

# Consolidated Manchester/ Derry-Salem [R8] Regional Coordination Council

**Tuesday, September 17, 2024**

Southern NH Planning Commission/Zoom

## DRAFT MINUTES

### ATTENDEES

Mike Whitten, Chair – MTA

Trish Caruso – Hooksett\*

Tim Diaz – RNMOV

Jo Ann Duffy – Goffstown

Ben Herbert – R8 Mobility Manager

Ted Houlihan – Atkinson

Jack Hutchinson – Deerfield

Lisa Ludwigsen – Easterseals NH

Nate Miller – SNHPC

Teri Palmer – Statewide Mobility Manager

John Wilson – Citizen Member (Londonderry)

Noriko Yoshida-Travers – Atkinson\*

Sylvia von Aulock – SNHPC

James Vayo – SNHPC

*\*attended virtually*

### 1. Call to Order

Chair Whitten called the meeting to order at 12:32 PM.

### 2. Action on Minutes of July 19, 2024

*Motion by Lisa to approve minutes, seconded by John. Motion carried unanimously.*

### 3. Updates

#### 5310

Nate provided a fiscal summary on FTA 5310 funds:

- Goffstown shuttle is \$1,400 under budget for the year
- Similar amount of trips/hours/cost for Hooksett shuttle
- New Boston covered 15 trips per month, additional trips are being paid for by town.
- Slow start to expanded Derry-CART service but the number of trips is rising significantly. Overall, the cost of services is under the allowed budget.
- Easterseals demand response service came in on budget and performance is good.
- Rockingham Meals on Wheels is also on budget and performing well.
- Caregivers VDP is drawing down funds in line with budget. In the future we can ask James Wilkie to come describe the benefits of this program.
- Mobility Management budget is \$110,000 and the actual costs were less than the budget.
- Similar situation for SNHPC's administrative costs.

Sylvia questioned the RCC's ability to use unspent funds; Nate noted that this would be a decision for NH DOT. In response to a question from Tim about Derry's increase in services, Mike noted that there was minimal use of overtime which allowed costs to come in under budget.

Sylvia asked if the RCC should put a request into NHDOT for reuse of available funding, noting that some services may need this money for expansion. NHDOT can always say no. John asked why NHDOT would say no to using the funds? Teri noted that costs may go up for next year, such as payroll.

Nate will write a communication to NHDOT regarding use of unspent funds.

### **Mobility Management**

Ben presented his workplan for fiscal year 2025. NHDOT has required that all RCCs approve a workplan prior to funding requests. The workplan includes:

- Participation in RCC/SCC meetings, collection and reporting of performance, assistance to NHDOT/SCC with strategic planning.
- Assisting the RCC with bringing new partnerships to the table and strategic planning for new sources of funding for transportation access that go beyond 5310 funds.
- Keeping RCC updated on performance measures for mobility access and use.
- Outreach including educational and public service media such as information graphics and videos to share with stakeholders.
- Assisting with statewide community transportation needs assessment.
- Conducting outreach events throughout the service area, including events in rural areas.
- Promotion of \$5 registration fee at the municipal level for supporting mobility services.
- Conducting surveys on community transportation needs. Becoming involved in RPC planning initiatives.
- Assistance with volunteer driver programs and expanding programs into areas of need.
- Regular updates to informational resources for the transportation directory and the “KeepNHMoving” website along with publishing of a quarterly newsletter.

Jack said there is a need to find accessible transport, noting that Granite Transport exists out of Concord. He added his wish that there was a directory of available services. The startup efforts for offering Medicaid reimbursable service are high so it would be known where they are. He noted that it will be challenging to reach a 25% return rate for service requests.

Sylvia concurred it would be useful to have such a directory. If any of the communities want Ben to participate in local engagement opportunities, Ben can be present at the events. Jack said that finding point people who represent and connect resources to end users is a priority.

