



**North Country
Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting
At the
Bethlehem Public Library
2245 Main Street, Bethlehem, NH
And via Zoom
Tuesday, March 26th
1:30PM to 3:30PM**

Minutes

1. Call to Meeting and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 1:30PM.

Stan Judge, Shelburne

Paul Robitaille, Gorham

Michele Cormier, Randolph

Emily Benson, Jackson

Mary Mortiz, Beth

Robin Irving, Lanc

Ray Gorman, Colebrook

Harry J, Stratford

Rosalind Page, Lisbon

David Campbell, Jackson

Tala Silver, Region 1 MM

Scott Boisvert, Region 2 Mobility manger

Chuck Henderson, Senator Shaheen

Stephanie Weiner, Congresswoman Kuster's
office

Vanessa Partington, NHDES

Lucy St. John, NHDOT

Ross Wood, NHDOT District 2

2. Approve Meeting Minutes:

a. June 13, 2023 **

b. August 23, 2023 **

c. December 4th, 2023 **

Robin: What is the Beirut land?

Stan: that is the correct spelling.

Emily Motion to approve all meeting minutes on the agenda June, August, December

Paul Seconded

Motion Carried.

3. TYP Solicitation and Projects

Carl Martland arrived at 1:28PM.

Nick Presented the TYP items and provided background on the criteria and projects.

Stan: is there a schedule of when these projects are completed?

Lucy: The process also can have projects change over time. The TYP is a snapshot but the projects can change due to the needs of the community.

Stan: Hazardous weather conditions happen more often along US-2.

Lucy: throughout the process NHDOT has public information meetings on these different projects to take public input. NHDOT keeps a schedule online. NHDOT reaches out to the impacted communities.

Nick will get the link to the meeting schedule out to the group.

4. Draft Public Participation Plan Objectives

Nick presented the PPP draft and noted that the Objectives are important to the work of NCC in regard to Transportation planning.

Emily: Page 3, opportunities for participation. Thinking of the RCCs. How often do they meet?

- Nick: Quarterly but has been every other month.

Robin: Who is the audience for this plan?

- Nick: it is an internal tool to guide our outreach work but also is a good resource if the public is interested in

Michele: We are updating our Hazard Mitigation plan, and it is very difficult to get people to attend.

Carl: The title of the section are transportation objectives, but they do not include the two obvious things that we are doing, the Regional Transportation Plan and the Ten year Plan. When we are trying to tell people what we do, those are the two obvious items. It would be good to add a section on “what we do”.

- Michele: agrees with that as we want to let people know what is going on. Seems like the cart is before the horse. The public is being brought into the process too late.

Stan: Agrees with Michele and wants to highlight the need for projects to satisfy the needs of the community. Have noted that the ability for the town to provide input is AFTER the planning takes place. As I read across the country, it is a complicated issue of safety versus comfort of nearby residents. There must be a compromise between safety of the road and the permanent residents (rumble strips). Think of sound walls being erected to protect residents. With rumble strips, it is mitigating an issue and then creating an issue.

- It is difficult when you have a public meeting and many of the decisions have already been made.

Paul: We have to take into consideration that many people are a bit misinformed about rumble strips. If you can use these meetings to demystify the public, you can get a bit more approval from the public.

Robin: it is great to open up an opportunity to get people information but when does the babysitting stop. How do we capture the people who late-in-the-game chime in but were never involved in the earlier process?

- Carl: Need to have organized opposition.
- Nick: My point of view is to do as much outreach as possible to reach people, and make sure it was widely advertised.
- Paul: it is difficult to break through the different communications bubbles.
- Emily: It is important to document the entire process. X amount of meetings and X amount of attendees.
- Harry: In Stratford, a lot of decisions are made with very limited attendance.

Stephanie:

The objectives we reviewed are great. They need a next level down that includes measurable tactics, including a comms plan.

- Nick will edit a section and add it to the draft.

Stan: I think the best thing is to try and mitigate the situation.

