



**General Membership Meeting  
Minutes – March 6, 2019 - 9:00am,  
McConnell Center room 305  
Dover, NH**

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The meeting was called to order at 9:10

**1) Introductions**

**Members Present:** Deborah Bartley (Lamprey Health Care), Pamela Becker (Community Partners), Tahja Fulwider (Ready Rides), Colin Lentz (SRPC), Rad Nichols (COAST), Debbie Perou (Rockingham Nutrition MoW), Sharon Reynolds (Citizen Member), Cheryl Robicheau (Strafford CAP), Betty Smith (Ready Rides)

**Staff Present:** Jeff Donald (COAST)

**Guests Present:** Steve Workman (Transport NH), Calvin Smith (VA)

**2) Approval of Meeting Minutes (2/20/19 meeting) {VOTE}**

B. Smith made a motion to approve the minutes from February 20<sup>th</sup>.

Seconded by C. Robicheau

Vote: all in favor with D. Bartley abstaining

**3) SFY20 5310 RCC Program Grant Update**

J. Donald explained that the FY2020 FTA 5310 RCC program application had been submitted for a total of \$534,000 (the full amount eligible). J. Donald said he thought they would have an indication from NHDOT about the grant by the end of March, but it would still need to be processed through Governor and Council.

**4) Tufts Health Plan Foundation**

J. Donald said he was still looking for grants to fill the gap in local match for the ACT budget. He submitted a letter of interest to the Tufts Health Foundation and they invited him to submit a full proposal. Tufts is interested in developing a multi-year grant for ACT. J. Donald said he will be completing a full proposal by the end of March. He noted that Tufts will be conducting a site visit to observe ACT operations. What's especially exciting is that the funds would not be restricted to a specific program but could be applied where needed to support ACT.

**5) Updates & Statistics**

J. Donald provided handouts on recent stats. He pointed to budget sheets and noted that 5310 and 5307 funds were spent in phases during the course of the two-year grant, so they appeared unbalanced. He showed that the local match line was unused so far because COAST was currently providing a portion of local match.

J. Donald said he was also submitting an application to Exeter hospital for local matching funds. He noted that overall the ACT budget is 5% under for revenues and expenses. Wages are over by 3% but everything else is underbudget. J. Donald said POS funds are under-spent. Recently, several regular Community Rides clients had passed away, resulting in a drop in trips, but there is usually a dip in ride requests around this time of year.

J. Donald reminded the committee that starting in July COAST will be lead agency and ACT will be billing monthly.

### Ridership

J. Donald pointed out an apparent sharp rise in ridership is due to a change in how trips were recorded, not more riders. The previous software only logged one trip per phone call or booking, but the new software logs each individual trip, so there might be multiple trips requested via a single phone call.

J. Donald noted that there were about 4000 calls made through TripLink in January. That includes every phone call from the office (it can include calls made by staff in-office).

D. Perou asked if clients call for other reasons besides scheduling trip (reassure that the ride is ready)?

J. Donald responded that they get a lot of follow-up calls from clients checking on their rides. He noted that clients can now request an automated text reminder of their trip.

D. Perou asked what the error rate is for trips. J. Donald responded that it is extremely rare for clients to not get picked up for a ride they booked, but they are constantly working to improve the general process, reduce client complaints, and ensure clients' expectations are met. He noted that sometimes clients are irritated when multiple trips are scheduled together and they have to wait on a vehicle longer than they expected, or when other logistical challenges create unforeseen issues.

P. Becker suggested that that is really about client satisfaction, and not really a "trip error". A trip error is a case when someone requests a trip and just doesn't get picked up. J. Donald agreed and reiterated that it's extremely rare for that to happen.

### **6) SCC Report**

J. Donald said there was all-day training tomorrow in Concord related to providers that hire drivers or volunteers.

### **7) Information Exchange**

J. Donald showed members a new TripLink trip request Journal. He explained that it was for clients to record the trips they book to help provide some self-assurance.

J. Donald explained that NHDOT had requested \$200,000 in their budget proposal for operating support for public transit providers. This funding was not included in the governor's draft budget that was recently submitted to the legislature.

S. Workman added that the transit capital portion of the state budget was also cut from the Governor's budget. This was about \$900,500 total removed from budget that transit providers rely on for capital purchases. He said legislators and advocate groups were working to develop a strategy for getting the capital funding restored. S. Workman explained that the \$200,000 operating funding request wasn't new but that it hadn't been included in the budget for many years after being removed in the past.

S. Workman said a representative from the Governor's office at a public hearing for the NH House Public Works Committee had claimed that the Governor's budget had been formed based on the priorities in the Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan, which did not include public transit. This is incorrect and misleading because the transit priorities are focused in the 4-year Transportation Improvement Program. R. Nichols added that transit discussions were regularly drowned out during the public meetings for the Ten Year Plan held by Executive Councilors.

D. Perou noted that Rockingham Nutrition Meals on Wheels had gotten \$1 million more than they had requested so there was obviously a lot of funding being shifted around. S. Workman agreed and noted that the Governor's budget put a lot of emphasis on the opioid crisis, which is great, but transportation and public transit will play a critical role in helping the state address the problem, so the two have to go together. This allowed the governor to say he was funding priority issues, but the priorities were funded at the expense of other critical services.

Several advocacy groups like Transport NH are focusing on this issue and will need support from agencies like ACT and providers.

D. Perou asked what the state transit capital funding is primarily used for. R. Nichols said it was primarily used as matching funds for bus and equipment purchases. Usually federal funds cover 80% to 85% of a capital purchase, state funds make up between 7% and 10%, and local funds make up the rest. The \$900,500 was match for over \$7 million in federal funds.

S. Workman provided a handout with the provider-specific funding amounts that would be lost if the state capital funds were not restored.

Members discussed that having to fight for the capital funds made it difficult to fight for the \$200,000 for operating.

J. Donald asked if any other providers had heard from NHDOT about their capital grant applications. No one had yet.

S. Workman explained that an upcoming hearing would be addressing a bill to raise the cap on the local vehicle registration fee to \$10.00 (it currently is \$5.00). Registration fee revenues are often used by the municipalities as match for federal transportation improvement grants. Nichols noted that several communities use the funds as local match for COAST, healthcare transportation, and ACT providers.

C. Smith introduced himself and said he worked at the Manchester Veterans Affairs office of permanent housing (focused on homeless or housing-insecure veterans). He noted that he works exclusively with homeless veterans and that the VA provides transportation for medical trips, but nothing else.

R. Nichols asked how disconnected VA housing was from public transit. C. Smith said housing in the Seacoast is very competitive, so vets usually go to more affordable housing which is generally in less expensive parts of the Seacoast that are farther away from transit. He said many of his clients are in cities like Rochester, but none are in Portsmouth. He said he was at the meeting to learn more about the transportation services that might be available to VA clients. J. Donald said the easiest thing for veterans to do is to call Triplink to get linked up with the right service for their needs.

Members discussed Veterans' issues, Medicare, and the Integrated Delivery Network.

D. Bartley said Lamprey Healthcare was updating their civil rights policy and needed to include other languages. She asked if anyone had their policies translated. R. Nichols said the COAST service area is not at the minimum population thresholds for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) to require a translated civil rights policy. P. Becker suggested that D. Bartley check with the hospitals because they might have translations already.

#### **8) Public Comment**

No public comments were brought before the committee.

#### **9) Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10