

**Monadnock Regional Coordinating Council  
For Community Transportation**

**AGENDA**

**February 20, 2024  
9:00 a.m.**

**Southwest Region Planning Commission  
37 Ashuelot Street, Keene, NH**

- |       |   |              |
|-------|---|--------------|
| I.    | Welcome                                     | (9:00 a.m.)  |
| II.   | Minutes of December 19 and January 16, 2024 | (9:05 a.m.)  |
| III.  | Treasurer's Report                          | (9:10 a.m.)  |
| IV.   | NHDHHS and NHDOT Budgets                    | (9:20 a.m.)  |
| V.    | Volunteer Driver Coalition (Ellen Avery)    | (10:10 a.m.) |
| VI.   | Partner Updates                             | (10:15 a.m.) |
| VII.  | Next Meeting                                | (10:25 a.m.) |
| VIII. | Adjourn                                     | (10:30 a.m.) |

**Monadnock Regional Coordinating Council  
For Community Transportation**

**Minutes**

**December 19, 2023**

Present: Frank Dobisky, Chair, *Thomas Transportation*; Charlie Pratt, Vice Chair, *Home Healthcare, Hospice and Community Services (HCS)*; Mary Jensen, Secretary, *Keene Senior Center (KSC)*; Alberta Bronson, *The Lukas Community (TLC)*; Kathy Baird, *RSVP Volunteer Center (RSVP)*; David Meader, *Citizen Member*; Daniel Smith, *Keene Family YMCA*; Lisa Steadman, *Liberty Mutual*; Alison Welsh, *Cheshire County*.

SWRPC Staff Present: Terry Johnson, *Senior Project Manager*; Jason Cooper, *Planner*.

Guests: Teri Palmer, *NH Statewide Mobility Manager*.

**I. Welcome**

Chair Dobisky called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. and introductions were made.

**II. Approval of November 21, 2023 Minutes**

**Motion: To approve the minutes of November 21, 2023.**

Motion by Charlie Pratt, seconded by Lisa Steadman. Approved by unanimous vote.

**III. Treasurer's Report**

Terry Johnson presented the November financial reports. He recommended that the MRCC conduct a close review of the financial reports during the January MRCC meeting, so as to provide an opportunity to make any needed budget adjustments ahead of the expiration of NH Health and Human Services (NHDHHS) funding in May 2024 and the end of the first fiscal year for the current Section 5310 contract with the NH Department of Transportation.

Charlie Pratt discussed some changes that are coming for HCS starting on January 2, 2024. The City Express routes are changing to accommodate new stops including the Cheshire Medical Center clinic on Maple Avenue and to remove stops that do not have high ridership, such as Monadnock Marketplace.

Alison Welsh suggested reaching out to grocery stores to solicit funding to replace the loss of funding in the upcoming months. Terry Johnson explained that there is precedent for this with Hannaford which is currently funding organizations to support the needs of older adults, including improving access to food, and increasing opportunities for socialization. Hannaford funding can be used to support transportation services.

**IV. Partner Updates**

Teri Palmer shared that transit stakeholders throughout the state are working on a solution to the challenge volunteer driver programs (VDPs) are facing due to new IRS reporting requirements that went into effect in 2023. VDPs are now required to issue 1099s for drivers making over \$600 annually in mileage reimbursement. VDPS are concerned the new requirement will both hamper driver recruitment efforts and cause existing drivers to limit the number of miles they drive. She said that Minnesota and Vermont are also working on this issue as well.

Kathy Baird shared that she is hiring for RSVP and asked the committee to spread the word. The job posting is available on the Monadnock Family Services website.

Daniel Smith reported that he is looking for a bus for the YMCA that does not require a driver with a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) to operate. He explained that if his current bus requires any work, the lack of a CDL driver requires the YMCA to shut down programming because of inability to transport children to the facility. Teri Palmer said that she would send Daniel Smith information on several buses that she is aware of that might be available.

## **V. Mobility Manager Update**

Terry Johnson shared an update regarding the State Coordinating Council's (SCC) plans for releasing bylaws for Regional Coordinating Councils (RCC). The MRCC provided input on a draft document presented by the SCC at its October meeting. The input was integrated into a final document that will be voted on at the January SCC meeting. Teri Palmer stated that the bylaws will then be implemented by each RCC over the first quarter of calendar year 2024, with Region-specific adjustments as may be appropriate.

