

**Monadnock Regional Coordinating Council
For Community Transportation**

Minutes

January 21, 2025

Present: Charlie Pratt, Vice Chair, *Home Healthcare, Hospice and Community Services (HCS)*; Jennifer Robinson, Treasurer, *Cheshire County*; Erica Alusic-Bingham, *Community Action Partnership Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties (CAPHR)*; Ellen Avery (remote), *Community Volunteer Transportation Company (CVTC)*; David Meader (remote), *Citizen Member*; Kim Rumrill, *Keene Senior Center (KSC)*; Lisa Steadman (remote), *ABLE NH*; Charles Weed, *Citizen Member*; Alison Welsh (remote), *Cheshire County Recovery Court (CCRC)*.

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

Guests: Suzanne Bansley, *Cheshire County*; Teri Palmer (remote), *Statewide Mobility Manager*.

I. Welcome

Vice Chair Pratt called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. and introductions were made.

II. Approval of December 17, 2024 Minutes

Motion: To approve the minutes of December 17, 2024.

Motion by Erica Alusic-Bingham, seconded by Charles Weed. Approved by unanimous roll call vote with Ellen Avery and Alison Welsh abstaining.

III. Treasurer's Report

Jennifer Robinson did not have any specific comments on the treasurer's report for this month. Ellen Avery commented that CVTC has expended 41% of its budget at the halfway point of the current fiscal year. She was confused because CVTC executive director, Allan Gillis, shared with her that the organization is running over budget. Jennifer Robinson explained that Allan Gillis may be referring to the allocation for next year's budget, or that he may be concerned that CVTC will exceed its budget later in the year as CVTC's rides tend to increase in the spring.

IV. Section 5310 Capital Application for MRCC Approval

Terry Johnson explained that the Monadnock Adult Care Center (MACC) is looking to purchase a vehicle for their programming. Teri Palmer asked if any representatives from the organization have participated in the MRCC. Terry Johnson explained that MACC was a MRCC member in the past. He said that the current MACC director is retiring later this year. There will be an opportunity to recruit the new director to serve on the MRCC. Todd Horner asked whether this lack of service on the MRCC is a detriment to MACC's potential application and Teri Palmer explained that this may be the case, as the funding application suggests that applying organizations should be engaged with their RCC. Ellen Avery pointed out that MACC is an

affiliate of Monadnock Family Services (MFS) and that it may make sense for a representative from MFS to serve on the MRCC. Erica Alusic-Bingham asked whether any representatives from MFS have been present at the MRCC and Vice Chair Pratt shared that Kathy Baird is an employee of MFS, which could help support the application. Vice Chair Pratt explained that, from his perspective, since MACC has previously been represented on the MRCC, and since the buses will likely be used solely for their own program, he believes that their application should be supported. Todd Horner asked whether MACC previously ran shopping shuttles and Ellen Avery confirmed that they used to run them before the COVID pandemic. Terry Johnson will follow-up with the MACC director to recommend highlighting in the application that MACC parent organization, MFS, has a representative serving as a member on the MRCC.

Motion: To approve the Monadnock Adult Care Center's application for 5310 Capital Funds.

Motion by Vice Chair Pratt and seconded by Kim Rumrill. Approved by unanimous roll call vote.

V. Section 5310 MRCC Application and Budget

Terry Johnson shared that the expected Region 5 Section 5310 allocation for the next funding cycle (FY26 and 27) will be approximately \$304,000 per year. He said that Cheshire County prepared a draft FY26 budget and explained that today the plan is to have an initial discussion on the budget. He added that no decisions will be made today, but the MRCC will need to approve the budget and the Section 5310 application at its February meeting. Suzanne Bansley stated that transportation providers need to make their case to the MRCC for its approval. She added that the application's public notice will be published in late January.

Terry Johnson explained that the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) is utilizing a new method for allocating funds for RCCs which was voted on by the RCCs and approved by the State Coordinating Council (SCC) and NHDOT in 2024. Whereas the previous formula considered percentage of seniors and individuals with disabilities in each region, the new formula adds the size of the region in square miles and number of lane miles. Additionally, the allocations include a set aside of \$120,000 per year for each region for Mobility Manager and administration services. RCCs are required to allocate a minimum amount of \$50,000 per year for these services.

