



COUNTY OF HUNTERDON NEW JERSEY

HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ALCOHOLISM & DRUG ABUSE YOUTH SERVICES COMMISSION MENTAL HEALTH BOARD



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REFERENCE:

- Council
- Mental Health
- Youth
- Disabled
- Substance Use Disorder
- Transportation

Approved July 12, 2023

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, May 10, 2023, 1:30 p.m.
Human Services Conference Room
and via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

J. Ricketts K. Hillman
T. Shepherd
M. Westlake
S. Lax

EX-OFFICIO

V. Singletary
B. Miguel

STAFF

E. Neukum
M. O'Reilly
K. Tustison
K. Fullerton

GUESTS

L. End

I. CONVENE: OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT:

“This meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 – 10:4-21. Notice of this meeting has been provided in the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Courier News. A public notice announcing this meeting has also been placed in the lobbies of the Hunterdon County Department of Human Services, the first floor of the Main Street County Complex, 71 Main Street Building #1, Flemington, NJ; the first floor of the Route 12 County Complex, building #3, 314 State Route 12, Flemington, NJ and County Clerk’s Office.”

E. Neukum read the Open Public Meeting Statement and Opened the Transportation Advisory Committee meeting at 1:30 p.m. with a quorum present.

II. MINUTES: T. Shepherd made a motion and K. Hillman seconded to approve the minutes of March 8, 2023. All were in favor, the minutes for the March 8, 2023, meeting were approved.

CORRESPONDENCE: None at this time.

III. REPORTS:

A. Transportation: E. Neukum reported the one bus that had been taken out of service to be made into an accessible vehicle has been completed. LINK van number 300 is a Ford Transit and is now accessible. There is a lift in the back and some seats have taken out. This is a CDL required vehicle.

B. Systems Operations – Easton Coach: L. End reported last month ridership trips were down and they are still experiencing the ongoing shortage of drivers. Vacation season is starting, and Easton Coach acquired some help from their parent company in Easton because Lafayette College’s program is suspended for the summer. With the added staff, there is a hope of increasing ridership and assisting with the summer scheduling. L. End reiterated what E. Neukum mentioned, Van 300 did come back last week and stated it is in use.

The three new buses that were delivered in January are currently being used in service on two of the routes. One bus is assigned to Route 19, the second bus is assigned to Route 17, and the third bus is assigned to various routes.

L. End stated that there is an increasing number of people starting to use the mobile application to check and cancel their trips. Easton Coach staff met with goHunterdon staff to discuss roles and ideas for helping current and future ridership schedule trips and hopes to work with them more often to improve relations with the people in the community. goHunterdon will assist the riders during their first trips on the LINK to become more familiar with how the riding process works.

C. goHunterdon: T. Shepherd reported goHunterdon has hired a part time community mobility coach, Wendy Parcell. W. Parcell has been getting familiar with the transportation services in the county. T. Shepherds advised herself, W. Parcell, E. Neukum and L. End had a meeting with Easton Coach and their dispatch office to talk about the coaching program. The program is being reactivated post covid and is aimed at teaching individuals about the LINK, understand how the system works and how to use it by teaching how to prepare to call the LINK to schedule a reservation and how to read the schedules. L. End referenced going back to accompanying first time riders on their trial ride on the LINK so they can gain confidence in the process. W. Parcell has been spending a fair amount of time out on the buses getting familiar with the routes, observing the trips and the overall riding experience.

T. Shepherd reported having a meeting with E. Neukum and the Special Education Teachers from the four High Schools in the County about the programs they offer. Each High School has an Independent Living Program and curriculum that they provide to their students. The students learn about available transportation, in particular the LINK. There was a discussion with the teachers, and positive feedback was received, on how goHunterdon can best refresh their program to meet the needs of the students and teachers. Many of the students continue schooling until they are 21 and are striving to be active members of society. The program is being revamped for the upcoming fall school year, and there will be an outreach in coordination with E. Neukum and L. End to make sure the program is delivered properly.

T. Shepherd reported goHunterdon is in the process of outreaching to all the new apartment

leasing offices. There is a list being compiled of the contact names and necessary information. goHunterdon is providing each complex with the LINK schedules and the Hunterdon County Transportation and Mobility Guide in the form of a welcome packet for the new tenants and reference information for the staff.

T. Shepherd reported goHunterdon has been asked by NJ Transit to facilitate vehicle surveying for the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) funded routes. There is currently no timeline for this, but she is coordinating with E. Neukum and L. End. The preliminary information is that NJ Transit is requesting that all the surveys be completed in person and NJ Transit will provide goHunterdon with Tablets to use in vehicles to record the information. Discussion ensued.

- D. Fiscal:** K. Tustison reported comparing the numerical data from the first quarter of this year to the fourth quarter of last year. He advised the Demand Response trips were down by 1,200, however the Shuffle trips were up 1,900. The additional 700 trips were based upon statistics from 2022's fourth quarter to this year's first quarter. The numbers compared to last year in the first quarter are up 20 percent.

K. Tustison informed the committee that there are no fares being collected at this time, however there was a \$100 dollar donation received.