Sylvia noted that outreach to welfare offices and the creation of an accessible services directory will be added to the FY25 mobility manager workplan. **Motion by Tim to approve workplan, seconded by Jo Ann and carried unanimously.**

### **4. FTA 5310 RCC Distribution Methodology**

Nate noted how funds currently come into the state and how funds are distributed to the regions based on the proportionate share of seniors and disabled populations. Moving forward, NHDOT will be considering new factors for the distribution of funds, including land area and lane miles. If they are added to the formula, the rural regions would receive a higher share of funding in comparison to urban areas. NHDOT is asking the RCCs to provide feedback on this proposal. NHDOT has provided a survey with four options regarding their preference for how the funding methodology should change.

The options include:

- keeping the methodology the same,
- keeping the mobility management base amount to be set aside

- base methodology on lane miles and land area
- do a set aside for both mobility management and lane miles/land area.

NHDOT will hold an informational session at 2pm today.

Mike noted he has yet to see an example of how more rural RCCs are going to use the funds and how they will source their local match. Sylvia stated the SCC has not provided enough information to understand how funding will shift.

Nate noted that NHDOT's survey states that we will not provide an analysis of how the funding will shift prior to the change in methodology. Provides a summary of the impact to the regions for choosing any one of the four survey options provided by NHDOT.

Jack asked what is considered a lane mile. Some discussion ensued, but there was no certainty about what NHDOT would include as lane-miles. For example, federal-aid eligible lane mile vs. all miles.

Mike anticipated that any change in methodology will ultimately hurt the region. Sylvia noted that the options pit service providers against mobility managers and thought it may be worthwhile to open up more funding sources and options to increase services.

Mike stated there is a likelihood that a fund change will hurt ridership and ultimately reduce the total funding available from FTA for service. John believed that some definitions of road miles may be fairer. Tim asked if any of these options are open for debate. Jack contemplated the validity of population, land area, and lane miles as factors, then noted that length of trips has a real impact on the ability to provide services.

***Motion by Tim to use the order of preference as presented in the NH DOT survey, seconded by Jack and carried unanimously.***

## **5. Other Business**

There was some discussion of Region 10 RCC regarding the service standards for service providers including ReadyRides. Jeff Donald in Region 10 is willing to conduct oversight for the ReadyRides service but asked if there were service standards or approved rates.

Nate said that no such standards or rates are adopted by Region 8 RCC. The only such standards that exist are for volunteer drivers for Caregivers. The assumption was that Region 8 would just use standards adopted by Region 10 with some edits to the drug and alcohol testing. There are issues with how the standards are written that make it difficult to administer and implement. Nate asked if the group is amenable to using the Region 10 adopted rates for Region 8.

Jack described the rates and their use, noting that there is currently no burden to the volunteer drivers for meeting testing standards. Nate inquired if the RCC would be willing to delegate the task of making edits to the service standards to him and, if desired, a few members of the RCC.

Trish noted she likes the idea of standardized service but asks how that may impact grant funding.

Nate stated that every 2 years the RCC reviews proposed rates of each provider and either deems them defensible or provides guidance for revisions.

Tim asked if Region 10 is willing to operate under two different service standards. John asked if there is a scenario where there would be conflicts between service standards if two regions collaborated on new routes. Nate said that in such a scenario for an inter-regional route the RCCs would want to coordinate standards.

Jack noted that he is happy to see that Jeff (Region 10 Mobility Manager) is willing to serve as the coordinator for the Deerfield service. He added that Region 10 was looking for the ability to get waivers for low frequency drivers but it never materialized.

Motion by Jack to allow Nate to coordinate with Region 10 and NHDOT for setting service standards and rates for Region 8 services, seconded by Tim and approved unanimously.

## **6. Next Meeting**

The next RCC meeting will be held on **November 19, 2024, at 12:30pm.**

*Motion by Jo Ann to adjourn, seconded by Tim and carried unanimously at 1:55 PM.*