



## Greater Nashua Regional Coordination Council (RC77)

### DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 27, 2024, 10:00 a.m.

#### Attendees:

##### In Person:

Carol Brooks, Souhegan Valley Transportation Cooperative (SVTC)  
Sara Cesar, Greater Nashua United Way  
Katie Dunfev, Southern NH Services (SNHS)  
Janet Langdell, Souhegan Valley Transportation Cooperative (SVTC)  
Kerry Miller, Nashua Transit System  
Angelique Pandolph, Easter Seals NH  
Camille Michon, City of Nashua  
Jessica Blanchette, Bridges  
Rocky Morelli, Opportunity Networks  
Jon Eriquezzo, Meals on Wheels of Hillsborough County  
James Wilkie, Caregivers/Catholic Charities NH  
Matt Sullivan, City of Nashua  
Derek Lavoy, Granite State Independent Living

##### Remote:

Nonyem Egbuonu, Emmaus Institute  
Teri Palmer, State of NH/RLS Associates

##### NRPC Staff:

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

#### 1. Call to Order and Introductions.

Langdell opened the meeting at 10:08 a.m. and introduced herself and her organization. The remaining attendees introduced themselves.

#### 2. Review/Approve/Edit the May 2024 meeting minutes (Action Item).

One edit was identified by Pandolph on p. 8 (last page) of the minutes. The time should be p.m., not "a.m."

***Brooks motioned; second by Pandolph.***

***THAT the RCC7 accepts the May 23, 2024, meeting minutes as edited.***

Eriquezzo, Lavoy, abstained. **Motion passed.**

#### 3. Review and approval of new voting member MOUs (Action Item)

- The Caregivers of Catholic Charities NH
  - Wilkie stated his agency supplies transportation and food for Nashua, Manchester, and Lakes Region communities.

- United Way of Greater Nashua
  - Cesar stated her agency functions in the areas of health, education, and welfare. They have been traditionally a fundraising organization for other organizations, but they have been doing more direct care services as well. Tutoring, food security, digital equity, and early childhood care are areas they have focused on in recent years.
- NAACP of Greater Nashua (not in attendance)

**Motion moved by Eriquezzo; seconded by Pandolph.**

***THAT the Greater Nashua Regional Coordination Council (RCC7) approves the memberships of The Caregivers of Catholic Charities, United Way of Greater Nashua, and NAACP of Greater Nashua.***

**Motion passed (unanimous)**

#### **4. Discussion and vote on nominated officers (Action Item)**

Langdell opened the discussion about officer positions as nominated at the last RCC meeting. After discussion, **Wilkie motioned, seconded by Morelli.**

***THAT the Greater Nashua Regional Coordination Council (RCC7) approves the appointment of officers - Janet Langdell as Chair; Kerry Miller as Vice-Chair, and Matt Waitkins as Secretary.***

**Motion passed (unanimous)**

Langdell noted that the bylaws also allow for up to two additional seats at the Executive Committee for Designated Representatives or Individual Members. Discussion ensued, and Wilkie and Morelli volunteered to serve; with consensus from the other members present, these two nominations will be placed on the July agenda.

#### **5. Increased Funding Under SFY25 FTA 5310 RCC and 5311 Potential Amendments**

Marceau distributed a memo from Fred Butler, Public Transportation Administrator, NHDOT that announced that the Commissioners approved the opportunity for grant agreement amendments with 10% increases for all 5310 RCCs (each region), as well as 5311 providers in FY25. Langdell stated RCC7 will receive approximately \$23,000. The funds should be used for the provision of rides and services, not for outreach/mobility management. Anything that is “shovel-ready,” or services in place could be considered. Langdell asked for anyone’s thoughts.

Waitkins stated the focus could be wheelchair-accessible transportation for those without insurance coverage or available services in their community.

Langdell shared that as it is being set up now, funding for this new program would flow through the NRPC Foundation, and purchasing services from outside providers could include for-profit providers along with non-profit RCC members like GSIL. The Foundation does have some considerations they need to work through, including liabilities and provider certifications. Langdell asked Waitkins to follow up with Kate Lafond, NRPC, about how 5310 RCC funds could be used through the new wheelchair ride program.

Marceau has received about five calls from Litchfield citizens who require ride services to medical appointments - they do not have insurance coverage, nor do they have income to cover medical appointment transportation. The same happened with two Wilton residents.

Langdell asked everyone - what other transportation service gaps have you identified? Blanchette stated her agency has seen an increase in the need for employment transportation.

Eriquazzo stated that recent survey results from their clients indicate a need for mini grants for transportation "off hours" for providing meals, for example through the "Dine Out" program.

