

Monadnock Regional Coordinating Council for Community Transportation (MRCC)

Minutes from Tuesday, June 23, 2026, 9:00 a.m.

Southwest Region Planning Commission
37 Ashuelot Street, Keene, NH

Members Present: Erika Alusic-Bingham, Secretary, *Community Action Partnership Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties*; Suzanne Bansley, *Cheshire County (alternate)*; Annie Fernandez, *Keene Senior Center (alternate)*; Allan Gillis, *Community Volunteer Transportation Company (CVTC)*; Sally Malay, *Keene Housing Kids Collaborative (KHKC)*; Sandra McDonald, *Citizen Member*; Jolymn Paulsen, *Monadnock Family Services*; Karen Richi, *Monadnock Peer Support (MPS)*; Scott Symonds, *SMART Ride LLC*, Jim Yannizee, *Cedarcrest Center*.

Members Present Online: None

Members Absent: Frank Dobisky, Chair, *Thomas Transportation*; Charlie Pratt, Vice Chair, *Home Healthcare, Hospice & Community Services (HCS)*; Jamilla Pucciarello, *Treasurer, Cheshire County*; Michael (Mick) Blume, *Keene Family YMCA*; Alice Cable, *Fall Mountain Regional School District*; David Meader, *Citizen Member*; Kim Rumrill, *Keene Senior Center*; Charles Weed, *Citizen Member*; Alison Welsh, *Cheshire County Treatment Court*,

Guests: Fred Butler, *NHDOT (online)*; Martha Doherty, *Monadnock Family Services (alternate)*; Jon Gullage, *Monadnock Community Hospital (online)*; Angelique Pandolph, *Easter Seals (online)*.

SWRPC Staff Present: J. B. Mack, *Assistant Director*; Lisa Steadman, *Region 5 Mobility Manager*; Chloe Gross, *Planner*

I. Welcome and Introductions

E. Alusic-Bingham called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and facilitated a round of introductions.

II. Minutes of May 26, 2026 Meeting

E. Alusic-Bingham called for any discussion about the May 26, 2026 meeting minutes.

MOTION: To accept the May 26th 2026 meeting minutes made by J. Paulsen, 2nd S. McDonald. There was no discussion. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

III. MRCC Housekeeping

a. Motion on New Member(s)

L. Steadman recognized J. Yannizze from Cedarcrest Center for Children with Disabilities, noted that he has expressed interest in joining MRCC and asked him to introduce himself. J. Yannizze explained that Cedarcrest is now transporting all its kids in-house to appointments because previous service from Medicaid brokers was inadequate and Cedarcrest was not having costs appropriately covered by Medicaid. Paperwork is now being done by a software contractor. Each child travels with an RN and LNA to appointments that are often in Boston, MA or Lebanon, NH.

MOTION: To accept Jim Yannizze from Cedarcrest as a new MRCC member made by A. Gillis, 2nd S. Malay. **The motion was approved unanimously by roll call vote.**

b. Utilizing eSignature for COI and MOU

L. Steadman proposed converting records of Conflict of Interest and Memorandum of Understanding from paper to an online platform that includes an e-signature function. This will help make sure that records are up to date and easy to find. L. Steadman proposed using a Google Form but E. Alusic-Bingham brought up the issue of having to sign in to a Google account to complete the form. Other proposed platforms included Survey Monkey, Adobe, Docusign, and Microsoft Forms. The group generally agreed that records should be moved online and that utilizing an e-signature is acceptable. L. Steadman will look into an appropriate platform to meet MRCC's needs.

MOTION: To investigate the best online form for the MRCC to utilize to move the Conflict of Interest and Memorandum of Agreement items to electronic signature made by S. McDonald, 2nd A. Gillis. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

c. Summertime Meetings

L. Steadman reminded attendees that MRCC voted to meet in July and not in August. However, SWRPC staff requested that MRCC take July off and meet in August so that the NextGen Transit Project steering committees would have adequate time to report back to MRCC. The new proposed date for the next MRCC meeting is August 25, 2026. S. Malay and A. Gillis noted that they will be absent. Scott Symonds and E. Alusic-Bingham noted that they may have to attend remotely. There was general consensus to meet on August 25th.

