

Minutes of August 8, 2023
Mid-State Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) Meeting
Future Insight Office
25 Walker Street, Concord

Attendees	
Tammy Carmichael, Executive Director, Partnership for Public Health	Joyce Sawicki, Project Planner, CNHRPC
Jen Cook, Advocacy Committee SLC NH	Tom Schamberg, Board of Selectman, Town of Wilmot (Chair)
Norman Hart, Transportation Coordinator, Granite State Independent Living (GSIL)	Kara Wyman, Director, Merrimack County Human Services
Vince Pagano, Regional Planner, CNHRPC	Cindy Yanski, Region 3 Mobility Manager (CAPBMCI)
Teri Palmer, Statewide Mobility Manager	
Suzanne Peace, Volunteer Program Driver Coordinator, Future Insight	

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Tom Schamberg, Town of Wilmot, called the meeting to order promptly at 2:00 pm and everyone present introduced themselves.

2. Review and approve minutes of the May 9th RCC meeting- Quorum Needed for Vote

A motion was made to accept the minutes from the February 21st RCC meeting.

m/s/approved K. Wyman/T. Schamberg /unanimous

3. Taking Nominations for Mid-State RCC Secretary\Treasurer

At our May meeting, Matt Baronas was elected Secretary and has since left the CNHRPC and had to vacate the Secretary position as well. With some new faces at the table, Cindy, Region 3 Mobility Manager, explained the responsibilities of the Secretary/Treasurer in accordance with the Mid- State RCC by-laws and asked for nominations for this leadership position with the RCC. The Secretary/Treasurer will be responsible for advising the Council on policy matters pertaining to financial management and the collection of annual dues (which we don't have any, so we don't have a Treasurer) and the disbursement of funds for the conduct of Council business. The Secretary/Treasurer shall be responsible for disseminating information to Council members, writing Council correspondence, keeping meeting attendance records, and taking minutes of meetings. Collectively, the Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary/Treasurer shall comprise the Executive Committee. Cindy explained that she has been doing all of this role except for the taking the minutes because presenting at the meeting and taking minutes is hard to do at the same time. Taking the minutes is the goal that Cindy has for this secretary. Tom said that the role is getting the motions down, and suggested that perhaps Cindy can send the pre meeting notes to the new Secretary and perhaps the Secretary can use those to write the minutes. The Secretary uses Cindy's notes; there is no need to take every word down. Then Tom asked if the meeting was being recorded. Cindy said yes. And Tom said perhaps we can find someone to sign their name to it. Cindy is taking nominations for the next quarter. Tom asked if any one has any interested, to take notes in their own words, and to see Cindy afterwards. She then reiterated that this was not a big ask and does not want to put any pressure on anyone.

4. FY 2024-2025 FTA Section 5310 Grant - Final

Cindy then provided background and context as to how the RCC's were put in place. Jen, Advocacy Committee SLC NH, asked for clarification of the acronym RCC. Cindy explained we are the Regional Coordinating Council for Coordinating Transportation in central NH. Then Cindy said we renamed

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ourselves as the Mid State RCC. Cindy then provided a copy of the regional map to show why we are named the Mid-State RCC. We are Region 3, and there are eight regions in the state. Note added to minutes (The Community Transportation Regions Map (Rev 11 Mar 2020) shows the numbering of the Regions as 1-10, and Region 3 is labeled Belknap-Merrimack, and Regions 6 and 9 are labeled “Reserved”). Cindy further elaborated and explained that in 2007, the Governor and Governor & Council created the State Coordinating Council (aka SCC). In 2021 and 2022 it was determined that every region in every portion of the state would have a mobility manager. This is very helpful to have a point of contact in every region when Cindy gets a call for referral. Teri, the Statewide Mobility Manager, works at the higher level. Teri is working with state agencies to try to work on transportation. Our task at the RCC Mid-State level is to determine how our 5310 funding is to be distributed and to determine how the funding will serve seniors and those with disabilities. We just had our biennial application to NHDOT and it has/had to go to G&C prior to its approval. Everyone attending our last meeting voted and approved the 5310 funding. Community Action Program Belknap Merrimack, (CAPBM) is our lead agency. Prior to that it was the CNHRPC. CAPBM has all of the programs and is vested in serving the region with transportation options. The 5310 funded programs CAPBM Transportation Services department runs the Volunteer Driver Program (VDP) Mid-State Transit, MST, the Taxi Voucher Program, and the Mobility Management program. We also set aside funding in order to assist those in wheelchairs so we set aside money for para transit. This year Future Insight has also requested funding to assist with their VDP for trips that originate in this region.