Jennifer Robinson presented a sample annual budget as a starting point for discussion. She developed transportation provider budget items based on an analysis of average monthly provider expenditures between July 2022 and October 2024. For the provider and mobility management line items, she factored in the minimum amounts of funding requested by each organization.

Teri Palmer asked for an explanation of what services the CVTC mobility management line item includes. Ellen Avery explained that it is for dispatcher services. Suzanne Bansley explained that before the February MRCC meeting, Cheshire County will be reaching out to transportation providers to strategize ahead of the new budget cycle. Ellen Avery stated that CVTC could consider reducing its mileage reimbursement rate to maintain their level of services. Suzanne Bansley acknowledged that CVTC has done this in the past. CVTC increased the rate during the COVID pandemic to promote driver recruitment. Ellen Avery shared that a strategy could be employed by transportation providers to save money by restricting the trips they provide, but that this would be a negative outcome since transportation providers have worked hard over

the years to expand their services. She also suggested that approaching Cheshire and Hillsborough counties for funding could be a way to fill the expected need.

Terry Johnson asked whether it would be worthwhile to schedule a follow-up meeting with transportation providers and the county for the purpose of gaining consensus on funding amounts for each provider. Vice Chair Pratt replied in the affirmative. Jennifer Robinson will distribute the projected budget distribution to the group ahead of the meeting. Ellen Avery recommended that Teri Palmer attend the meeting to provide her statewide perspective. Suzanne Bansley explained that NHDOT is projecting a budget deficit in future fiscal years and that future hard decisions may also need to be made.

Erica Alusic-Bingham asked if it would be more cost-efficient to have a State operated public transportation system versus the current regionally operated systems. Terry Johnson said that, although it is not a direct comparison, the NH Department of Health and Human Services manages the Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Program using brokers to arrange rides for beneficiaries. The system is known for being inefficient. Suzanne Bansley and Erica Alusic-Bingham suggested that a speaker from New Futures could be a worthwhile guest at a future MRCC meeting to help inform advocacy efforts. Terry Johnson explained that the upcoming statewide transportation needs assessment will provide data to help bolster the argument for increased funding.

Todd Horner asked whether Cheshire County has pursued operations funding to supplement Section 5310 dollars. Suzanne Bansley explained that they have investigated it but have not pursued it. She suggests that the MRCC has maximized value that can be extracted from grants and that subrecipients should pursue non-federal funding opportunities, such as contributions from towns.

VI. Partner Updates

Erica Alusic-Bingham asked whether anyone was surprised that the results from the recent Healthy Monadnock Alliance community health survey indicated that only 2% of respondents identified that transportation is a barrier for them to get to appointments and other needs. Alison Welsh suggested that the survey may not be reaching many of the most vulnerable families and individuals in the region. Erica Alusic-Bingham agreed.

Kim Rumrill shared that Cheshire Village at Home (CVaH) was able to meet all requests for rides for the previous month. She shared that they have two drivers who are currently willing to drive to Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center. She added that they are up to 50 homes enrolled in the CVaH program.

Vice Chair Pratt shared that HCS has completed training for a new driver.

VII. Mobility Manager Update

Terry Johnson reported that the “Next Generation” Transit Project team is currently working on refining transit service concepts for the Greater Keene area and is set to hold a series of meetings with key stakeholders that may play roles in managing and providing financial support for expanded transit services. The service concepts will include federal and local match funding scenarios for the expanded services. Stakeholder meetings are being planned in the coming months. Terry additionally shared that the MRCC Coordinated Plan draft has been completed and asked for volunteers to review it. Vice Chair Pratt

volunteered to review the document. Terry Johnson said the plan will be shared with the MRCC prior to the February meeting and that the intention is for the MRCC to adopt it during the meeting.

VIII. Next Meeting

The next MRCC meeting is scheduled for February 18, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

IX. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:27 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Cooper
Planner