MOTION: To move the summertime meeting to August made by E. Alusic-Bingham. **The motion was informally approved by consensus.** E. Alusic-Bingham declared that the next meeting will be held in August.

d. Other Housekeeping Items

L. Steadman asked attendees to create Vision Statements and MRCC goals for the new fiscal year. Prompt questions could include "Why are you here?" and "How do you benefit from MRCC?". These reflections will help focus the purpose of members' attendance. (Another way to think about it is creating your organization's mission for working towards the MRCC mission.) L. Steadman requests that MRCC members come to the August meeting with a small mission statement. E. Alusic-Bingham supports this idea since not all the member organizations of MRCC work include transportation in their scope of services.

L. Steadman posted this month's meeting packet to the KeepNHMoving website and is seeking feedback. The website currently shows the packet, upcoming meetings, contact information, members, and more, all under the Region 5 subpage. The group agreed that having this information available on the website is valuable and it encourages them to view what other RCCs are doing.

IV. Treasurer's Report

S. Bansley reported that the financial figures are preliminary, as fiscal year-end processing is still underway. Current figures represent approximately 10 to 11 months of activity. Approximately \$64,000 remains available, and

reimbursements continue to be drawn down evenly while invoices are processed. The SFY26 awards are expected to be released in August, and funding for SFY27 is anticipated to remain level.

L. Steadman noted that the SFY26 subrecipient agreements include updated language as approved by MRCC in its May meeting. The added language is:

In the event that the Community Volunteer Transportation Company is unable to provide a requested ambulatory transport within two (2) business days of the request, they will inform the regional mobility manager. Subrecipient will provide via email the rider's name, contact information, and details regarding their request. The regional mobility manager will attempt to find transportation for the person. The Subrecipient shall document these RMM-referred requests in their invoices to Cheshire County under referrals to "Mobility Manager."

A. Gillis requested that Community Volunteer Transportation Company (CVTC) be notified if referral procedures change so that the organization can address any insurance implications.

V. Grants Subcommittee Report

L. Steadman reported that the only outstanding grant application is the Point32Health grant. The subcommittee is also exploring funding opportunities for the Next Generation Transit project through GO-NORTH and may pursue Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding or congressional earmarks in the future.

L. Steadman clarified that federal regulations provide guidelines on her grant writing activities on behalf of MRCC. She can continue providing technical assistance to the Grants Subcommittee.

Scott Symonds asked whether the council has access to a grant specialist. S. Bansley explained that she can provide grant assistance to organizations serving Cheshire County and adjacent communities as her workload allows.

VI. Old Business

a. Critical Access to Care (now Crucial Appointment Ride Service) RfQ

L. Steadman reviewed the feedback received on the draft Critical Access to Care RfQ. The goal of the discussion was to determine which proposed revisions should be incorporated before releasing the document.

The group discussed changing the program name from "Critical Access to Care (CAC)" to "Crucial Appointment Ride Service (CARS)." A. Gillis shared that hospital partners expressed concern that the word "critical" could unintentionally suggest that individuals should contact the transportation program rather than emergency services during a medical emergency.

L. Steadman reviewed proposed revisions to the RfQ, including updated insurance requirements and a new section outlining desired provider expertise and capabilities. Proposed qualifications include wheelchair-accessible transportation, redundant communication systems, passenger assistance, driver training, coordination with other transportation providers, and experience serving rural communities.

A. Gillis recommended that wheelchair accessibility be required only when applicable by changing the language from "must have" to "if applicable." This would allow providers to offer only the services they are equipped to provide while ensuring accessible trips could be assigned to providers with the appropriate capabilities.

The group also discussed driver training requirements, including first aid, child passenger safety, and mental health response training. E. Alusic-Bingham emphasized the importance of equipping drivers to appropriately respond to individuals experiencing mental health crises, noting that transportation should not be denied solely because someone is experiencing a behavioral health episode. A. Gillis stated that while CVTC drivers do not currently receive specialized mental health training, the organization would not refuse transportation solely for that reason and would contact emergency services when appropriate. E. Alusic-Bingham noted that the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline may also be an appropriate resource in some situations. L. Steadman said she would add "and skillsets" to the driver training section heading to better reflect these discussions.

The group also discussed policies regarding children traveling alone and determined that child transportation policies may be more appropriate in another phase of the RfQ process.