Carl: Sugar Hill had twice as many people at our town meeting due to a warrant article stating Everyone Belongs. A local group got together to organize around the vote. People have organized and are now going to the selectboard. Changes in the zoning also had many people involved. If you get one issue to get people involved, you can get them to provide input on other items.

5. Regional Transportation Plan Updates

Nick provided a brief overview of the RTP update.

Robin: One document I have always referred to is the US-3 Corridor Study, will that be defunct?

- Nick: yes, and now, this is a more general overview of the corridors. There is also a statewide effort on corridors that will be more involved and have updated information and data.

6. Transportation Challenges

Nick presented the UM Rural Health Polic Brief and Social Determinants of Health.

Tala: We are dealing with a lack of statistics for the GAPS in rides and trips. If we just depend on our RCC to just have transportation providers, we will have the same 4 people in the RCC meetings every time.

Paul: I see regular posts and calls for rides to different appointments and trips.

Tala: I am currently thinking of how to collect that. The recent meeting dealt with how to get more people involved. NHDOT is funding a mobility management network in July and we will possibly have more guidance on collecting information.

I have been trying to feed every bit of information to the SMM regarding missed trips and rides.

Scott: Service providers have been doing a lot of work updating the collection of those numbers. In Carroll County the big issue is not having a lot of providers, and those providers struggle with drivers and retaining drivers. Starting up a community-by-community drive to meet with residents to hear these stories. Want to get them in the room to tell their stories, whether it be rides they have missed, appointments they have missed. We can then try to address them individually. The lack of awareness to folks is tremendous.

Emily: Are you referring to the town halls? When you have one of these meetings, make sure that people with mobility issues have rides to the meeting.

- Scott: The target audience is people who cannot get their own their own.

Emily: All the small things crop up (lunch time business, appointment scheduling, rush hour, etc.)

Scott: One of the challenges I am faced with is people reach out saying they have an appointment the same day. What we really need to do is to get more of a notice to schedule the rides. But I don't know what that looks like. White Mountain community health has reached out with need to have people make appointments. Have talked about setting up a specific schedule for rides and appointments.

Paul: is there a way to contact medical providers and see if there is a way to access them to get some of their data on missed appointments?

- Tala: I do have some of this. That was where I started.

Paul: One of the things we need to talk about is that other people (individuals) provide rides. Is there a way to document others like me that unofficially provide rides?

- Emily: In our neighborhood we have a small network organizing trips. It is a trust thing.
- Scott: When we have these meetings and we go community by community, we promote neighbor helping neighbor. When people are at these meetings they are on board with helping their neighbors. Many want to sign up and want to provide rides. What we really need is the follow up after the fact.

Nick provided information on NADO.

- Please contact him with any research, project, data needs that they can assist with.

Tala: TCCAP has a volunteer driver program that is lacking right now. They are willing to take on the administrative side of things for local volunteer drivers town-by-town. This would fill the gap of tracking rides and things like that. It is a missed opportunity in many communities tracking and fulfilling trips. Kind of an untapped resource.

Emily: Was trying to get people to sign up with RSVP. Due to the liability, coverage, etc.

Tala: Many times people are comfortable only giving rides to people they are familiar with, and that is okay.

7. Discussion:

a. Funding Opportunities

Nick provided information on the USDOT funding opportunities. There is also NHDES work ongoing for corridor charging for specific 4-charger locations.

Lucy: Mike Moser just gave a presentation on this. There was a previous joint application between DES/DOT. He was asking for information from communities on locations in the region.

Michele: We were notified that the December 15th storm was declared a federal disaster. Means we could apply for some mitigation funds from FEMA.

Emily: National Culvert Removal and Restoration. Might reach out to you on that but weren't affected by recent flooding. They need to be addressed.

b. NCC Field Work & Projects

Nick provided information on the field work NCC conducts and to let him know if any communities want local traffic count locations, RSMS, CCDS, Stream Crossings assessed and worked on.

