

**Greater Nashua Regional Coordination Council (RCC7)**

**APPROVED Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, January 23, 2025, 10:00 a.m.**

**Attendees:**

In Person:

Janet Langdell, Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative  
Carol Brooks, Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative  
Teri Palmer, NH Statewide Mobility Manager, RLS Associates  
Sara Ceaser, United Way of Greater Nashua  
Sandra DeLos, Town of Merrimack  
Jon Eriquezzo, Meals on Wheels  
Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja, NRPC Foundation  
Margaret Loret, Nashua Citizen  
Rocky Morelli, Opportunity Networks  
Pat Murphy, Town of Merrimack  
Angelique Pandolph, Easter Seals  
Don Paré, Gate City Bike Co-op  
Deb Ritcey, Granite State Independent Living

Remote:

Kerry Miller, Nashua Transit System  
James Wilkie, Caregivers

NRPC Staff:

Matt Waitkins, MPO Coordinator  
Donna Marceau, Regional Mobility Manager - RCC7  
Kathy Kirby, Administrative Assistant

**1. Call to Order & Introductions**

Langdell called the meeting to order at 10:03. Introductions were made by the attendees.

**2. Approval of December 2024 meeting minutes**

The December meeting minutes edits: "John" Eriquezzo should be Jon. Page 2, Item 4 edits: delete "not" in front of spending; delete "...at this time," and replace it with the word *first*. Delete the word "that" at the end of line 7 and replace it with the word *this*. Page 3: delete "Miller" and replace it with *Butler*.

Jon Eriquezzo made a motion and Carol Brooks seconded.

***THAT the December 2024 RCC7 draft meeting minutes be approved as edited.***

**Deb Ritcey abstained. Approved unanimously.**

**3. Recognition of Service by Pat Murphy, Town of Merrimack Welfare Director, on her well-deserved retirement**

RCC7 members honored Pat Murphy for her 20+ years of dedicated service to the RCC7 and furthering community transportation.

**4. RCC FY2026-2027 5310 funding discussion**

Langdell led the funding discussion and gave a brief overview of the three different sources of federal funding (5310, 5310 Capital, and 5305e). 5305e is a planning grant that NRPC has applied for in the past, and FY22-23 5305e funding was used for a volunteer driver feasibility study. NRPC proposes to use the FY24-25 funding to update the transportation modeling program, "NTS Comprehensive Plan and Locally Coordinated Plan." The 5311 funding

program is for capital purchases. NTS and Opportunity Networks may have an interest in applying for these funds. Then there is 5310 RCC funding which is the largest source of federal funding for community transportation.

Waitkins provided additional information about the available 5305e funding: only regional planning commissions may apply for it. Three studies and one plan have been funded using 5305e funds in the last four funding rounds. For this round, NRPC would like to fund the usage of the NRPC travel demand forecasting model to expand on the recent model analysis of the NTS fixed route public transportation system. In the proposed project, we will include and expand beyond the senior and disabled populations to new demographic groups: under 18 years, low-income households, limited English proficiency (LEP), and zero/1 auto households. The study includes the entire region (13 municipalities). The results of this study may suggest improvements, such as on-demand service, increased use of a phone app, and micro-transit options. Langdell stated that NRPC is looking for a letter of support from the RCC7, the benefit being that RCC7 gets the benefit of having the data and analysis to help us make informed decisions about the future of community transportation in our region.

Carol Brooks made a motion to provide a letter of support. Jon Eriquezzo seconded.

***THAT the RCC7 provide a letter of support for the NRPC grant proposal for the SFY 5305e SPR funding.***

**All in favor. Approved unanimously.**

5310 Capital Funding: Opportunity Networks applied last year but their funding request for a vehicle was not accepted. Opportunity Networks (ON) can reapply if desired. Morelli stated Opportunity Networks is still looking at how they want to approach it. They have received a recommendation from NHDOT to work with Nashua Transit System availability but have not initiated further discussion with NTS to date. ON questioned how easily it would be addressed through NTS's current service model, but he thinks ON needs to have that discussion with NTS. Langdell stated if NTS's current model does not work for ON's specific needs, perhaps a letter from NTS could be shared with the DOT saying that, as well as mentioning the inter-regional nature of your work that NTS does not provide. Palmer stated that NHDOT is very intent on providing capital funding where there is coordination between providers to get people to destinations in other regions or within a region. Morelli is intent on applying once everything is well-thought-out and proper as ON may be setting precedence. He feels it needs to be a longer-term view and a more comprehensive view.

Eriquezzo asked if ON were to be part of a network, could they get reimbursed. Palmer stated it's an option because in that case it is considered operational funding. Langdell stated that is an option, but it could be a subcontract situation where SVTC could be purchasing service from ON, similar to what SVTC does with NTS. ON has the potential to work with smaller groups. If we could get transportation services inter-regionally, that would fill a gap in the transportation services we provide right now. Does RCC7 support a request from ON for funding a replacement vehicle for their fleet of two, and the current handicapped-accessible vehicle is free? Palmer stated she recommends ON apply for the 5310 capital and ON give those present the chance to advocate for ON as well. Morelli thanked Palmer and stated ON has a base to work off of now by spotlighting some different areas we are addressing. Langdell asked for a motion.