Waitkins stated there is a demand for transportation services in the western part of our region. We have been talking about reimbursing volunteer drivers for mileage. However, there are no volunteer driver programs that are operating in that area. CVTC could help here – when they are ready to expand. Langdell stated there is an effort to look at transportation in Wilton and Lyndeborough, especially for rides to Peterborough medical appointments.

Morelli stated it is hard to have a broad-based program because of the diversity in services needed at all hours of the day.

Langdell believes that the 5310 funds cannot be used for bus fares, but it can purchase services.

Palmer reminded that this is still 5310 funding, so it still needs to fall into the seniors, disabled, and low-income criteria, Miller stated NTS offers on-demand services – SVTC rides are available in the Milford-area communities, senior ride service for Nashua age 65+ residents, and contracted services with Hudson and Merrimack – same schedule and destinations.

Morelli stated door-to-door rural ride service is expensive. The actual need is greater than what Marceau is receiving requests for because many people are not reaching out. This should be addressed.

Waitkins stated Merrimack had a budget shortfall this year, which the RCC has addressed by reallocating FY2025 5310 funds. The process for reallocating that funding is ongoing. Langdell stated that the original amount Merrimack needed was higher than recent discussions; there may still be some need for funding in FY25. Waitkins and Sullivan noted that the contracts are being reviewed this evening by the Merrimack Council.

Waitkins stated that Butler would like to know which RCCs are considering taking advantage of this additional funding. Palmer stated that unbelievably, there are regions in the state that do not need the funding and will release it. When those regions release their funds, they can be made available for other regions that need the funding. Langdell stated let us circle back next month after we have some time to think about how to best use the money to benefit the region. She stated she was going to circle back to Wilton and see where they were. (a Wilton representative was not present at this meeting). Waitkins was asked to connect with Lafond and discuss the process and procedures for NRPC Foundation receiving the funds and dispersing the funds. Palmer stated that there will be an RFP in the fall for the 5310 contracts for the next biennium, and whatever you all decide, let the people know you are working with that this RFP is coming and to apply for these funds as well to make the programs sustainable. The amount of money we receive from the federal government is TBD, but we are all hoping that it will be more.

Wilkie asked if there is a possibility of increasing the number of hours, times of day, or weekend service because we are always looking for that in Manchester. Miller stated that the extension of services should be discussed with Camille Correa and Matt Sullivan. She agreed it is a clever idea, and they would like to do some surveying to see if the need/desire is there, and second to see if there is funding to do a 20% match. Merrimack can use some of this and they would have to produce a 20% match as well. Sullivan stated that we are open to talking about it. However, some questions need to be answered regarding the sustainability of the service, continued funding for it, and the concern that it may fall to one community to continue the funding and service. The practical concerns beyond sustained funding and services are fleet and driver availability. We would have to work through some fixed costs within our contracts with our contracts, but we should keep them on the table. It is a great idea.

Langdell stated that before the next meeting, we should all go back to our colleagues and brainstorm and email each other with ideas about the potential to extend services. Palmer mentioned that Region 5 Monadnock Region is coordinating with Hillsborough County border towns as we have been discussing here, trying to recruit volunteer drivers. Waitkins stated that they have some internal matters to address before they can move forward with considering service expansion to the Nashua RCC Region 7.

## **6. Ongoing RCC items from the last meeting**

- a. Reallocation of the FTA 5310 funding – Merrimack: the contracts have been processed; the Town Council is meeting tonight (to sign the Merrimack/NTS/NRPC service agreement) so perhaps we can find out where they are relative to that full project cost that was quoted at the beginning of this situation. Sullivan said that the City had concerns about being in a new fiscal year without an updated service agreement. Sullivan stated the City is willing to continue the service whether the

contracts are processed by the end of June or not. We would like to see the process started earlier next year to avoid any risk of this question coming up and not being able to provide a service for one reason or another, but we were prepared to continue and just work through the process.

Langdell stated for all our towns we need to know what the projected rate would be for next year to set a budget. The budget season starts in the fall for most towns and then must go to a town meeting in March. If we do not have accurate information, we may have hurdles to overcome, which was what happened in Merrimack.

Morelli stated it is very honorable that NTS is going to continue to meet the need. It is the right thing to do for the people that depend on that. Services could have been hung up due to politics. Does it make sense to produce and distribute a white paper about senior transportation to educate people about the need for and importance of community transportation? Langdell stated we have bits and pieces of a “white paper” from various sources, and it is worth revisiting. Miller stated it is important to educate the voters to vote in favor of an operating budget. Langdell stated we have had success in communities where people are “on the ground” doing grassroots education. Morelli stated that stories are part of it and Miller stated we need to have a follow-up – call people, find out how they made out, and let them know their outcomes are helpful, enabling us to get our story out.