Jen asked what happens when someone calls 211, and if they referred to these different programs through RCC, and does 211 know what RCC is about? Cindy stated that 211 does, and the RCC was added to the 211 database when she came on board listing her as the Mobility Manager. RCC does not directly provide any transportation services, they just oversee the programs and the taxi program is contracted out. Cindy explained that we do get referrals from 211. Jen added how these things are separate and together at the same time and she expressed the difficulty people have in navigating if they have a disability, or if they are elderly. Cindy said we have our sites up there and that Cindy explained that we update 211 annually. Tom thanked Cindy for the overview of the programs and the explanations of the grant funding. Cindy offered to send information out to anyone who requests it.

5. Mobility Manager Report- Trip Summary

Cindy shared the usual summary of the 5310 funded trips for mid-state transit; in 2023 we added a 56% increase in trips from 2022. We are moving in the right direction. Trying to reach all of the seniors where they live is daunting and difficult. Word is getting out and it is the best way to learn about the programs. She encourages people to tell their neighbors and tell friends about ridership opportunities.

The Volunteer Driver Program was the only program that saw a decrease in the number of trips. One reason for this is that the MST buses are serving areas that they did not serve before, so we are trying to get some of the volunteer trips on buses. Cindy has spoken with Rosa, the Volunteer Driver Coordinator, and Rosa had some drivers that were out (in the beginning of the fiscal year), so she was unable to fill all of the trips. Cindy showed us the list of trips we were unable to fill. In July there was only one incomplete round trip. Cindy is hopeful that Rosa will fill up to 3,000 trips for FY 2024 and 2025. Suzanne, the Volunteer Driver Coordinator for Future Insight asked if that was specifically for CAPBM trips. Cindy indicated yes, and that we should also add the number of Future Insight trips that are project funded.

The next tab is our denials. Rosa ended up with 153 denials at the end of the year. Denials are trips that people requested but the VDP could not find a volunteer to take these trips. Cindy then shared more details,

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including the number of new rider applications for the program, for MST, CST and VDP. The application includes all programs. Cindy then explained additional driver statistics. Mileage and volunteer hours are also tracked. There were over 2,000 hours of volunteer hours for the year in FY 23. For the VDP, the hours are the 20% match.

Cindy continued by explaining the taxi program and explained that the number of requests for the TVP were low however with Merrimack County Navigator program now able to make requests, we should see an uptick in trips. The taxi program is a contracted program with Merrimack County Corrections. Belknap County was not interested in participating as they did not have the need. Merrimack County Human Services was added, so those clients can now take advantage of the program. Cindy provided some history about clients who ended up back in jail, not being able to get a ride to get their urine analysis and return to the jail.

Norman, the Transportation Coordinator, Granite State Independent Living (GSIL) contributed that he used work for CTS using Medicaid transportation and they would get prisoners call them to get Medicaid benefits to get back to jail. GSIL was not able to help.

It was clarified that these are taxis, and that we have not partnered with Uber or Lyft. Kara, now Director, Merrimack County Human Services was a former assistant superintendent at the jail and tried to partner with Uber and Lyft but could not convince them that it was safe having made every attempt to explain that they are coming back into the community, and they need to make the drive to work.

Staff from corrections and human services are the ones that book the trips. They control the trips booked for released prisoners. Kara said it is a great system for many of their programs, adult diversion, to get clients to the hubs of Boscawen and Franklin.

Volunteer drivers also shy away from wanting to pick up developmentally disabled folks who may have behavioral challenges.

Kara stated that there were seven rides last night. There is a process to be deemed “developmentally disabled” or elderly. The question was asked as to who is getting the young not developmentally disabled folks to their appointments? They can be met at the Franklin library, or at the police department or the courthouse.

The question was asked what ever happened to “no wrong door?” No wrong door was created about 10 years ago-someone can enter NH systems simultaneously. Teri explained that the program is still around. Concord Hospital, Laconia are no wrong door hubs, and it is still part of the public health council and the state. Does it mean someone has to do duplicate paperwork? The state is working with an organization to contract to get a statewide web-based program that provides resources. Cindy asked if this was the Fire Department? Now the program is called Doorways.

