



# 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 13, 2022

### TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

#### Regular Meeting

Wednesday, May 11, 2022, 1:30 p.m.  
Via Conference Call

#### MINUTES

#### MEMBERS PRESENT

M. Westlake  
J. Ricketts  
J. Hager  
M. Bartelli  
M. McDonough

#### EX-OFFICIO

#### STAFF

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

#### GUESTS

K. Hillmann  
L. End  
T. Shepherd  
K. Melchers  
L. Tulley  
B. Miguel  
J. Mattison

#### **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 at 1:30 p.m. with a quorum present.

- II. MINUTES:** J. Hager made a motion and M. McDonough seconded to approve the minutes of March 9, 2022. There were two abstentions. All were in favor. The minutes for the March 9, 2022, meeting passed.

- III. CORRESPONDENCE:** No correspondence at this time.

- IV. PRESENTATION:** No presentation.

- V. Reports:**

- A. **Transportation – Erin Neukum:** E. Neukum stated the county is working with Transpo Group USA and provided them all of the information that they had requested to do the transportation planning analysis. Transpo Group USA, Inc. is going to be looking at the hours of operation, the types of service and the days of the week that are offered. With a lot of the new residential housing under construction, they are looking if those transportation needs are required to be modified or tweaked to accommodate these new locations.
- B. **Systems Operations – Easton Coach:** L. End reported Easton Coach is still in the same situation in seeking new drivers. Unfortunately, there is no real response for a call for drivers. The company had increased its finder fees and sign-up bonuses to try to continue to obtain qualified drivers. As of February 7, 2022, the CDL drivers now have to go through a registered training site to complete the 220+ hours of training which consists of workbook, off-road and on-road before they can even qualify to go in for an actual CDL road test. This has made the process tougher.

One action that had helped keep the system running efficiently was allowing the system to assign the trips to the routes available and not allowing the dispatchers to place passengers on the routes they requested. Before making this change, dispatchers were assigning the passengers to the routes they “normally” take, this change allows the software to make the routes based on time and location rather than passenger preference. The system is now generating a more on-time performance and turning around jobs to different drivers resulting in an increase close to over 400 trips including CEA, Shellborn and Highpoint within the last week or so. Additionally, the LINK is continuing to open up more same day On Demand trips for the public.

There had been a very good response for the Ecolane Mobility App. Signs have been placed on the buses so passengers can immediately download the App on their phones. This app allows the passengers to get idea of their overall schedule including past trips, trips coming up, cancelled trips, the day of notification, etc. It is hopeful that this app will help cutdown on no shows because a notification is sent to the phone alerting that the driver is enroute and/or has arrived. The app also allows passengers to cancel their trips at any time which opens up more availability for Same Day Trips.

K. Hillmann asked if more information via posting notification on the buses could be provided to the passengers outside of the study including disabled riders. E. Neukum stated this information is located on each bus. M. Westlake asked for clarification from K. Hillmann regarding what information is not available/made accessible to view. K. Hillman explained her request further by asking for a posting of the same information in two locations in the vehicle; one set directly behind the driver, where it is now, then posting a second set of notices in the wheelchair securement area of the bus. Discussion ensued. L. End he will ensure all of the buses have the information, as well as posting additional notification in the back of the buses. S. Lax agreed to ensure the postings are visible on the buses. Discussion ensued. Again, L. End will ensure that all passengers, especially passengers riding in the back of the bus see and understand all information as required.

- C. **Fiscal – Keith Tustison:** K. Tustison reported he analyzed the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter trip totals and as far as compared to last quarter, the totals decreased slightly which is typical due to weather conditions. He continued to report that last year accounted for 15,000 trips and this year accounted for over 20,000 trips, which is heading in the right direction. Fares continue to be not collected. K. Hillmann inquired about the gas costs and how it will affect ridership. Is

there a plan in place for notification to riders if fares may increase? Discussion ensued.

- D. NJ Transit Report:** E. Neukum introduced Brian Miguel and Lisa Tulley from New Jersey Transit. L. Williams has moved to another department therefore she will no longer be participating in the TAC meetings. She will definitely be missed. L. Tulley thanked E. Neukum and asked B. Miguel to provide an update first.

