

Region 4 RCC Meeting 2/20/24

In attendance: In person – Candy Reed, Tim Josephson, Teri Palmer

On Zoom: Keith Thibault (Southwestern Community Services), Taralyn Bielaski (Dartmouth Health/Sullivan County Public Health Advisory Council), Nancy Meyer (City of Claremont), Beth Daniels (Southwestern Community Services), James Berquist (Sullivan County Transit), Allison Browning (Town of Newport), Brenda Burns (Newport Senior Center/Sullivan County Meals on Wheels), Jen Blodgett (Sullivan County Service Link), Jim Contois (Claremont), Michelle (Turning Point)

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Approval of minutes from 12/19/23
 - a. Table until next meeting
3. MM Updates:
 - a. Candy gave an update on by-laws – those were approved at the SCC level and other MMs are working with their RCCs to make any changes before voting on them. Please review them and give feedback ASAP so we can change that – contact Candy
 - b. Keep NH Moving Website – updates: coming along nicely. Should be up and running by the middle of March. Will consist of each MM having their own page with info on how to find different modes of transportation, RCC meeting minutes/notices, agile mile will be on there too – “Trip Planner” – lots of great transportation information. Question – Taralyn – will my website be able to link directly to the Sullivan County page? Answer: yes
 - c. SCC Annual Report – Candy sent a copy of her report that was submitted – every year the MMs/RCCs update their information for the annual report, new things/programs happening in our region, etc. Anything else to add, please let Candy know ASAP (2/23 cutoff) This is for the 21-22 years – the 2023 program year report will be started in July and finished in November. Keith – what else can we add to this report? Anything we are missing? Candy: There’s a lot packed in here, but we can add anything else people want to add
 - d. RCC Goals: see emailed list
 - i. Coordination between RCC and local SAUs on helping transit for kids experiencing homelessness
 - ii. More publicity for Volunteer Driver Programs in Sullivan County
 - iii. Recruit from other communities not currently members
 - iv. Expand engagement with communities that have high transit needs that are not being met currently
 - v. Increased ridership on local transit, i.e. potential expanding of the hours of Lebanon Bus
 - vi. Comments:
 - vii. Brenda said that the more rural areas like Unity or Springfield have the needs for volunteer drivers. Expanding the Volunteer Driver program would address these needs
 - viii. Teri: Once the goals are set, Candy and Teri will develop a work plan for the goals and share with everyone.

- ix. Beth: context for the bus and volunteer driver services might be helpful for goals moving forward. Hard to put into context without an idea of where we're heading w/transportation at this point. There are some goals we want to set for the RCC that are a big lift for all of us, but together we can make it happen. Getting the word out is super helpful. If we talk about expanding services that already exist, it will always come down to money. We may want to roll into the goals "ensuring additional funding" – getting the word out and recruiting drivers are things we can do w/out additional funding. Anything about routes, hours, etc – that is operating expenses, and we are zeroed out on these now. For example: procurement takes a very long time so there are a number of buses on the road that have reached end of life but we are waiting for the state. We need to be realistic about expanding services that any expansion needs funding – can we tie that into the goal? Riders don't bring in money. Fares don't provide much of a revenue source, but they offset some costs. Not impossible, but it needs a boost to get over the last hump. SCS is currently in the process of getting 3 buses – with new buses then maintenance costs should drop. Software will cost money with match funding but will provide long-term savings. SCS is trying to keep this going – just the transit facility they had to come up with \$300k in match. Buses are going to be about \$70k, plus 20% ops funding. Once you add it up, it becomes almost half a million dollars. Also, Claremont bus and increasing ridership – this bus is so busy they have to turn people away. They might need an additional bus for the route since it's so busy. Last year from July-June we gave about 35,000 rides. Difficult balance with all of us in organizations that have needs and match requirements.
- x. James: one of the things we are doing is we are starting the afternoon Claremont bus earlier and dial a ride earlier. Full bus at 8:30am today (14 ppl). Add-ons are the deviations for people who need a pickup/drop off the route – these are additional pages for each pick/drop. The Claremont route is hoping to add a second bus.

4. Teri Palmer: State Mobility Manager update:

- a. Public Works and Transportation Committee met and had a public hearing that spoke on behalf of transportation. DOT mentioned that transit and transportation was brought up at numerous GACIT hearings. Teri also submitted written testimony on her work. Hoping that community transportation will be \$2.2 million for FY 2026. Depending on CMAQ (Congestion, Mitigation, Air Quality) projects that are happening, some of those might have to take some of this funding. But NHDOT will have funding sitting aside and with the knowledge of \$2.2 million coming, they might be able to move funding around for mobility managers. The goal is to have enough 5310 money for services, not the MM network as 5310 should be for mobility not the overhead.
- b. Loads of content on the Keep NH Moving Site
- c. Had their virtual MM meeting a few weeks ago, next will be in person in March – hoping for special guest for training.

- d. SCC annual report – there will be a draft going to leadership team this month to look at. Regional drafts are the bulk of this. Working on community transportation section – Blueprint implementation, the Alliance for Healthy Aging, work with Commission on Aging. After this one, we will go right into 2023 report.
 - e. NHTA hat – annual meeting talk started – beginning of June?
 - f. Teri is adding resources to the website for things like making posters, hiring drivers, etc. Also adding funding opportunities – most of them like AARP, Northern Borders, etc. If people are interested in Northern Borders, talk to Tim
 - g. Teri and Candy and Nancy Merrill had a meeting with Yoshi (Claremont City Manager) – one thing he mentioned is that the Claremont Community Center is providing transportation from the Amtrak station to downtown at noon. Great work at the airport, lots of new and great exciting things happening. Question – are they bringing people to the station? Answer – it seems to be more from the station, not to the station. Volunteers at the station call the center for a ride. Sometimes an entire bus worth of people arrive that have no way to get to their final destination. Can we get the Claremont Community Center into the RCC? New director on board, we will work on that
 - h. Center for Advancing Rural Health Equity – they had a webinar last week – they will give support for an innovative project; transportation is part of that. Teri will share the link. More information is on the website. Taralyn will send the presentation on to Candy
5. Partner Updates:
- a. Teri asked Brenda how it was going hiring drivers – she said they hired their final driver this morning to get Meals on Wheels all distributed. The question is how long people stay and if they show up daily. Meeting with Ruger tomorrow to see if they will use them again for a donor to the Ruger golf tournament. Teri: How many households are you serving now? Brenda: 500 meals a day – 400 homes and 100 in congregate. 60+ age requirement, Newport only. Teri: are you seeing ridership growing? Yes! Brenda shared that social isolation is becoming a growing epidemic, so they are working to address this.
6. Candy: over the past few years we've talked as a group about what it means to be a member of the RCC and I'm grateful for this group – the focus on the last year and a half has been with COVID grants and using those funds and approving projects that help with social isolation. I appreciate so many of you are coming to these meetings and willing to give input and recruiting new members and giving input. I really appreciate all the time people are putting into this! I will be sending out emails to those we've approved for the CDC grants because the end of May is fast approaching, and those funds need to be spent by then. She did get an answer about being able to shift funds – for example, if you had money set aside for advertising, we could switch that money into something else you need. Can't start any new projects now, but we can shift funds with how much is being shifted and the purpose of the shift. We really want to see these funds be used because if we don't use it, it goes back and the state/federal levels think we don't need the money which could not be further from the truth! If we have project ideas, Taralyn will look at them for us.
7. Next meeting: April 16 1pm in Claremont. Adjourned at 2pm