



**Regional Coordination Council 7
DRAFT Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 28, 2024, 10:00 a.m.**

Attendees:

<p><u>In Person:</u></p> <p>George Barrett, Opportunity Networks Carol Brooks, SVTC Sara Cesar, Greater Nashua United Way Janet Langdell, SVTC Mobility & Planning Manager Kerry Miller, Nashua Transit System Max Morelli, Opportunity Networks Rocky Morelli, Opportunity Networks Teri Palmer, NH State Mobility Manager Don Paré, Gate City Bike Co-op</p> <p><u>NRPC Staff:</u></p> <p>Donna Marceau, Mobility Manager Kathy Kirby, Admin./Communications Assistant Matt Waitkins, MPO Coordinator</p>	<p><u>Remote:</u></p> <p>Mike Apfelberg, Greater Nashua United Way Julian Long, City of Nashua, Urban Programs Mgr. Germano Martins, NH Dept of Health & Human Services. Sandra Pratt, Gateways Community Services</p>
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1. Call to Order

Langdell opened the meeting at 10:03 a.m. Janet Langdell noted that we did not have the required voting members physically present for a quorum. In that case, Langdell suggested, we will craft an email to Jesse Lore and let him know we did not have a quorum. We could change our plan. We can get the new MOUs out to our voting members that have not been approved, have the voting members sign them, and then go from there in terms of the bylaws. So we will do it backward. The bylaws were adopted by consensus at the February meeting so pending a physical quorum at the April meeting, both the bylaws and the MOUs could be voted on.

2. Approve the meeting minutes of January 25, 2024, and Review and approve the February 22, 2024 meeting minutes.

A vote to adopt the January 25, 2024 meeting minutes was postponed due to a lack of voting member quorum.

The February 22, 2024 meeting minutes were reviewed. There was one edit in Item 4 on page 3.

Revised the sentence starting with, “Palmer stated your region...” The sentence should be edited to read: *Palmer stated your region has an opportunity to apply for 5310 capital and if not used, it will end up flowing into regular operational funding.* The edit was approved by consensus. A vote to

adopt the February 22, 2024 meeting minutes was postponed due to a lack of voting member quorum.

3. Approve Opportunity Networks Proposal – Action Item

Postponed with a consensus to support the grant application to purchase a new vehicle according to FTA specifications. Paula Devons or Fred Butler at NHDOT will contact Opportunity Networks with any questions about their 5310 application which is under review.

4. Introductions

Langdell asked for members to introduce themselves.

5. Vote to adopt the DRAFT RCC bylaws

Postponed due to a lack of quorum.

6. Mid-year financial report – Janet Langdell

Langdell gave the financial report. The data discussed included the funding, and available data on regional rides. The data that is used to prepare the presentation is not 100% complete, but it gives everyone who views it an understanding of the trends relative to rides.

- FTA 5310 (RCC) Funding slide. RCC7 was allotted approximately \$232,000 per year for a two-year contract FY24 & FY25. Funding was approved for on-demand service to be provided by NTS Souhegan Service and volunteer driver management by Caregivers NH as seen in the budget. Also, the budget contains funding for the RCC Mobility Manager position and NRPC's contract management. Spending is broken out by quarter (starting July 1, 2023, through the end of last year). Also included is a breakout of what was federal dollars and what was the local match at 20%. All have to be matched at 20% except for the Regional Mobility Manager program for which the State funds. SVTC and Caregivers have to provide their 20% match respectively. To close the gap in the salary for the Mobility Manager position, NRPC put a proposal together through their UPWP (United Planning Work Program). Therefore, the Mobility Manager position is funded out of two pots of money.
- "NTS POS": we have spent \$93,237.50 out of the \$209,375 that was in the budget for purchasing service from NTS for the Souhegan Valley towns. We are running a little under the 50% that you would expect.
- Any money left at the end of the fiscal year will roll into the next fiscal year as it is a two-year contract.
- Caregivers have not submitted any funding requests. They do have bills and need to provide them for payment. They asked for \$10,000 which was requested for marketing for volunteer drivers.
- NRPC has submitted bills for just under \$2,000 out of the total \$6,000 allotted to them
- Langdell worked with the NRPC Assistant Director, and NRPC MPO Coordinator to prepare the financial report; she is the treasurer for the NRPC Commission. Thus it makes sense for Langdell to prepare the RCC7 financial report. FTA 5310 Funding Notes slide: summary of the UWP numbers that the NRPC gets for the RCC7. It includes salaries and other expenses including printing, etc.
- 5310 (RCC) Services & More: Langdell reviewed a Comparison of Demand Response Services (Applications and Rides) for FY 2024 first half to FY2023 second half. There is an increase in SVTC and NTS rides, while applications are flat or down slightly in total. However, SVTC