S. Bansley recommended extending the procurement timeline to allow additional time for vendor questions and proposal preparation. L. Steadman agreed that the schedule could be adjusted while still allowing sufficient time for contract negotiations in October and a July 2027 program launch.

The group discussed whether providers should be expected to coordinate long-distance and interstate medical trips. Members agreed to retain this expectation within the RfQ, but that it would not be required of all applicants.

S. McDonald shared an experience in which a transportation provider failed to return after her medical appointment ran late, requiring assistance from a hospital social worker to arrange alternate transportation. Members discussed the importance of ongoing provider compliance monitoring and establishing a process for reporting complaints to both the provider and MRCC.

MOTION: To authorize SWRPC staff to finalize the RfQ language while maintaining the substance of the revisions discussed by the Council made by E. Alusic-Bingham, 2nd A. Gillis. S. Symonds abstained. All other members voted to support the motion. **The motion was approved.**

From this point forward, the acronym CARS will be used in reference to this program.

b. CARS Steering Committee Composition

L. Steadman reported that representatives from Cheshire County, Cheshire Medical Center, and Monadnock Community Hospital have agreed to serve on the steering committee. MRCC was asked to appoint its own representative to the committee.

L. Steadman reviewed the expected commitment, including an initial kickoff meeting, independent review and scoring of proposals, up to four vendor interviews, additional scoring, and a final recommendation meeting. The process is expected to involve approximately six meetings.

E. Alusic-Bingham noted that the time commitment may be difficult for agency representatives whose participation depends on employer availability. She expressed support for appointing a community member to represent MRCC. S. McDonald indicated she was willing to serve, with transportation to the meetings being her only concern. S. Malay noted the irony of needing transportation assistance to participate on a transportation committee.

MOTION: To approve S. McDonald as the MRCC representative on the CARS Steering Committee made by J. Paulsen 2nd E. Alusic-Bingham. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

c. Eligible Trip Purposes for CARS

L. Steadman reported that A. Gillis arranged a meeting with Tricia Zahn of Cheshire Medical Center and Molly Rajaniemi from Monadnock Community Hospital, both serving on the CVTC board of directors, do help develop the proposed list of eligible trip purposes. The list includes Cancer Care, Cardiac Rehab, Diabetes Care, Dialysis, Infusion Therapy, Outpatient Physical Rehabilitation specifically for recovery from injuries, surgeries, or illnesses, Post-Surgery Follow-Up, Respiratory Therapy, Hospital Release, and Post-Surgery rides home.

S. Malay proposed adding transportation to enrichment activities for youth as an eligible purpose if additional funding becomes available.

Members discussed transportation following outpatient surgery. S. Bansley noted that post-surgical transportation may involve responsibilities beyond simply driving a passenger and raised questions about liability and caregiver responsibilities. E. Alusic-Bingham suggested that requiring a companion could address some of these concerns. S. Symonds observed that hospitals already discharge many patients without requiring a companion and cautioned against creating additional barriers to transportation. Members agreed that companion services could be offered when appropriate without making them mandatory.

The group also discussed replacing the term "enrichment" with language that more clearly reflects the intended purpose of youth transportation.

MOTION: To accept eligible trip purposes as written with opportunities for youth riders as additional funding is available made by E. Alusic-Bingham 2nd S. McDonald. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

d. Greater Keene Transit Service RfQ Status Update

In F. Dobisky's absence, L. Steadman provided an update on the Greater Keene Transit Service procurement process. Five proposals were received, and four applicants have been interviewed. The steering committee is currently gathering references and additional information before completing its evaluations. Once deliberations are complete, the committee will forward its recommendation to MRCC. A recommendation is expected at the August meeting.

e. Community Transportation Champion Award Press Release

Members reviewed the draft Community Transportation Champion Award press release. No revisions were suggested.

MOTION: To approve the press release as presented made by E. Alusic-Bingham 2nd S. Symonds. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

Members discussed distributing the press release to local media outlets, including the Keene Sentinel, The Shopper News, the Monadnock Ledger-Transcript, and The Monadnock Shopper News.

