



# Town of Sudbury

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<https://sudbury.ma.us/transportation/>

## Sudbury Transportation Committee

### Minutes

Friday, December 18, 2020

10:30 AM

Via Town Zoom Conference Call

Core Members Present: Daniel Carty, Sandy Lasky, Debra Galloway, Adam Duchesneau, Alice Sapienza, Doug Frey

Core Members Absent: Dan Nason

Advisory Group Absent: Charlie Dunn, Scott Nix, Beth Suedmeyer, Carmine Gentile, Bethany Hadvab, Ellen Joachim, Lisa Kouchakdjian

Guests: Linda Faust, Kay Bell (silent observer), Karen Dumaine/Michelle Brooks from Transaction Associates/CTC

### Confirmation of Quorum

The statutory requirements as to notice having been complied with, Dan Carty as chair convened the meeting at 10:33 am. Dan made an announcement that this was a public meeting and the meeting was being recorded via Zoom and by Sudbury TV for future viewing.

### Selection of Clerk

Alice volunteered to take meeting minutes.

### Agenda

Dan C proposed the following agenda: (1) administrative and related announcements, including follow-up items from prior meeting; (2) review of taxi program to date, including possible centralized dispatch/booking by Transaction Associates; and (3) discussion of likely Uber processes.

#### (1) Administrative and Related Announcements

- Taxi rider satisfaction survey: Survey created by Sandy and reviewed by Debra and Sr Ctr staff; sent/mailed to all registered riders (a paper survey completed by Linda as beta test was returned to Debra for inclusion in the data); Dan uploaded the survey to the GO! Sudbury site and will summarize the data thus far using the Google tools and distribute to the committee.
- Rider policies: The document created by Debra and reviewed by the committee is final and will be uploaded as part of the registration process; it was also distributed to currently registered riders; based on complete dissemination, any necessary follow-up with a few riders (re: use or other issues) will be undertaken by Sr Ctr staff.
- Uber credit card: Adam stated that the Town credit card is ready for use in the Uber program and will be setting up the account.

- Board of Health and Uber: Dan spoke with Bill Murphy about proposed use of Uber for transportation (Debra had also spoken briefly with Bill). Bill stated he saw no red flags about Uber from a health perspective, assuming drivers and riders comply with CDC and other recommendations. Dan assured Bill that he or other members of the Transportation Committee would be happy to meet with Bill and/or the Board at any time about the transportation programs (taxi, Uber).
- Select Board priority goals: At the most recent board meeting, Dan advocated for the transportation efforts thus far, and board members agreed to put “transportation” in the top priority goals for the year (others included financial policies and capital planning, Lincoln-Sudbury school agreement, the second fire station on Rt 20, Sewataro use, and the rail trail).

## **(2) Review of Taxi Program and Dispatch Options**

Adam stated that Beth Perry sees a steady flow of rider utilization (earlier there was some discussion as to whether volume would drop off) and, as a result, her “paid for” hours from the original MAPC grant have been consumed before the grant end in February. Thus, Adam has explored the option of centralized dispatch by TransAction Associates (TA), which provides centralized dispatch via Cross-Town Connect (CTC) for the CoA vans in Acton, Littleton, and Maynard and for the shuttles (to commuter rail) for Acton and Maynard.

In addition to Sudbury’s annual contribution as municipal member to CTC (\$5,500), provision of centralized dispatch for similar hours and usage of the taxi program would cost an additional \$4,950. The TA dispatch hours are 8:30 AM to 4 PM weekdays, and they are exploring a collaboration with Uber and Lyft and the companies’ concierge services. If the latter occurs, TA’s weekday-hour service would include concierge service at no extra fee. For after hours and weekend service, however, the companies would levy a separate charge. It should be noted that the Select Board approved payment of \$5,500 for continued membership of Sudbury in CTC.

There was much discussion about centralized/concierge dispatch. Alice pointed out that, if Sudbury is awarded another MAPC taxi grant, we would have **\$3,607** allocated for administrative/dispatch purposes, leaving about \$1,300 to be covered by other sources of funds. Adam said there is a small fund allocated to the Planning Department each year, and perhaps that delta could be paid from it. If we do not receive the MAPC taxi grant, then nearly \$5,000 for centralized dispatch would have to come out of, likely remaining Meadow Walk mitigation funds. Also, such funds would have to cover any continuation of subsidized taxi transportation.

Linda asked for clarification about the timing of the potential new dispatch. Dan stated that the new dispatch (if implemented) would be similar to the current process with Beth Perry, and Adam said that the current taxi dispatch will remain in place until the end of February.

In terms of a motion to pay for centralized dispatch, the committee decided that the uncertainty of continued MAPC support was high enough that we should postpone any decision until January 8 (the next meeting). Michelle assured the committee that TransAction Associates were ready to work with the town and would only need 30 days to go from a contract to providing dispatch services. By the next meeting, the committee would try to identify other sources of funds if a new grant is not awarded.

After this discussion, Debra brought up a series of complaints made by one rider about one of the taxi companies. The complaints involved two instances of long waits for pickup (70 and 40 minutes, respectively) and a third instance of a wait > 30 minutes followed by cancellation by the rider. In that case, the dispatch apparently replied that the individual *did not pay for the ride and could wait*.

Committee members agreed that the response was unacceptable and that the company should be involved in following up the complaint. Debra asked about a policy for such an issue, and the committee agreed that all complaints should be noted by the committee, and that serious issues (such as the former) are brought by a committee member for formal response. Dan C agreed to be the person who will contact the company manager and discuss the complaint and agreed restitution as needed. He will follow up on the prior problem.

### **(3) Likely Uber Processes**

Alice and Dan met via Zoom on 12.16.20, to discuss probable registration and other processes for Uber services under the Community Compact grant. Alice prepared a summary of required target populations and destinations, and Dan prepared a flow chart showing where decisions had to be made and associated questions that needed to be addressed (both documents were sent to the committee).

Although time was running out, the group briefly discussed the following (this will be the focus of the next meeting):

- Contact person for questions/approval of Veteran status is Chief Scott Nix.
- Outreach assistants can be paid from the Making the Connections grant, to help people with problems arising after registration/approval and any required training (e.g., the Brookline CoA Trips training, Uber training materials, etc.).
- Ana Cristina could likely continue with oversight of online registration, with help from the listed Contact/Advocates as needed. For example, Adam is listed as someone who could help an individual complete the online registration process, etc.
- Beth Perry could be responsible for completion of the Excel file of riders and information (currently collected for the taxi program) and for sending that file electronically to Uber on a regular basis so that riders are then registered with the TNC.
- Potential Uber concierge services can be assessed if needed (for Making the Connections, separate from the taxi program).
- Still to be clarified is how to provide Uber services to an individual with neither credit nor debit card.

Dan reminded the Committee that the town would be essentially at arms' length from Uber services, given that a registered rider will use her/his own smartphone and app for the duration of this program.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the December 4th meeting were reviewed. Dan moved to approve with recommended edits (highlighted in yellow), Alice seconded the motion, and a roll call showed unanimous approval.

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting was set for January 8 at 10:30 AM via the town Zoom service, with a likely following meeting on January 22 at the same time via Zoom.

**Motion to Adjourn**

Alice moved to adjourn at 11:55 AM, Debra seconded; the motion was passed 5-0.