B. Miguel introduced himself as the Grants Administrator for Community Transportation that oversees the NJ JARC funding that funds the LINK's Routes 15, 16 and 21. He also oversees the TMAs including goHunterdon and the van pool program. NJ JARC Round 8 is winding down on the funding that is expected to end June 30, 2022. He commended E. Neukum and her team for consistently being on time in sending in pertinent paperwork and also, for sending in applications at the beginning of each round. Round 9 application went out at the beginning of April 2022. Hunterdon County submitted the Application on time. The application process will continue with the reviews by both by the administrators and with the MPOs that are designed to the other agencies and counties that had applied. They are hopeful to get the Round 9 award letter out by the end of May 2022. He will provide status to E. Neukum as appropriate.

L. Tulley conveyed L. Williams will be missed. She continued to report that the Senior Citizen Disabled Residence Transportation Assistance Program grant allocation for 2022 was \$414,649.00; including a close-out of extra monies that was left-over from the prior year was \$594,808.73. The 2022 agreements are being routed throughout NJ Transit for signature and it is hopeful to be available very soon.

The next grant to discuss is Section 5310, the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and People with Disabilities. Hunterdon County has seven vehicles slated to be delivered in 2023; four additional vehicles are on deck after that. The 2020 application closed and the state review occurred in February of 2020. Awards are being determined and once the program of projects is approved, the inclusion letters will be forwarded out.

L. Tulley noted that with inflation and nearly doubled costs, there is a possibility that NJ Transit may not have a 2021 grant year for Section 5310, they will use the awarded money to cover the inflation costs for the already awarded vehicles that have not been produced from previous applications and they will just have a year 2022 application.

The Section 5311 grant, which is the Urbanized Areas or Rural grant, has extended their 2021 grant until December 2022. This is due to receipt of the C.A.R.E.S funding. These agreements to extend the grants are being routed through NJ Transit and once they arrive in the county, signature is required by the Hunterdon County Commissioners in order to receive updated reimbursement forms.

L. Tulley thanked E. Neukum for submitting the National Voter Registration Implementation Plan and Isabelle will be meeting with people from the state. More information will be made available after that meeting.

## **VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- A. LINK Website Update – COVID Update & Easton Coach is Hiring:** E. Neukum conveyed the website had been updated because there was a COVID mask rule update. On the vehicles, masks are optional but are suggested to be worn by the CDC when someone is

in close contact for more than 15 minutes or in closed transit, but it is not mandatory. It was asked if the drivers are required to continue wearing masks, E. Neukum stated the drivers are not required to wear a mask, but some drivers are wearing a mask based on their own preference.

Additionally, on the website's "contact us" page, information has been posted to include job openings for Easton Coach drivers.

**VII. NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. JARC Round 9 (SFY 23):** E. Neukum echoed B. Miguel's report on JARC Round 9 as she submitted the application in the beginning of May 2022.

**B. NVRA Implementation Protocol:** Regarding National Voters Registration, the LINK needs to offer more information to passengers when they call in to schedule a ride, if they would like to register to vote. If any contact information changes, the questions must be re-asked. E. Neukum stated she pulled that information together as requested.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

T. Shepherd announced goHunterdon will be participating in the Progressive Center for Independent Living Open House tomorrow evening. LINK information will be made available and sharing schedules and other materials. She will also have information about the Ecolane Mobility App. Similarly, they will be participating in Greater Raritan Workforce Development job fair on May 24, 2022. LINK information will be there as well and provide any assistance for prospective job seekers may have about using the LINK to get to employment.

J. Mattison with The Arc thanked E. Neukum for inviting him. He spoke to a report of ridership which is averaging six to seven people Monday-Wednesday-Friday and 10-12 people on Tuesdays and Thursdays. He is very grateful for the services.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. A motion was made and seconded. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned. The next regular meeting will be held on July 13, 2022, at 1:30 pm via Webex. Members are requested to call the Department of Human Services if they are unable to attend/be a part of the call.