applications have increased in five of the six service towns. NTS provides paratransit rides in Nashua, Merrimack, and Hudson – they provided over 14,000 of those rides (that is not a fixed route – it is just the smaller vehicles). Increases are most likely due to Mobility Manager outreach and Kerry Miller as well. Langdell pointed out we are still coming out of the post-Covid period where people are slowly coming back to community transit. Rocky Morelli stated the quality is probably increasing in the services as well.

- Salem Caregivers Pelham and CVTC (Community Volunteer Transportation Company) Mason: The numbers shared do not contain numbers for November and December 2023. Langdell is getting updated numbers and will update this slide. Caregivers decline in applications and rides is due to a data-driven issue. Salem Caregivers rides have increased, however. In 2018, we got calls from a church in Mason for rides. CVTC picked it up because most riders were headed towards the Peterborough area. Alas, no one has used the service. It is there and it is worth it to keep this option open to Mason. There may be leftover 5310 funds available for getting rides to the western area of our region incorporating CVTC, places other than Nashua. Rocky Morelli asked about the Caregivers' decrease in the first half of FY24. How much would that be impacted by workforce shortages? Langdell stated all of the Caregiver drivers are volunteers and you can't give the rides if you don't have volunteers. She asked for the data points of all the volunteers they had at the beginning and end of the periods. The data received is a "mixed bag." They have seasonal changes too (most likely snowbirds). Palmer stated just looking at the data we do not know how many requests Caregivers got. If Jim can join us next time, maybe he can give us some indication of the number of requests vs. rides provided. If he has many more requests than rides, that may mean that he needs more volunteer drivers. Langdell stated we are waiting for the NH Alliance for Healthy Aging annual survey data of VDPs. Palmer stated some volunteer drivers can't get all the data they are looking for; she wondered how many of those programs have switched over to NTS. Apfelberg asked about what form the match takes - can it be in-kind? Langdell stated it is a 20% match, generally a cash match, and there are ways to do in-kind matches. Langdell stated that she could get Mike information on that. Matt stated that CVTC's volunteer driver programs reimburse their drivers and that can be a lot of money so that may be a funding issue that should be part of the discussion with CVTC. Langdell stated that Matt brings up a really good point. Also, in talking with James at Caregivers, he has seen an increase in unfulfilled rides. Palmer stated the State has been working on the Medicaid brokerage – and that riders are frustrated with the two brokerages in the State. We have heard from many riders that the brokerages are not letting those seeking rides know that they are eligible for Medicaid reimbursement for the rides and riders have been paying without getting reimbursed from Medicaid. Langdell stated that it's an edict from NH DOT for 5310-funded programs that they need to ask if the rider has Medicaid when they are asking for medical transportation. We have a disclaimer in our brochure, website, and application. But because we don't have the manpower, to a certain extent we take it in good faith that the questions have been asked. But we do make the effort to remind residents.
- Matt stated a correction: Caregivers do not reimburse their drivers. Langdell stated that Caregivers have an income limit while CVTC does not and would give a ride to anyone. Langdell stated that the slides do not include the rides that are provided through local agencies such as Opportunity Networks, Gateways, and the Plus Company, and those have to be thousands more. Also, the small services that are provided by, for example, the Town of Pelham has a senior van that provides seniors with rides, and our slides do not capture that. Palmer, Marceau, and Waitkins appreciated the data presented. Don Pare asked about mileage reimbursement... is it a .67/mile per mile reimbursement to the

driver? Palmer responded that every program is different though. Caregivers do not provide reimbursement and some rider programs only provide .25 per mile. It all depends on the trips they are providing and their funding. (Brief talk about the high cost of taxi fares to go a few blocks for groceries, etc. Langdell stated it is \$65 one way to get from Milford Center to SNHS for an appointment.)