Terry Johnson reported that SWRPC continues to work on the update to the MRCC Coordinated Plan with the goal of finishing it by the end of January 2024. He requested MRCC members to volunteer to review a final draft of the plan when it is complete. Chair Dobisky and Charlie Pratt stepped forward. Terry Johnson reported that the Monadnock Region Community Transportation Directory update is also expected to be completed by the end of January.

Terry Johnson reported that Transport NH is coordinating with a consultant to design a new statewide website on behalf of the SCC and NHDOT. The website is named "Keep NH Moving". Expected to go live in January, the website will include information about statewide community transportation activities, a statewide interactive transportation directory and dedicated pages for each RCC. Regional mobility managers have been tasked with providing content for their pages and administering their pages after the site goes live. The intent is that the regional pages will ultimately supplant current RCC websites. Mobility managers attended a training to learn how to populate content to the site.

Terry Johnson reminded the MRCC of the current transit operating model study SWRPC is undertaking. He said SWRPC has released a request for proposals for a qualified transit consultant and has recruited stakeholders to participate on a project advisory task force. Several MRCC members have volunteered. A task force kick-off meeting will be held in January 2024.

Terry Johnson additionally highlighted a Bank of America (BoA) funding opportunity that may be relevant to the MRCC. Providing community transportation services will be an eligible activity. BoA will be releasing two separate requests for proposals during 2024. Suzanne Bansley has expressed interest in working with MRCC members to prepare an application if there is interest. Daniel Smith shared interest in applying for funding on behalf of the YMCA.

## **VI. MRCC Outreach Strategies Discussion**

Terry Johnson informed the MRCC that SWRPC is compiling input on strategic priorities solicited during the November MRCC meeting for inclusion in the Coordinated Plan update. He reported that during the discussion Ellen Avery suggested that, as part of overall MRCC outreach efforts, there should be a greater emphasis on joint advertising of transportation services provided in the Region. She indicated that advertising costs are expensive and that an economy of scale could be achieved through joint purchasing by transportation providers. She highlighted the success of the October Community Transportation Month campaign that transportation providers participated in. Terry Johnson then solicited input from the MRCC on potential education, outreach and advocacy tactics to increase public participation and understanding of community transportation. He asked the MRCC to focus discussion on two MRCC mobility management

work plan activities: 1) conduct coordinated outreach across the transportation network, and 2) engage input and participation from transit-dependent populations.

Chair Dobisky shared that radio stations are required by the FCC to broadcast public service announcements of nonprofit organizations and suggested that MRCC members could take advantage of this policy. Charlie Pratt shared that any efforts to broaden the ridership would be beneficial. Teri Palmer suggested that more coordination with Keene State College (KSC) would provide an important market to tap into. She also stressed the importance of having KSC participate in transportation efforts regionally. Terry Johnson said that SWRPC is recruiting KSC to participate in the transit operating model task force.

Chair Dobisky suggested that marketing efforts could utilize the stories and perspectives of current riders. Charlie Pratt shared that HCS has published several press releases publicizing their new routes and that they plan to conduct more efforts in the coming weeks.

Terry Johnson requested recommendations of other transportation stakeholders that should be at the MRCC table for involvement in strengthening the overall transportation network. Alberta Bronson suggested that independent living facilities could be interested partners. Charlie Pratt added that many of the facilities have their own transportation services, however, the services may not be sufficient to meet the needs of their clients. Mary Jensen suggested that medical facilities, such as the dialysis center in Keene, could be good partners to work with. Teri Palmer added that there are plans to engage these facilities statewide, but that engaging with them individually might be useful as well.

Mary Jensen recommended reaching out to ServiceLink Resource Centers as they may have resources to contribute to transit efforts. Teri Palmer praised the relationship that the MRCC has with the regional public health network and affirmed that such efforts are important to sustain. She also shared that there may be a renewed effort to implement the statewide transit needs assessment which could provide additional data on the market for transportation services. Terry Johnson suggested that there could be additional efforts made to target public officials and that such actions could spur increased attention by means of funding.

Mary Jensen shared her view that getting more younger riders would be an important pathway to increasing ridership and funding. Teri Palmer explained that this relates to statewide efforts to destigmatize public transit and that the service is not just for older riders. Charlie Pratt explained that, recently, HCS changed their marketing to separate advertising for the Friendly Bus from advertising for the City Express to try and change public perception of transit services. Daniel Smith explained that in other communities he's found success changing perception by engaging children from a younger age and increasing generational familiarity.

