

**Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission
Transportation Advisory Committee**

MEETING Minutes

October 10, 2023

4:00-5:30 PM

Hybrid Meeting via ZOOM

Kilton Public Library

80 Main St, West Lebanon, NH 03784

Members Present: George Sykes (Lebanon, Chair); Dick Jones (Lyme, Vice Chair); Liz Emerson (Charlestown); Rob Taylor (Enfield); Christina Hall (Hanover); Bill Chaisson (Wilmot); Adams Carroll (Advance Transit); John Haffner (Vital Communities); Ellen Hender (Vital Communities, Remote)

Partners Present: Jessica Wilcox (NHDES, Remote); Shannon Aiton (NHDOT, Remote)

UVLSRPC Staff Present: Meghan Butts; Majestic Terhune

I. Call to Order

Chair Sykes called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. Attendees introduced themselves.

II. Action on Minutes from June 13, 2023

Chaisson noted that 1) previous comments on school bus signs for NH Route 4A were more parochial (Wilmot), 2) Wilmot was considering signage for class VI roads (not himself), and 3) sentence about Sykes reaching out to class VI roads was unclear. Sykes clarified that he had reached out to others on class VI questions after June meeting.

Taylor motioned to approve the minutes with amendments correcting the above errors and ambiguities. Jones seconded. All voted in favor 8-0-0.

III. Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment Opportunity Presentation by NHDES

Jessica Wilcox from NHDES provided a presentation on NHDES' application for and request for public involvement on a new electric vehicle charging grant program.

Wilcox provided background on funding sources for the program, NHDES' application, and plan to administer a statewide subgrant program. The funding will go toward community EV charging (in main streets, tourist attractions, and other gaps that remain after DOT funds corridors).

NHDES wants to engage stakeholders for public comment opportunity and noted that priorities include community centers, commerce centers, rural areas, tourist attractions, and underserved communities. The rescheduled listening sessions for public comment will be hosted on October 26. Terhune to send presentation and listening session information.

Hall asked about previous sessions and whether listening sessions will provide information on subgrant applications and funding. Wilcox confirmed earlier postponement of the listening sessions and stated that specifics for funding have not been determined.

IV. FY 2025-2034 Ten-Year Plan Updates

Butts initiated a discussion on the TYP/GACIT hearings within the UVLS region (Lebanon (Sept. 12) and Claremont (Oct. 2)) and expressed appreciation for TAC members who attended. Butts said that UVLSRPC would be compiling comments from the hearings and sending them to NHDOT and asked whether TAC would additionally like to make comments.

Sykes, Heffner, Chaisson, and Butts commented on funding concerns. Sykes, Heffner, and Butts stated attendees at both Lebanon and Claremont hearings mentioned need for increased funding and encouraged others to emphasize funding need as well, particularly for rural areas. Chaisson noted that most funding seems to focus on vehicles, and Sykes added that bridges are also a focus for funding in the draft TYP.

Members commented on other topics mentioned at the public hearings. Sykes acknowledged Carroll's participation and comments on Advance Transit's expanded hours. Carroll said that attendees brought up intercity connections, such as Lebanon to Concord, and then clarified comments on Claremont routes of interest with Butts. Heffner added that SCS participated in the Claremont hearing and acknowledged the Lebanon to Claremont corridor.

Sykes suggested that members speak with state representatives and encourage them to create a bill to spend money on projects of interest as a means to begin a conversation to educate other legislators. He encouraged members to not undersell the importance of educating local state representatives.

V. Long Range Transportation Plan Updates

Terhune provided updates on the Long Range Transportation Plan, including its finalization and public outreach efforts. She encouraged those interested in helping with public outreach to connect with her.

Jones asked how we can bring the Plan from completion to public awareness and implementation. Butts stated that repetition helps spread knowledge of the Plan and its process.

VI. [Stormwater Presentation](#)

Terhune provided a brief presentation on the importance of accounting for stormwater management in plans. Terhune to send out the presentation and include on the TAC site.

Jones, Sykes, and Chaisson commented on FEMA floodplains. Chaisson clarified the data-driven process for determining floodplains and noted that updates (or a lack thereof) to data impact floodplain map accuracy.

Sykes encouraged communities to report flood damage. He provided the example of Grafton County, which experienced damage during the July 2023 funding, not qualifying for funding (although the decision is being appealed). Taylor agreed and further highlighted the importance of reporting flood damage.

VII. Amend Bylaws

Butts gave an overview of the bylaw update. Sykes and Jones asked about the process of defining, appointing, and reviewing active bylaws. Butts went through the bylaw processes for membership and confirmed that members are evaluated on activity every year.