- b. Locally Coordinated Transportation Plan (LCTP) – Waitkins gave an update on the LCTP, the purpose is to identify projects for which we use the 5310 funding. Projects need to be on the list to get 5310 funding. At this time, we are still doing public outreach, i.e., surveys being distributed via social media, NRPC newsletter, Marceau asking people to fill them out, etc. We have ~180 responses. Discussion ensued about making direct connections within our agency network that serves clients beyond Nashua (for example SHARE Outreach), asking them for help with the survey, and NRPC putting up posters in key locations with QR codes and hard copy surveys (which will need to be collected). Waitkins stated he distributed several of the posters with QR codes to area libraries. The past practice of leaving hard-copy surveys at libraries has not been effective. We are continuing to distribute the survey into July. Consider some agencies and locations to distribute the surveys, including:
- Waitkins also stated he would create slides with a QR code for local access TV.
  - Miller stated that NTS has July outreach events where they can distribute the surveys.
  - Blanchette stated she could distribute some to her clients to complete.
  - Blanchette suggested leaving some in medical centers' waiting areas.
  - Morelli stated yes, wherever, people are waiting, i.e., the DMV, doctors' offices, the Welfare Offices, and DHS.
  - Any agency with a newsletter.

- Brooks stated to consider some employers in the region that may have some employees that could need community transportation to get to work consistently.
- c. 5310 Capital Funding Application – Opportunity Networks – Per Langdell and Morelli, the Opportunity Networks application is under review, no final word yet from NHDOT although some applications have been approved.

## 7. “Looking Forward” - Discussion Items

A discussion ensued about how best to effectively engage RCC7 members in a strategic planning conversation to look at what the group would like to accomplish in the next year or two, and what the RMM work plan should include as priority action items. A question was asked: should we have a formalized, facilitated discussion with an outside facilitator? Could it be a paid facilitator and if so, could mobility management funds be used for that purpose? Langdell suggested considering a survey of all members for what they would like to see as RCC7 goals and could include feedback about future agenda items. These would be anonymous responses. The idea of having guest speakers might help to provide more value to the attendees and their clientele. It was agreed that a broadly structured, anonymous member survey would be an effective way to get initial feedback.

Other ideas/comments:

- Speakers to educate on different topics. Marceau mentioned Mark Munroe from NHDOT to speak about NH’s vision to have safer transportation routes.
- If there are topic suggestions from our members, Palmer offered to take topic suggestions and search for qualified speakers given the number of contacts she has out of state. She had PDFs of posters from NH’s mobility managers and what they are doing. She will share them so discussion topics can be taken from them.
- Available funds for paid professional speakers were discussed.
- Topic suggestion: recruiting drivers.

## 8. RMM Update

Palmer provided a statewide update. We have secured funding for a statewide needs assessment. The RFP is coming from the Commission on Aging (Rebecca Skye). She is hoping that the statewide needs assessment will provide useful data to increase state funding and bring awareness as to what the needs are throughout the region. Also, July 1 is a new fiscal year for transportation. Marceau will be sending out requests for data. To get funding, we need negative data. How many requested trips could you not provide? Send it to Marceau so she can send it to me. Langdell asked Palmer if there was a way to receive confirmation that providers had submitted their data via the required Google form. Palmer stated that we are trying to get a spreadsheet that stays within the

region so you can look at it. Marceau is currently providing an Excel spreadsheet with numbers I receive by the 15<sup>th</sup> of every month for our members. Palmer stated that there is no issue getting numbers from this region, but we need to get data on referrals and what rides we could not provide. Langdell suggested we take the conversation/meeting offline as there seems to be some duplication in what Marceau is required to do and we can provide the data in the format we all need.

Marceau reported that she went to a Transit Retreat in May located in Erie, PA, and the three main topics: electric buses – not working as well in the colder climate regions, kindness – violence on public transportation rides, and the importance of expressing gratitude to transit workers, and disability – there was a young business owner who became wheelchair bound. You just never know who can end up needing wheelchair transportation. It could be anyone. She reports she had 17 requests for help in May. The Senior Housing Complex at 161 Bridge Street in Milford would like a dedicated bus for shopping once a week. Langdell stated that SVTC and NTS have talked with them. Palmer stated that at the May retreat, they made a presentation about mobility management - why we have it and how to get it funded. We were asked to come back next year. Marceau will send everyone a Town & Country article about community transportation.

#### **9. Other Transportation Issues or Concerns/Updates**

None currently.

***Motion to adjourn by Brooks, second by Lavoy at 11:50 p.m.***

***The next meeting will be Thursday, July 25th, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.***