Teri Palmer shared that she will be conducting a session on travel training for mobility managers in January 2024. She said that travel training helps new riders gain familiarity and comfort with using community transportation services.

## **VII. Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for January 16, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.

## **VIII. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:21 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jason Cooper, Planner

**Monadnock Regional Coordinating Council  
For Community Transportation**

**Minutes**

January 16, 2024

Present: Frank Dobisky, Chair, *Thomas Transportation*; Charlie Pratt (remote), Vice Chair, *Home Healthcare, Hospice and Community Services (HCS)*; Jennifer Robinson, Treasurer, *Cheshire County*; David Meader, *Citizen Member*; Erica Alusic-Bingham (remote), *Southern New Hampshire Services SNHS*; Ellen Avery (remote), *Community Volunteer Transportation Company (CVTC)*, Alberta Bronson (remote), *The Lukas Community (TLC)*; Alice Cable (remote), *SAU 60*; Sallay Malay (remote), *Keene Housing Kids Collaborative (KHKC)*; *Cheshire County*; Lisa Steadman (remote), *Liberty Mutual*; Alison Welsh, (remote) *Cheshire County*.

SWRPC Staff Present: Terry Johnson, *Senior Project Manager*; Jason Cooper, *Planner*.

Guests: Teri Palmer (remote), *NH Statewide Mobility Manager*.

**I. Welcome**

Chair Dobisky called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. and introductions were made.

**II. Approval of December 19, 2023 Minutes**

Approval of the December 19, 2023 minutes was deferred to the next meeting as a quorum was not physically present.

**III. Treasurer's Report / Transportation Equity Projects/Budget Discussion**

Terry Johnson said that the MRCC is halfway through its current fiscal year and that current NH Department of Health and Human Services (NHDHHS) funding for the MRCC expires at the end of May 2024. He noted that having a budget discussion will help the MRCC make financial decisions in advance of the expiration of these funds. He also described communications that Cheshire County received from the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) requesting the amount of potential excess funds that could be available for reallocation to state-level activities.

Jennifer Robinson described the current financial picture broadly. Terry Johnson provided supplementary information regarding the financial status of NHDOT Section 5310 funding. Chair Dobisky asked whether NHDHHS funding could be used to support anticipated budget shortages in Section 5310 line items. Teri Palmer replied that statewide policies may restrict such activities.

Sallay Malay shared that Keene Housing Kids Collaborative (KHKC) is anticipating that approximately \$10,000 in NHDHHS funding will remain unspent for their project by the end of May 2024. She asked whether other organizations may have a need for this funding. Teri Palmer provided insight on other regions with similar issues. She said some projects are more successful than anticipated and could use more funding, while others are spending less than was budgeted. These regions have opted to move funds between these projects. Teri Palmer reported that she has requested information on any restrictions on use of NHDHHS funds before they expire. She has not yet received specific guidance. Lisa Steadman suggested that KHKC consider signing an agreement to hold the \$10,000 in reserve for use after May 2024. Suzanne Bansley said that would not be permissible under the terms of the grant.

Terry Johnson recommended that an ad hoc committee be formed to discuss use of NHDHHS funds through May 2024. He suggested the committee meet for the purpose of identifying spending recommendations and

reporting to the MRCC during its February 2024 meeting. Ellen Avery, Jennifer Robinson, Lisa Steadman, Sally Malay, Chair Dobisky, and Vice Chair Pratt volunteered to join the committee. Others also demonstrated interest, so Terry Johnson said that he would send a meeting invitation to the MRCC at large.

Erica Alusic-Bingham described how her program is unable to find transportation for some of her students and whether she could partner with KHKC to use the \$10,000 to help develop a new project. Lisa Steadman stated that she thought that children were eligible to ride a bus to wherever the parents said they should go. Erica Alusic-Bingham responded that the school bus cannot fit all the children that want to ride on the specific route. She asked Chair Dobisky if Thomas Transportation would be able to provide transportation for students to the program as needed and he responded that it would be something to explore. Erica Alusic-Bingham asked whether it would be appropriate for her to submit a proposal for a new transportation project to cover her program's need before June. Terry Johnson replied that it would be appropriate.