Ray: We have a road in town that is ruined by recent roadways that had improvement work already. Will need to talk to you about the engineering. The road in question is a logging road with significant traffic.

Emily: can those counters collect speed data?

- Nick: Yes, they do.

c. Scenic Byways

Carl: Have a draft update to the CMPs that would combine all the plans into one major plan. I would love all the maps to be provided. It would be great if NH did what VT and ME does to highlight the byways on the state maps. (federal and state).

- I am now the Chief Steward of the byways, travelling the byways and assessing their qualities and services.
- A big portion of this is to ensure that the routes are still scenic.
- 3 Byway Enhancement Awards
 - By the Byway
 - Read the Marker Award
 - New Attractions Award
- Relocate some historical markers would be great for access and safety.

Projects all through the North Country all impact the byways.

Lucy: the Council was abolished by the Legislature a few years ago. The Bureau of Historic Resources took minor control. When we have the opportunity to provide more of an update.

d. Updates from Communities

Shelburne (Stan): Energy Committee is extremely active. We have a lot to keep busy, a lot of activities. Had a very successful town meeting with a large turnout.

Gorham (Paul): Town of Gorham just bordered 1,000 acres of land that will be added to the town forest. Also purchased 8 acres bordering route 16 that will be used for Flood control. Have been talking about

this for 20+ years. There are 5 streams and 3 springs all in that area. Rivers are moving to their natural courses and this will help manage. Lost two homes in the area and a number of bridges nearby. We started researching some of the maps in the early 1900s. It appears that the river is shifting back to its natural course. This will impact a lot of houses, businesses, roads, bridges. We are looking at ways to try and mitigate the situation.

Randolph (Michele): The town meeting was uneventful until the end. Had a warrant article to declare Randolph an inclusive community. Had minor uproar. We have joined the Community power Co-op. We are looking at FEMA funds for the December storm. One of the Selectmen is leading the effort. Previous grant on mitigation funds on Durand Road (BRIC grant). Will proceed with December storm repairs, whether or not they will be reimbursed.

Jackson (Emily): December 18th floods, we filed with FEMA and got all damages in. A lot of work had to be done on this but it was completed. Very interesting in overlapping groups involved in the process. Update of Hazard Mitigation plan ongoing. Working hard to let folks know. Making sure to have all action items noted in the plan.

David:

- Still working on CIP. Moved forward with Fire Dept study to relocate the station to an improved location. Hoping to install electric chargers.
- Valley Cros Bridge reconstruction is starting this May, should be done by end of Fall. Traffic in certain areas will increase due to the work.
- Town meeting had a great turnout. Interesting conversations and issues. Had identified 7 culverts that need to be repaired. Have also started effort to begin a process of regular review and update of culverts.
- Started a housing committee to see what Jackson can do with valley housing group. Added some funding to support doing some studies.

Bethlehem (Mary): Fared better than most towns in the December storm. Have two FEMA grants in the works for hazard mitigation. BRIC grant and culvert project.

- Town meeting had many things passed. Community power was adopted.
- In the process of looking for new location for our public safety facility.
- Big transportation goal is pedestrian sidewalk from town center up to Library and Elementary School. Engineering study done last summer with ARPA funds and the traffic calming study with NCC. Hopefully getting organized to do SS4A Planning & Demonstration Grant. Hoping to get that grant together. Would be a great as an economic driver for businesses and people downtown.

Lucy: Abridged version: Depending on sources of funding (CMAQ, TA, etc.) projects can develop and be worked on. There is sometimes the opportunity for a project to move forward quicker than the 10-year horizon. The process allows for some flexibility.

- If you have a long-term project, good to work with NCC and through the process.

Mary: Newer to transportation and roads; The resurfacing and town roads. Does anyone have an estimate to outsource road construction or handling it in-house?

- Lucy: Comes back to capital improvement process. Depends on road equipment and supports. I can work with NH Roadway contacts to get an answer and get the information back to Nick.