K. Tustison reported that regarding the costs per ride, the numbers are similar from last quarter to this quarter. The Shuffle Service has been picking up more trips versus the Demand-Response Trips. The total percentage was 63 percent. The Shuffle deviations are similar at 14 percent this quarter versus 12 percent as of last quarter. Discussion Ensued.

T. Shepherd asked what the timeframe was regarding collecting fares again and is not collecting fares impacting the operations to be going without the revenue? E. Neukum discussed that there has been additional funding over the last couple of years and that funding has been used to cover fares that are not being collected. Once and if we do start collecting fares again, she will be giving plenty of notice for all riders regarding this.

K. Hillman requested it be added for the minutes to look at getting additional funding from recently built housing developments and developments that are projected to be built. To forecast the financial costs in the future, whatever those costs could be, would there be a way that some of the funding be subsidized in some way by a grant or casino revenue and other options that may be available.

- E. NJT Report:** V. Singleton reported that the 2023 Senior Citizen and Disabled Resident Transportation Assistance Program (SCDRTAP) agreement has been fully executed. The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act-American Rescue Plan (CRRSAA-ARPA) applications have been reviewed and will be submitted as well as the inclusion and non-inclusion letters within the next few weeks. The 5311 Agreement was sent out in February, and we are waiting for the agreement to be sent back, executed, and signed.

Announcements: V. Singleton announced NJ Center for Training Transportation Professionals (CTTP) is sponsoring a community transportation association past a trainer course, there is a two-limit participant per agency. Training will take place on June 19, 2023, and June 20, 2023.

V. Singleton introduced B. Miguel into his new position as the Senior Coordination Administrator. B. Miguel's previous role was the former Grant Administrator with Community Transportation. B. Miguel will be assisting in the development of the Title VI plan as well as the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (CHSTP).

B. Miguel discussed the New Jersey Job Access and Reverse Commute (NJ-JARC) survey; the surveys must be conducted every 3 years. The purpose is to capture as much information in terms of ridership and questions regarding the program. NJ Transit will be providing tablets to the participating Transportation Management Associations (TMA) that will be conducting the surveys. There is no start date as of now, the survey program has been pushed back in the past due to covid and complications after that period. The plan to start the survey could be as soon as this upcoming fall when school sessions start. Regarding NJ JARC, the Round 10 application is available on S-Rides. The closing date for that is May 31, 2023. Discussion Ensued.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. TAC Amended By-Laws: E. Neukum reported the TAC Bylaws were accepted. She would like to, for the next Commissioner's meeting, ask that our current membership extend each member's term to match the new bylaws. An example is if the term went up to the two-year limit, the limit would be extended two more years rather than going through the re-certification applications at the two-year mark. The TAC membership term was two years before and then the chair and vice chair would each swap after a year. The committee has not been able to keep up with that, therefore she would like to extend the term for each member. Discussion ensued.

V. NEW BUSINESS:

A. JARC Application Round 10: E. Neukum reported that the first step of the JARC application has been completed and has been sent to the Commissioners for approval. There was a request for additional funding this year. If additional funding is received, the funding would be used to start a Saturday Shuffle Service in areas other than Flemington. Transpo completed an analysis of our current system and the analysis indicated that a Saturday Shuffle Service would be necessary in different parts of the County other than the Flemington area. Two additional Shuffles routes would be added with the additional funding. One Shuffle route would service the Hampton, Clinton and Whitehouse areas and the Second Shuffle route would service the Frenchtown, Lambertville, and Flemington areas. The new routes would expand services for those who work shift work on Saturdays. If not all the additional funding is received that was requested, we would still try to offer the Saturday Shuffle Service, however the number of days it can be offered may go from 4 to 2 Saturdays per month. Lastly, the new Saturday Shuffle Service route numbers would be 24 and 25. A new Saturday Shuffle brochure will be made which will mean Route 21 schedule would be taken off the main schedule and put onto the new Saturday brochure.

E. Neukum advised there is an upcoming redesigning of the printed schedules and brochures. There is a need to update the current schedules. There are certain locations on the runs that are not being used and certain locations that are being used as a deviation. It would be a better use of our time and resources if these issues were fixed on the schedules. Discussion Ensued.

E. Neukum advised that there have been complaints as the weather gets warmer with riders on the buses. There is a need to provide resources for riders in their everyday lives. The LINK would like to help distribute this information to as many riders as possible so they can understand the importance of how we can assist them on and off the LINK. S. Lax advised for the LINK to also provide information about Helpline to riders as a resource they can use.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

S. Lax reported the fourth edition of Choices for Seniors has been published and is available for distribution. S. Lax conveyed their coaching program is specifically for seniors to maintain their independence. T. Shepherd advised there will be individuals designated to deliver this information to all social service agencies, senior facilities, churches and libraries across Hunterdon, Somerset, Mercer, and Warren counties. Discussion Ensued.

M. O'Reilly reported that the Housing Section 8 waiting list will open June 1, 2023, through and including June 15, 2023. Flyers have been sent out to all the groups and agencies and if anyone needs a flyer, to let her know.

VII. *MOTION TO ADJOURN: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:04 pm. A motion was made by T. Shepherd and a second by K. Hillman. All were in favor. The next regular meeting will be held on July 12, 2023, at 1:30 pm. Members are requested to call or email the Department of Human Services if they are unable to attend.