

Minutes
Public Transit Elders and Persons with Disabilities Regional Committee Meeting
Virtual Meeting
Friday, October 21, 2022
10:00am – 11:30am

Attending: Otis Munroe (MARC), Colin Bratton (WRC), Tim Bradshaw (VTrans), Christine Howe (SEVT), Margaret Lewis (TGP), David Neumeister (Windham County Seniors' Health Collaborative/Windham Aging)

Welcome and Introductions: All present introduced themselves. David also introduced the 2030 plan for healthy aging in Windham County he is working on along with 10 partners. Transportation is one of the topics to be covered. The next phase of the Plan is public outreach.

Minutes Approval: Colin made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 15 meeting. Christine seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

Spending and Budget: Christine reviewed the FY23 spending and budget through August for each partner. July spending is generally higher due to five payroll periods this year and the high cost of fuel – double the cost for July 2021. There has also been a need to use more paid drivers instead of volunteers. There are currently about 30 active volunteers when SEVT used to have over 60. SEVT is kicking off a campaign to attract new volunteers.

Overall spending was at 20% which is a little higher than the target of 17%. Partner-specific highlights follow:

- Bellows Falls Senior Center is already at 88% of their budget. This is because several clients who used to live in town have moved much further away.
- Mount Ascutney has not yet spent any of their budget because they still have funding left over from Rides to Wellness.
- Wilmington Meals and Shopping is a little high due to a lack of volunteers in the area.
- Springfield Adult Day is a little high due to a trend of last-minute cancellations. Often cancellations come in too late to be able to reroute drivers or replace a bus with a volunteer. This is being worked on.

VTrans Updates:

Tim and Christine will be meeting with Mount Ascutney Hospital on the **Recovery and Jobs Access Program**. There is a healthy amount of funding remaining in that program. There will be a virtual Recovery and Jobs Access summit – more details will be forthcoming. There has been an uptick in recovery rides in the SEVT region. Overall utilization has been low statewide except in the Northeast Kingdom.

The **Community Rides** initiative is still in the works. Volunteers are unlikely to meet the demand. It might be difficult for volunteers to transition to community rides which is more of a paid driver model.

SEVT is doing a great job meeting demand. No E&D rides have been denied.

Tim asked Christine to provide an update on the **Windsor Microtransit pilot**. The service will be branded the Micromoo. The vehicle(s) are expected at the end of November. SEVT is working with a software company to develop the app that will be one option to book rides. It is hoped much of the current E&D and Medicaid demand can be met through microtransit since many current trips begin and end within Windsor. A tentative launch date has been set for mid-January. For the second round of microtransit feasibility studies, SEVT is hoping to evaluate evening and weekend service in Brattleboro.

Maggie asked for an update on the other pilots and whether there were plans to bring service to the rest of Windham. Tim provided an overview of the challenges faced by the Montpelier pilot. These include a high number of calls to schedule rides instead of using the app, the familiarity with and preferences for fixed routes, and serving clients who don't have phones. Overall, replacing fixed routes has proven to be complicated and been met with a mixed response. Funding is always a concern when providing new services, however.

VTrans is very close to signing a contract with a new scheduling software vendor.

Partner/Guest Updates:

The Gathering Place (TGP): Maggie shared that TGP has hired two new staff so will be actively enrolling new people and can serve people at a higher acuity. This will likely result in greater demand for E&D transportation services. Beginning last week, masks have been optional at TGP. As mask requirements in the larger community have disappeared, it made less sense to continue to require them.

Windham Aging: David shared that a draft report as well as background on the project is currently available at windhamaging.com. The final report will be released on November 15th. The report will be comprised of data and descriptions of the challenges faced. The next step is identifying and selecting strategies.

Next Meeting: January 20, 2023.

There was discussion on holding additional meetings in February to discuss mid-year budget adjustments and in June to discuss a draft budget for the following fiscal year. The February meeting was tentatively set for Friday, February 17th at 10:00 AM.

Motion to adjourn by Christine, 2nd by Maggie. Motion passes unanimously.