Jon Eriquezzo made a motion and Pandolph seconded.

***THAT RCC7 is authorized to write a letter of support for Opportunity Network's 5310 capital funding application.***

**Rocky Morelli abstained. Approved unanimously.**

Langdell referred everyone to Fred Butler's (NHDOT) email and a packet of information including a notice of funding availability for 5310 funds. For FY2024, RCC7 was funded \$23,200. In FY2025, it was the same amount, but RCC7 received a 10% boost so the final amount was \$255,000. The 10% boost (\$23,000) was used to provide on-demand,

gap-filling rides. For FY2026, our 5310 funding from NHDOT has been cut to \$206,300. This is due to census changes and changes to the algorithm used by NHDOT. A portion of this funding is required to be used to fund our regional mobility manager position. SVTC provides service to six towns in the region and SVTC will not be able to operate without this funding. In the past fiscal year from the FY2025 5310 funding, RCC7 allocated to Caregivers \$10,000 for volunteer recruitment management. Wilkie stated that he does not have specific numbers but the \$10,000 does make an impact and volunteer recruitment is challenging. We can retain drivers for 3 to 5 years, which is higher than average. Langdell stated that in preparation for the RCC7 Executive Committee (EC) meeting, anyone who would like to apply for this funding needs to pull our stats together for the FY2024 & the first part of FY2025 and plan to attend the EC meeting. The application deadline is March 6. The “Working Budget FY2025 5310 RCC Funding” was projected (was also discussed and projected at the December meeting). There are 7 categories listed with their starting budgets and Q1 spending showing a Balance YTD.

Murphy stated that Merrimack is planning on seeking funding from another grant and funding from the Town for 100% funding. So we will not be seeking funding from RCC7. We hope we do not have a default again, but everything is on track at this point.

Langdell asked if any other organizations in RCC7 are interested in applying for FY2026 funding. Also, do we want to make sure there’s money for the NRPC Foundation Pilot Program to continue to fill transportation gaps? St. Mary’s Bank provided the major portion of the match funding for the Pilot Program. A discussion ensued about the number of rides provided to date in the Pilot Program and actual cases that demonstrate a transportation gap exists for transporting the disabled to airports and medical appointments. There have been 3 distinct ride requests so far.

Deb Ritcey motioned and Pat Murphy seconded.

***THAT RCC7 will set aside whatever available funds we have to be used to continue funding the NRPC Foundation Pilot Program.***

**Unanimously approved.**

The RCC7 Executive Committee and anyone interested in applying for funds will meet at NRPC on February 7, 2025, at 9:30 a.m.

## **5. Regional and State Updates (as needed)**

### **a. State Coordinating Council (SCC)**

Palmer stated she’s been participating in a Maternal Health Task Force. 11 out of 26 birthing centers have been closed. One expectant mother reported her trip to the nearest center took four hours. The SCC is coming up with a plan that can be done without funding. So we will see how that goes.

### **b. Statewide Mobility Management Network**

An update on the SIM will be given at the next meeting.

### **c. Regional Mobility Management highlights**

Thank you to Langdell for putting together the intake application for the Foundation Pilot Program wheelchair rides. Marceau agreed to start getting more than one quote for wheelchair rides. Marceau reported the roundtrip ride provided from Hudson to Nashua by SK Taxi on a Saturday. Ritcey recommended Future Insight’s volunteer driver program. At the time of the call, Caregivers were not an option as the rider’s application had not been processed. Marceau has been trying to get CommuteSmart’s rideshare website to have a link so that people seeking transport to the Boston Medical Centers can post rides.

## **6. Community & Member Concerns and News**

Loret stated she would like Boston Express to expand its services to include direct transportation from Nashua to Longwood area hospitals. A full-size bus would not be necessary. Langdell stated if Loret had all the needs in written format, she could solicit the service from local limo services that have vans. Palmer stated that Boston Express is not interested in making additional stops in Boston at this time according to Fred Butler. Langdell stated LA Limo may be an option. Richey stated that Access Transportation in Derry has vans parked in their lots in the morning and may be interested. Palmer stated some of their Massachusetts partners may be interested in providing the service as well.

Palmer: a statewide needs-assessment advisory committee has been formed (perhaps). Butler and Palmer said they are working with a consultant so work is happening. When we have updates, we will share them with the RCCs.

Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja, President of the NRPC Foundation was introduced to the Council members.

The meeting adjourned at 11:43 a.m.

**Important Dates:**

***Friday, February 7, 2025, at 9:30 a.m., is the RCC7 Executive Committee – it's open to anyone interested in seeking 5310 funding.***

***Thursday, February 27, 2025, is the next full RCC7 meeting!***