Alice Cable said that SAU 60 is experiencing serious challenges regarding the lack of drivers and asked whether there might be ability to use excess funding to support driver recruitment. Terry Johnson responded that there is precedent for this within the MRCC and statewide.

Ellen Avery suggested that Erica Alusic-Bingham explore whether Peterborough Recreation Department may have availability to provide transportation. Erica Alusic-Bingham responded that the agency does not have enough drivers. Vice Chair Pratt said that HCS does not have availability to help either. Teri Palmer shared that the lack of drivers is once again becoming a statewide concern that needs to be addressed.

Jennifer Robinson asked whether the MRCC holds the position that there will not be excess NHDHHS funding available to support state-level activities. There was consensus among MRCC members that the MRCC will find a use for the remaining NHDHHS funds. Jennifer Robinson and Terry Johnson concurred that this position will be considered when responding to NHDOT.

#### **IV. Partner Updates**

Vice Chair Pratt shared that HCS has launched its new City Express routes. He reported that overall ridership is up 15% since the new routes have been put into effect. He shared that ridership for the two routes is roughly equal now and that beforehand the figures were roughly 60/40. Vice Chair Pratt also reported that Shopping Shuttles ridership to Market Basket is up by 150%. Terry Johnson asked whether HCS has gotten feedback about the route changes. Vice Chair Pratt responded that he has heard only good things thus far.

Sally Malay reported that KHKC is experiencing challenges finding a second paid adult to accompany youth during transportation trips. Teri Palmer suggested using surplus KHKC funding to fulfill this requirement. Sally Malay asked Chair Dobisky whether Thomas Transportation may have capacity to fill this requirement. He said he will look into it.

Teri Palmer shared her excitement regarding new apartments on Route 12 near Keene. Terry Johnson reported that construction is nearing completion of an affordable housing development on Route 10 in West Swanzey. He said that Swanzey's proposal for improvements to Route 10 along the busy corridor where the apartments are located has been selected as the top priority project for Southwest NH in the 2025-2034 NH 10-Year Transportation Improvement Plan update process. The improvements will include infrastructure to slow traffic and make it safer for bicyclists and pedestrians to access businesses and housing located along the corridor, and to cross Route 10.

Ellen Avery provided an update on the IRS rules requiring volunteer drivers to pay taxes on mileage reimbursement amounts exceeding \$600 annually. She shared that, for the first time, CVTC will be issuing 1099 tax forms to 31 drivers. CVTC has already lost one driver over the issue. Ellen Avery shared that federal legislation has been drafted to address the issue and that there will likely be advocacy efforts to show support for the legislation. Ellen Avery said that, of the 31 drivers that will receive 1099 forms, their

taxable income ranges from \$600 to over \$5,000. She said that, so far, it appears that most CVTC drivers are willing to continue their role despite this new challenge.

Lisa Steadman shared that the Monadnock School District will be renegotiating its contract with their bus provider next year.

## **V. Mobility Manager Update**

Terry Johnson provided an update regarding the State Coordinating Council (SCC) draft bylaws for Regional Coordinating Councils (RCC). The SCC considered comments from RCCs in its development of the final version which was adopted at its December 2023 meeting. The SCC now has distributed the approved bylaws to the RCCs. Each RCC will have until the end of March to adopt the bylaws as written or provide amendments to the SCC.

Terry Johnson provided an update on efforts to develop the statewide Keep NH Moving website. The website will provide a page for each RCC and a transportation navigator for users. Terry Johnson said that the current MRCC website will remain active until it is determined that the Keep NH Moving website meets Region 5 needs.

## **VI. Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for February 20, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.

## **VII. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:29 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jason Cooper, Planner

**Date:** February 16, 2023  
**To:** Monadnock Regional Coordinating Council  
**From:** Mobility Manager

**RE:** NHDHHS and NHDOT Budgets

### **Background**

NH Department of Health and Human Services (NHDHHS) funding for the Monadnock Regional Coordinating Council (MRCC) expires on May 30, 2024. Based on current budget expenditures, it is anticipated there will be a balance of up to \$45,000 in unspent funds at the end of the grant period. At a special meeting of the MRCC on January 31, 2024, the Community Volunteer Transportation Company (CVTC) requested an increase of \$7,500 to support advertising activities for its volunteer driver outreach campaign. No additional uses of remaining NH DHHS funds have been confirmed.