Teri contributed that at the state level, conversations have been started in the north country. If someone is released in Berlin (from jail), they are basically released with a few resources that fall short. There is a program modeled from Ohio, where the inmate may earn vouchers for food. We are adding transportation to that. The conversations are just starting. Teri used to be a correctional officer and saw many inmates that returned to jail within 48 hours. There are so many areas, like Sullivan County, that have very few taxi programs to take individuals to drug court. Day-to-day trips have been difficult. Also, a lot of people do

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not want to do it. We also have opportunities with Voc Rehab to develop programs that are getting people to work. Jen gave an example of the challenges a certain drug court victim faced, who had also suffered a serious intellectual capability and was being influenced negatively.

Cindy shared the Fiscal year end project balances and mentioned that they are in the packet provided. She noted that the para transit program always ends up in the negative, without offending GSIL, because she appreciates their fabulous service for wheelchair and accessibility challenged clients. If a volunteer driver program rider can't transfer into a car, the VDP contracts with GSIL. We want to continue the partnership with GSIL.

Tom, our Chair, asked if we were still waiting for the word from DOT regarding approval of the grant? Cindy assumes that DOT had reviewed it as they had questions in the beginning, so she knows they are comfortable with it. The fiscal year started on July 1, so we are assuming the grant has been accepted but must go through G&C for final approval.

a. **RFQ for the VDP and TVP**

Cindy sent out twenty requests for qualifications (RFQ)'s and heard nothing back. She then reached to DOT for assistance and asked if we were able to roll the existing MOU's over to the GSIL realizing that the RFQ process is daunting. Concord CAB is one of our partners, however, they are stretched very thin. Kara knows of the issues of the drivers may have having to do with incarcerated prisoners. Many have outstanding warrants and license revocations. The inmates who are on riding mowers at the county jail have to have a valid license. A health council meeting is to be held in September to bring on more taxi drivers in. The paperwork is relatively simple for cab companies. They must also have to keep a trip slip. Cindy and Kara discussed further.

b. **CDC Funding Update**

Funding has been extended through May 31, 2024. We had \$92,000 left at the end of FY 23 which was rolled over to FY 24. The driver differential was increased so we were able to keep drivers in their seats. Cindy discussed what was remaining. Cindy explained the funding for passenger enhancements, Find My Bus, an Infotainment system with information is provided and there is an opportunity for advertisements, such a pizza hut ad pop up at lunch time. The enhancements cater to what passengers are currently looking for. We discussed the CDC funding to help support CommuteSmart with AgileMile. The original budget was 10K and we spent that down. The remaining \$3,100 is expected to be invoiced in October 2023.

d. **The new Concord- Laconia Connector**

A target date is set for October 2 to start an intercity bus route from Laconia to Concord. There is no fare. Kara shared about this being so important, (this process started in 1990). She is very excited about this. There is a transportation need from Penacook and from all of the county offices. Elderly people are walking along the very busy Route 3 to get to their caregivers. The bus is scheduled to run 5 or 6 times a day each day. Cindy explained we are going to Market Basket in Penacook, and the bus will be available to anyone, and Cindy restated is totally free. However, drivers will need to be hired in order for this to work. A grant for two more buses was submitted but is currently delayed. Some buses may be bought from the seacoast area. Tom shared that the Town of Wilmot has been waiting 2 years for

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the delivery of a dump truck and have been told they are back ordered. The question was asked if the bus drivers are able to help someone disabled on and off the bus. Cindy explained that the buses will have passenger enhancements. Once they get to the bus, the passenger is assisted by providing the lift. The drivers are not trained to physically lift or help passengers. Cindy concluded that was all she had. Tom asked if there was anything we wanted to add. We all learned a lot. Cindy opened it up for any transportation related concerns.

e. New Business

Tom explained that as a NH State Rep, he serves on ways and means committee. Another rep on the committee from the Plymouth area is trying to start a bus system in Plymouth. Tom shared Cindy's contact information with the representative from Plymouth although it is outside our service area. Teri Palmer, and the Regional Mobility Manager in that region are helping to provide information. Note added to minutes: (the Regional Mobility Manager in that area is Nicole McKeen).

Susanne Peace of FIS asked if we have services that provide transportation to dialysis or cancer treatment appointments. She shared that when she was with Caregivers of Greater Derry, folks needed consistent and continual assistance and it is difficult for volunteer programs to manage. In this region, we have a number of VDPs but also have the Mid-State Transit, ADA para transit and Concord Senior Transit and many of these individuals qualify for Medicaid trips.

6. Motion to Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 3:22pm.

m/s/approved V. Pagano/ N. Hart/Unanimous

7. Next Meeting

Per the RCC website: the next scheduled meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 2:30pm at the Lakes Region Mental Health Center, 40 Beacon St. E., Laconia.