Sykes, Hall, and Jones expressed concern over achieving and maintaining a quorum of 1/2 active members present. Sykes suggested 1/3 attendance plus one as the requirement for a quorum.

Carroll suggested that the language for the bylaw amendment be kept concise.

Taylor motioned to amend the TAC bylaws to state that “One-third of voting members plus one shall constitute a quorum of the TAC for voting at meetings.” Emerson seconded. The motion passed 7-0-1. Jones abstained; all other members present and voted in favor.

VIII. Updates from Members

- a) Emerson stated that Charlestown is beginning to look at FEMA reimbursements from recent damages.
- b) Taylor expressed hope for the flood damage funding appeal. He acknowledged that Lebanon and Enfield worked well together during the flooding and shared resources, piquing his interest in working more interregionally. He added that Enfield conducted a wage and salary study and noted a prolonged difficulty in procuring CDL drivers and the resulting difficulty of staffing DPW. Taylor mentioned CDL requirement barriers, including substance testing, and private contractors increasingly offering competitive benefits.

Sykes stated that NHDOT has been engaged with a subcommittee of professional staff to try to work with the federal government to change CDL requirements, particularly age requirements. He affirmed that the issue is recognized at a state level.

- c) Carroll addressed changes to substance testing and other barriers to earning a CDL permit, including training costs and course times. Carroll stated that Advance Transit also has a final draft of its transit development plan, which will be shared with its transit committee and potentially taken to the Advance Transit board for adoption.

- d) Heffner said that as part of Walktober, Vital Communities is promoting active transportation. Vital Communities' next TMA meeting will be in Hanover and include a walking tour that highlights pedestrian infrastructure.
- e) Hall shared that Hanover is also undergoing a wage rate study and has recently lost a lot of personnel. She described a few ongoing projects, including trail updates and downtown visioning.
- f) Chaisson discussed the repavement of NH Route 4A in Wilmot, noting that the road has been widened and safety concerns haven't been addressed.
- g) Jones stated that the work on Lyme-Thetford Bridge has continued to seriously impact businesses.
- h) Sykes provided an update on funding for the Rail Trail/Mascoma Greenway and sidewalk improvements for Mechanic Street. He touched on the City's purchase of the High Meadows Builders building ahead of roundabout implementation and plans to open an emergency shelter at the building for the 2023 winter.
- i) Butts described UVLSRPC's current safety studies, including at Wyeth Road and Dunster Drive in Hanover. Adams noted that Advance Transit regularly receives requests for a bus stop with shelter and seating at that location. Butts added that UVLSRPC has recently researched conditions at the Lovers Lane intersection in Charlestown.
- j) Butts also announced UVLSRPC and Vital Communities' funding for the USDOE Community Driven Clean Transportation project, which will include Upper Valley-wide, in-depth community outreach that helps inform a plan to identify rural, clean transportation priorities in our area. Heffner encouraged attendees to participate and encourage participation amongst their Towns and areas. Chaisson asked about forms the outreach would take. Heffner stated that the intent is to do a transportation equity audit to determine transportation barriers and find solutions to those barriers that connect to a clean energy transition. These efforts are flexible and could take the form of a community meeting or demo day, for example. Chaisson expressed interest in having Wilmot participate.
- k) Wilcox stated that the Granite State Clean Fleets program is still accepting applications and that NHDES is willing to assist communities assisted in the Electric Vehicle Charger Reliability and Accessibility Program.

IX. Other Business

- a. Hanover Bike Walk Bike Plan & Vision Zero approved by Hanover Selectboard
 - i. Hall had no further updates.
- b. New London Bike Walk Coalition worked with New London town leaders, Department of Public Works, and UVLSRPC to procure and install bike racks.
 - i. Terhune had no further updates.
- c. [**NHDES Fleet Electrification Program**](#)

- i. Wilcox had no further updates beyond that addressed in VIII.
- d. **Electric Vehicle Charger Reliability and Accessibility Program**
 - i. Wilcox had no further updates beyond that addressed in VIII.
- e. **NHDOT NEVI Funding and RFP Resources**
 - i. No further comments beyond that addressed in III.
- f. Stormwater Events
 - i. Terhune reminded attendees of aforementioned stormwater events; to send information.
- g. Sykes announced that he will be reexamining his various commitments for personal reasons.

X. Adjourn

Jones motioned to adjourn. Taylor seconded. All voted in favor 8-0-0. The meeting adjourned at 5:22 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Majestic Terhune.