7. Regional Transportation Provider Updates

NTS (Miller): fixed route transit is running at 96% on time. Ridership on the same is steadily growing. Correa and Miller visited Nashua South High School for the first time and gave a presentation on riding the city bus service. Many want to get to after-school jobs and weekend activities. Providing a travel training session is our next step at Nashua South HS. Have a travel training session scheduled at the Hunt Community. They have a little van that only does grocery trips so the city bus would provide more destinations. Public Health Week is the first week in April and Marceau and Miller will be at the event on April 1. Sustainability Fair at the Nashua Library on April 20 - Marceau and Miller will have a vendor table coordinated with Sara (Cesar). Miller has also provided lots of referrals to Donna, keeping her busy. Langdell requested a list of those referral destinations.

Gate City Bike Co-op (Pare):

The annual bike sale will be held on April 27 at 9 a.m. at our location for the community. Even median-income families with a few children appreciate the sale. Bikes are typically gone by 11:30 a.m. The money helps pay for the bike accessories. Pare mentioned he was interviewed by Carol Robidoux of Manchester Inklink.com – it was their first electronic interview. She came over to the Bike Co-op and took pictures. Cesar stated that Inklink.com has a Nashua correspondent too. Pare stated that Cynthia Whitaker from a radio station interviewed him. Pare praised Greater Nashua Mental Health. He is impressed by the procedure they have in place which includes a case manager coming to the bike co-op with the client to get a bike.

SVTC (Brooks & Langdell):

We are going to be helping with events that coincide with Older Americans Month – we will be helping with a senior barbeque in Milford sponsored by the Milford Rotary Club. Langdell would like to have a senior information table. Marceau, and maybe Miller, could attend. There is another Health and Welfare Fair at the end of May, perhaps May 29, put on by the Milford Recreation Department. It may be an opportunity. Marceau plans to attend the Senior Linings senior fair unofficially to network, but we will not be attending it as a vendor. Carol Brooks stated that they have plans to set up tables at important summer and fall events this year including Mont Vernon's Spring Fling in late May; Summerfest in June in Wilton; July 4 in Amherst; August is Old Home Days Week; Hollis Old Home Day in August; Lamson Farm Day; and Milford Pumpkin Festival. Being at these events is important to "put our arms around" all these things that are happening in community transportation, as well as share information about our services. Applications are rolling in. Rides are steady. It is contract time now. Rides provided have been steady although up & down. We are redoing our annual contract. Merrimack and Hudson will be with NTS. We asked Correa if it would be possible to expand services for our clients for riders to and from Merrimack. Unfortunately, the time to do this is too short and we should put it on our horizon this coming year to try to somehow connect the destination pods between

transportation providers. With the carryover funding available, we could do it as a pilot and we will continue the conversation. It would be great to strengthen connections between our transportation services.

8. SCC and Mobility Manager Updates

SCC (Palmer): reported that she is part of the Able NH Transportation Task Force now and she has spoken with the other members to talk about how difficult it is for folks with disabilities to get around now. Sometimes our work at our meetings doesn't allow us to get down to the root of why we are there. So she hopes to inspire more solutions that come from the group members. She prepares a Key Performers Indicators Update that Langdell stated we should include in the RCC7 meeting packet. It can be found on the Keep NH Moving website which has had a soft launch (not live yet – she will update when live). The budgets are not showing how all the CDC grant money has been spent. It kind of shows that there is a lot of money waiting to be spent, and that is not realistic.

Ten-year plan - no movement.

Save the Date: June 7 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. will be our joint annual conference with NHTA and the State Coordinating Council. There will be incredible folks speaking.

There will be a draft of the annual report next week at the State Council.

Strategic Work Groups Sustainability: we are working with Melina Hill-Walker from the Endowment for Health and she has some grant funding that will be available through the Mackenzie Scott Fund. So Palmer is making a list of funding that is needed all across the region and she is sending it to Melina, her contact there. They have \$7 million available over many years and they want to support public transit/any public transportation.

