comment

No members of the public brought comments forward.

11) Adjournment

R. Nichols made a motion to adjourn

Seconded by F. Roberge

Meeting adjourned at 10:05