

REGIONAL TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES—MAY 5, 2025
RICHIBUCTO @ 4:00 PM

1) CALL TO ORDER

In the absence of the Chair, Isabelle Godin welcomed the committee at 4:06 p.m.

2) ATTENDANCE

Normand Maillet, Christel Robichaud (Zoom), Jean-Charles Daigle, Ray Portugaliza, Roméo Bourque (Zoom)

Other attendees: Julie Bernard, Isabelle Godin, Marc Thibert, Danik Savoie

Absent: Shivran Siddhu, Claudette Dupuis

3) DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

4) ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

2025-04TR

It was moved by Normand Maillet, seconded by Jean-Charles Daigle, that the agenda be adopted as amended—addition of the item “Committee Member – Client” and “Client Payment” under new business.

Motion carried

5) MEETING CHAIR

2025-05TR

In the absence of the Chair, it was moved by Normand Maillet, seconded by Roméo Bourque, that Jean-Charles Daigle act as Chair for this meeting.

Motion carried

6) ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 3, 2025

2025-06TR

Normand Maillet moved, seconded by Roméo Bourque, that the minutes be adopted as presented.

Motion carried

7) DEPARTMENT UPDATE

a) STATISTICS

Isabelle presented the statistics for January to March 2025. We currently have 32 volunteer drivers in the SIGTIC system. The same number as our last meeting. We have gained new volunteers, but have also lost some since January. An information session will be offered in Rogersville (Nouvelle-Arcadie) on Tuesday, May 6th and another in Bouctouche on Wednesday, May 14th. We hope to attract not only new clients, but especially new volunteers through these meetings. Jean-Charles suggests that the transportation service attends the Senior's Games, which will be held in Pointe-Sapin on May 31st, to promote the service and find volunteers. Christel also recommends taking advantage of the National Accessibility Awareness Week to find promotional opportunities. Finally, Roméo invites the department to present the service and its volunteer needs during a monthly council meeting, as these are shared on social media and gain lots of visibility.

We also have 554 customers registered in the SIGTIC system. An increase of 87 customers since the last meeting. During the 3-month period, 1,032 trips were made, with a total of 4,217 stops, 112,243.16 km covered and 133 trips cancelled. We're well on the way to beating last year's record, as demand continues to grow. Work-related demand is down, as our agreement with Global Windows expired on February 1st. Medical appointments remain the main reason for travel requests.

Roméo asks what explains the increase in demand. Isabelle explains the agreement with Vitalité Health Network (Vitalité) has encouraged the enrollment of new customers, but also the cost of living in general and the promotion of the service, which has increased compared with 2023. Jean-Charles asks what will happen on a day when we don't have enough volunteers to meet demand. Isabelle replies that some trips will have to be rescheduled (e.g., grocery shopping) and we'll prioritize appointments that can't be changed. It hasn't happened to us yet, but we know it's a possibility and we're working to avoid it.

Romeo asks if it would be possible to elaborate more in the statistics instead of using the term "Other". We're talking about a high percentage of trips that fall into this category and it could create confusion. Isabelle and Julie will work on developing different categories to make data easier to read.

B) AGREEMENTS

Isabelle announced the difficult news that the agreement with the Vitalité had ended much more quickly than we had hoped. The available funds of \$21,900 were used up in just under four (4) months. Our contacts at Vitalité believe in the project and would like to continue supporting us, but the ministry simply doesn't have the means. This is also why discussions with Horizon Health Network have been halted. As a result, our customers once again have to cover their own travel costs for medical appointments. Our volunteer drivers have been advised. Most customers are understanding, but others are a little less so. A lot of word-of-mouth was done between November and February, so new customers had signed up for this reason alone.

Roméo asks if we have any statistics on the number of clients and the type of treatment requiring travel to Moncton (George-Dumont) that the KSRC could use to justify adding services at the Stella-Maris-de-Kent Hospital. Isabelle replies that the department shares its statistics, and Paul has used them in the past to advocate for care needs in our region.

8. DISPATCH SERVICE

With so much demand, it's hard for Julie to keep up. A student started work today at the Bouctouche office, and will be able to help her once her training period is over.

On the platform front, things are moving slowly. Blaise Transit Inc. will soon be inserting payment schedule into the platform. Until then, tests are not really conclusive, as we can't know whether the system calculates things correctly. Volunteers will need to be trained once the platform is ready because, unless otherwise specified, it will no longer send emails once a trip has been booked. We await further details on this subject.

9. WHEELCHAIR-ACCESSIBLE VAN

Marc Thibert gave an update on the accessible transportation service, mentioning that it's going well, helping schools by transporting young people in wheelchairs to social activities when the van isn't booked for medical appointments.

He had a question from a customer about the lack of a disabled parking sticker. Romeo confirms that these cards are associated with an individual and not a vehicle, but that the customer can take it with them on the trip if there are any concerns. Marc also brought the question for roadside assistance. He doubted he would have any problems, but wanted to know who he should contact if he had any problems on the road. Isabelle explained that the KSRC was in conversation with local companies to find out which one could offer this service, and that she would find out how these exchanges went.

10. STUDY ON REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION

Isabelle introduced Danik Savoie to the committee, the student who would be developing our regional transportation study. Danik introduces himself, briefly explains how he will conduct the study, whom he will consult and accepts the committee's recommendations. Roméo and Christel present him with options so as not to miss out on key groups such as Ability NB and Inclusion NB, among others.

11. NEW BUSINESS

a) Committee member - customer

Isabelle informed the committee that the department had heard from several sources that committee member Shivran Siddhu had passed away over the winter. As a result, we will need to find another client to join the committee. This person will be elected by the KRSC Board of Directors this spring.

b) Customer payment

Jean-Charles wondered if there was a mechanism to increase the rate charged to customers if fuel costs suddenly increased, which could cause challenges for municipalities who would have to pay more. Isabelle explains that the reimbursement to drivers will not change regardless of the cost of gas, as this is the limit allowed by the CRA. However, if this amount continues to rise and the KSRB Board judges that the gap to be covered becomes too great, it has the power to modify the rate to be charged to customers at any time. This is not advisable at this time to keep the service accessible, but Danik mentions that it will be part of his evaluations of the program in comparison with other regions.

12. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting was scheduled for July 7, 2025 at 4 p.m., but as Isabelle will not be in the country, a new date will have to be found. More details to follow.

13. ADJOURNMENT**2025-07TR**

It was proposed by Normand Maillet that the meeting be adjourned at 5:10 p.m.