Governance – we are supposed to see the first draft of the SCC bylaws (by Friday). The statewide needs assessment draft - folks from the Commission on Aging are working on this. Hoping for \$400,000 requested (Rebecca Skye is working on it). The next meeting is at 2 Channel Drive next Thursday at 1:30 at Granite State Independent Living. Everybody is welcome/a Zoom option available.

The Endowment For Health is having its annual meeting at 3:30 in Manchester. Palmer wants to hear from urban areas that have smaller funding needs. Rural areas were taken care of by the Strategic Works Group Sustainability. Only \$50k - \$75k available and urban areas should provide shovel-ready project proposals. It should be a one-and-done (not something that the fund will need to sustain). Marceau stated there is also an opportunity grant for \$1,000 - \$20,000. It should not be something that could be funded by federal money. They like bicycles. In every region with a mobility manager, there would be a bike co-op similar to our Gate City BikeCo-op.

Palmer stated that there are a couple of statewide health equity things coming up – there will be one in Meredith, NH in May.

Check into Wellness Link is within ServiceLink. Add your events to the calendar.

There was our Mobility Manager meeting last week (held virtually). Judy Shanley joined us and showed us the seat tool, a stakeholder engagement action tool. NH is being recognized for that. Last week we had a virtual Mobility Manager Summit (the whole week). The National Center for Mobility Manager website should have the seminar recordings.

RCC7 Mobility Manager (Marceau): Marceau reported that in addition to the Sustainability meeting, she went to the Alliance for Healthy Aging meeting. Marceau stated that the State is combining aging and disability into one resource center. I sense that they should keep aging and disability separate so that one of the two groups will not become dominant and take over. They should have two separate resource centers as they are not the same thing. Palmer added that

ServiceLink is changing their name to the Aging and Disability Resource Center (rebranding). BEAS is now going to be the Bureau of Adult and Aging Services. It is unclear why they are combining the two. Germano Martins stated that he believes that both are under one resource center now because the services needed are alike, i.e. visitations, cleaning, medical supervision, for instance. The services ServiceLink has always provided have been broad. Sometimes people don't realize what ServiceLink does from the name of the organization.

Marceau reported that the State of NH is putting together a "Keep NH Moving" website. Some of the features include ways to travel, how to find a ride, and Future Forward which is about EV and DEI initiatives. The Regions section is about where the mobility management information is and it looks good (thanks to Janet and her comments about it). The Resources section has blog news about different articles on transportation and information about the SCC, and RCC – insider information. Consideration has been given to adding the VT and ME border towns. Donna thinks it is a good idea as there is overlap. Customer friendliness is important so that people will use it. She is still working on the transportation link to Boston hospitals. The hospitals will pay for an Uber or Lyft ride to and from South Station. Langdell requested clarification about which Boston hospitals will pay for an Uber or Lyft ride to and from South Station.

There have been 18 requests since the last meeting, four specifically for bikes. Requests are steadily increasing. April has many events. A lot is going on.

9. Other transportation Issues and Concerns

Pare brought up a case where someone from Merrimack is getting set up with Boston lodging accommodations by Mass General Boston Hospital for daily chemotherapy treatments over nine weeks. Langdell stated it may be because transportation costs are even higher than being provided with lodging accommodations. She asked Pare to find out the name of the program and share it with Marceau. Marceau stated that they are trying to get CommuteSmart to have that information so that if people are trying to get rides to Boston for medical treatment, they can coordinate that through CommuteSmart because they have a rideshare place already on their website. Brooks stated that ride flexibility is important as there are often delays in the treatment schedule.

Wrap-up: Langdell: Waitkins, Langedell, and Marceau will draft a follow-up email to Fred to follow-up; we will work on bylaws and MOUs, get a mailing out, reach out to not only the 13 voting members but also anyone who is on our participant list. We will get an email to Jesse. We need to get a quorum in this room.

Adjournment by Langdell at 11:40 a.m.

Chat messages:

- Sandra Pratt: See you all next time. Thanks.
- Julian Long: Have a good afternoon, all!