- Robin: Some engineers have a price per linear foot. IF you contact them, sometimes you are able to get an estimate that way.
- Paul: Depends on the size of the project. We always plan to do roadway work with water/sewer replacement.
- Lucy: Key is that a lot of factors come into play. Coordination is integral to what you hope to accomplish.

Lancaster (Robin):

- Number of different warrant articles at town meeting: 6 zoning amendments. 5 passed. As far as housing is concerned, the tenements downtown have been getting permitted for affordable housing units. It is impacting public parking. Would like to do a parking planning process for town center.
- Town approved purchasing an electric loader. Will have charging system at the Transfer Station. Jiffy Mart in town has received a charging grant.
- Warrant Article for Energy Committee.
- Lancaster is transitioning with town Management.
 - RSMS and
 - Culvert Assessments
- Lancaster received CDS and NBRC funds.
 - Rework an intersection (Summer St) to eliminate a traffic island and widen roadway with lanes. (Water sewer, culverts, sidewalks, redesign)
 - Will need to collaborate with District 1 AND on-call services.
 - Sadly, did not put this to town meeting due to lack of Federal budget approval.

Colebrook (Ray):

- Large water/sewer project last year. Town planned to do streetscape and sidewalks after the utilities were done. Have gone backwards, not sure if utilities will be done this summer due to delays.
- Project seems to be on the 20-year plan.
- Difficult to tell residents that things keep getting pushed back and delayed.
- 80/20 match has majorly changed over the years. Need to be concerned about the costs.
- Difficult situation for a small community.
- Good rumblings about the Balsams' development recently.

Stratford (Harry):

- State approval for river walk. Waiting on federal portion.
- Sidewalk preparations continue.
- Town meeting: town was very favorable for community power project.

Sugar Hill (Carl):

- Town meeting approved community power
- Lot of development – 20 building permits in the last year.
- Passed 6 out of 7 zoning articles. Including cluster zoning
- Role info plays with highways: have been doing a local surface management program.
 - Have been doing an RSMS for the past 10-years and include findings in the report.
 - Able to report the # of segments in very poor condition.
 - Consistent data collection.
 - Protects the road agent from citizens complaints.

- Communication is important. A little bit of data allows Selectboard to make changes to policy/budget.

Michele: Have tried to direct people to talk to the selectboard and not the road agent, as it is the towns responsibility to direct the road agent.

Chuck: Want to congratulate the communities on their warrants and especially housing-related.

- Thank Ray Gorman for being a champion for Colebrook. Things have ground to a halt but news from balsams should pick people's spirits up.
- Let me know if there are any glitches with federal funds.
- Good CDS projects in Lancaster and Whitefield going on right now.
- This is a very slow process but creates a good line of funding to get things done.

Vanessa:

- Posting out on NHMA website about a month ago.
- Hope to have a DERA RFP out in April. Will send and email out for that when it is ready.

Stephanie: To follow up on what Chuck was saying. We are here to help when times are challenging. Please reach out to me or Chuck and we can let you know of anything coming down the line, Able to provide letters of support for different applications, or a shoulder to cry on.

8. Other Business

Tala: With the eclipse, TCCAP program director asked if there were any communities that would be interested in using the TCCAP Connect trailer (used for remote services, generator, heat, kitchen, internet, etc.).

- Contacted Ray at Colebrook
- Ray got in touch with Northern Borders Emergency Response, Troop F state police and other groups.
- Would come drop it off, set it up, and then pick it up when you are done.

9. Adjourn

The Meeting was adjourned at 3:37PM

Next Meeting: May (tentative)

****Indicates vote of the TAC is required**

An in-person quorum (7) is needed in order to conduct any votes, so please plan to attend if you are willing and able. If this is not possible, please use the information on the following page to attend virtually. While attending in-person, please wear a face covering for the duration of the meeting and keep a safe distance between yourself and others. Thank you.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82976645268>

Meeting ID: 829 7664 5268