MOTION: To accept SWRPC's standard press release outlets as MRCC's own made by S. Symonds, 2nd E. Alusic-Bingham. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

VII. New Business

a. Quantifying Stopgap Rides

L. Steadman reviewed a memorandum outlining efforts to better quantify "stopgap rides", which is defined as transportation provided by partner organizations when existing community transportation systems are unable to meet

a rider's needs. The goal is to better document the extent to which organizations are filling transportation gaps that are not currently captured in available data.

L. Steadman shared that she has spoken with MRCC members S. Malay and E. Alusic-Bingham, about developing a pilot effort to track these trips. Both indicated that their organizations could provide data on transportation they currently arrange or provide outside traditional transportation systems. J. Paulsen added that Monadnock Family Services may be able to use expense reports to document these trips.

E. Alusic-Bingham explained that her organization will likely need to create a spreadsheet to consistently track stopgap rides. She noted that shorter trips, particularly those under 10 miles, have not historically been tracked, although her organization recently submitted approximately \$300 in transportation expenses for reimbursement. J. Paulsen reported that she has discussed the initiative with her organization's leadership. She noted that many of their transportation needs involve clients requiring 24/7 supervision and that all riders currently require a chaperone. She believes those trips can be documented once an appropriate tracking process is established.

J. Yannizze explained that Cedarcrest already documents medical transportation provided to its residents but is working to better distinguish transportation costs from other operational expenses. Cedarcrest is creating a separate department to track medical transportation, so staff time, vehicle use, and related expenses can be more accurately identified. He noted that Cedarcrest frequently transports youth to medical appointments in New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts, averaging approximately five medical trips each week. L. Steadman clarified that, at this stage, the project is focused primarily on documenting the number of trips being provided rather than calculating their costs.

S. Malay noted that her organization regularly pays transportation providers directly using program funds when no other transportation options are available.

S. Symonds emphasized that the ultimate objective is to identify transportation requests that fall through gaps in the existing system. L. Steadman agreed, explaining that organizations often step in to provide transportation before a trip is officially recorded as unmet, making it difficult to accurately measure the true level of transportation need. She noted that documenting these stopgap rides will help demonstrate the unmet demand that currently remains invisible because community organizations continue finding ways to ensure clients receive necessary transportation.

Members discussed whether organizations such as Cedarcrest could request transportation through existing community providers before providing the trip themselves to document unmet requests. J. Yannizze expressed concern that doing so solely for data collection purposes could create unnecessary administrative work and financial burdens for providers when Cedarcrest already intends to complete the transportation itself.

b. Transportation Security Index

L. Steadman explained the purpose of the 6-question Transportation Security Index survey. She noted that it was administered within the larger Community Transportation Needs Assessment. There are figures representing the Monadnock region, but the sample size was small. She would like to open a conversation with MRCC members about sharing the survey more broadly to discover the true TSI for the region with a larger size. This will be discussed more in future meetings.

VIII. Mobility Manager Update

L. Steadman reported that she recently attended the National Transit Institute, Rutgers University, Advancing Mobility Management training in Oklahoma. The training focused on the mobility management framework, strategies being implemented across the country, professional competencies for mobility managers, and networking opportunities with transportation professionals. L. Steadman noted that she established a mentoring relationship with a Director of the Oklahoma City Transit provider, EMBARK.

L. Steadman also attended the joint annual meeting of the New Hampshire Transit Association (NHTA) and the State Coordinating Council (SCC), where she presented the Community Transportation Champion Award to Ed Sweeney of Sweeney Transportation. She continues providing individualized transportation assistance to community members seeking available transportation options.

IX. State-Level Updates

Both guests from NHDOT had already left the virtual meeting. L. Steadman reported that the State issued an RfQ for an intercity bus route connecting Keene and Nashua or Keene and Concord and has received one proposal.

She also summarized topics discussed at recent state meetings, including the Community Transportation Needs Assessment, FTA Region 1 updates, transportation funding associated with the Build America 250 bill.

X. Partner Updates

E. Alusic-Bingham shared that Manchester has launched a new transit route providing transportation for children to local swimming pools during the summer.

XI. Next Meeting: July 28, 2026

The next MRCC meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, August 25, 2026**, at 9:00 a.m. The council is expected to receive the Greater Keene Transit Service RfQ recommendation at that meeting.

XII. Adjourn

MOTION: To adjourn made by E. Alusic-Bingham. A formal vote was not conducted. The meeting was adjourned at 10:28 a.m.