The MRCC has not yet finalized the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) FY25 5310 Enhanced Mobility budget which provides \$233,619 in direct costs for transportation and mobility management services (\$245,300 including indirect costs). The MRCC has the option to increase the total budget amount through transfer of anticipated surplus NH DHHS funds to cover the costs of HCS, CVTC and Keene Senior Center (KSC) purchase of service expenses that are currently being charged to the FY24 5310 budget. This will result in up to \$45,000 in unspent FY24 5310 funds that can be carried over to the FY25 budget to ensure sufficient funds are available to cover expenditures for transportation and mobility management services.

### **Recommendations**

Recommendation 1: Approval to increase the NHDHHS budget CVTC Advancement Assistant line item by \$7,500. Recommendation 2: to charge purchase of service invoices for HCS accessible and ambulatory demand-response, CVTC volunteer drivers, and KSC volunteer drivers to the NHDHHS budget (expected to be as much as \$80,346 for the period January to May 2024). After DHHS funds are depleted, purchase of service costs will be applied to the NH DOT grant through June 2024.



**DOT Enhanced Mobility SFY24-SFY25 Budget \*DRAFT\***

GRANT BUDGET LINE ITEM	Miles	Hours	1-way Trips	Unique Riders	Rate	DOT APPROVED	DHHS DRAFT	COMBINED BUDGET	DOT DRAFT	Notes
						SFY24	Jun'23-May'24	SFY24	SFY25	
POS: HCS scheduled and demand-response		1,068	2,954	135	\$ 84.00	\$ 89,712	\$ -	\$ 89,712	\$ 64,080	Trip # based on avg Jul-Dec, incl 158 WC 10-mnt avg \$1372 8-mth avg \$1023
POS: HCS Tuesday Shopping Trips						\$ -	\$ 16,464	\$ 16,464	\$ -	
POS: HCS Rt10 "SWWIN" Shopping Trips						\$ -	\$ 12,276	\$ 12,276	\$ -	
POS: CVTC volunteer driver	127,937		3,539	340	\$ 0.655	\$ 83,799	\$ -	\$ 83,799	\$ 62,970	
POS: CVTC accessible transportation			30	6	\$138.00	\$ 4,140	\$ -	\$ 4,140	\$ 3,375	
POS: Keene Senior Center volunteer driver	6,500		500	50	\$ 0.655	\$ 4,258	\$ -	\$ 4,258	\$ 3,194	5-mth avg \$3776
POS: Kids Collaborative						\$ -	\$ 45,312	\$ 45,312	\$ -	
POS: Reserve for more projects							\$ 19,413	\$ 19,413		
<b>Subtotal Purchase of Service (POS)</b>						<b>\$ 181,909</b>	<b>\$ 93,465</b>	<b>\$ 275,374</b>	<b>\$ 133,619</b>	
MM: CVTC mobility management		2,080			\$ 19.60	\$ 40,760	\$ -	\$ 40,760	\$ 30,000	Hourly rate reflects average of 2 PTs Part time 20/wk x \$25/hr Request is for \$131,410/yr (est \$25k remaining)
MM: CVTC advancement assistant						\$ -	\$ 26,000	\$ 26,000	\$ -	
MM: SWRPC Regional mobility manager						\$ 10,950	\$ 120,459	\$ 131,409	\$ 70,000	
<b>Subtotal Mobility Management (MM)</b>						<b>\$ 51,710</b>	<b>\$ 146,459</b>	<b>\$ 198,169</b>	<b>\$ 100,000</b>	
<b>Subtotal Direct Expenses</b>						<b>\$ 233,619</b>	<b>\$ 239,924</b>	<b>\$ 473,543</b>	<b>\$ 233,619</b>	
Indirect/mobility mgt (5% DOT, 10% DHHS)						\$ 11,681	\$ 26,657	\$ 38,338	\$ 11,681	
<b>TOTAL GRANT EXPENDITURES</b>						<b>\$ 245,300</b>	<b>\$ 266,581</b>	<b>\$ 511,881</b>	<b>\$ 245,300</b>	
						Budget Limit: \$ 245,300	\$ 266,581		\$ 245,300	DHHS balance available 6/1/23 ESTIMATED
						Need to (reduce) / increase the above: \$ -	\$ -		\$ -	If negative, decrease above; If positive increase

\$266,581 DHHS balance available on 6/1/23 balance remaining assumed: SWRPC \$33,127 + KHKC \$32,248 + Projects \$150,889 + Indirect \$33,000