



Town of Sudbury

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

Sudbury Transportation Committee

Minutes

Friday, April 16, 2021

10:30 AM

Via Town Zoom Conference Call

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

Core Members Absent: Debra Galloway, Dan Nason

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

Guests: Linda Faust, Amy Loveless, Ana Christina Oliveira

Confirmation of Quorum

The statutory requirements as to notice having been complied with, Dan Carty as chair convened the meeting at 10:32 am. Dan C 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.

Go Sudbury! Taxi Program – New Grant

The first order of business was an update on the second MAPC grant for taxi service. Adam noted that the check had arrived (\$50,000, representing half the total) from the state, and he would send the appropriate amounts to the three collaborating towns: Concord, Maynard, and Stow.

With a hoped-for start date of 3 May, Adam was confident that TransAction Associates would be ready for dispatch. The remaining issues to be addressed were (1) determining priorities for taxi service and (2) communicating the transportation options available. With regard to the first issue, Alice emphasized that the grant award would cover about 18 sedan rides and 4 WAV rides per month, fewer than had been provided under the first grant (the town supplemented MAPC funds).

Linda asked why the award was lower, and Alice responded that there were many proposals but limited funds; thus, the state decided to provide less money for a number of grantees, in order to fund more towns that had never received money for taxi services.

After members discussed options for allocating the lower funds (e.g., limiting to medical rides), the committee decided that clearly communicating both the increased transportation options now

available and the limited money for taxis was key. Ana Cristina stated that there was a small group of riders for whom taxis would be beneficial and that keeping all targeted destinations available for a smaller group would be a good option. In terms of working with TransAction on dispatch, Ana Cristina could send information on the currently registered individuals to them, and update with new qualified riders on a regular basis. TransAction will be checking in with Sudbury weekly, at the start of the initiative, so we will keep tabs on “burn rate” and other progress.

All agreed that we would try to keep the grant funding as stable as possible, to avoid stopping and starting the program and confusing riders. Also important was clear communication about the second MAPC grant, and Ana Cristina volunteered to draft a message and circulate it with the committee. The message would emphasize the now-increased number of options available and clarify the constraints on the next taxi program. Sandy had reminded the group that Council on Aging vans are now running, with some limited availability, and there are free services for transportation to vaccination sites (e.g., BayPath).

Uber Program

Because of the limits of MAPC money for taxis, Alice emphasized the importance of rolling out Uber services, especially to currently registered individuals who could use them. Dan asked what we needed to accomplish, in order to roll out Uber more broadly, and did we need education on smartphones or Uber? The response was that education options on both were necessary. Dan had sent a number of YouTube videos and commented that all were somewhat complicated for new users of smartphones. For example, some videos presumed certain models of smartphones and were aimed at people wanting to utilize more options with their phones, as opposed to someone new to smartphones generally.

Ana Cristina had a “step by step” guide (printed material) on downloading and using the Uber app available, and she said that a TRIPPS video would soon be out on YouTube. She also noted that a couple of volunteers from the Senior Center could be available to help riders with both smartphones and Uber use.

Linda provided an example of the difficulties that could arise, stating that she was concerned by a repeating message, once she had requested a ride last Friday, saying “connecting with driver” but not giving her an expected pickup time. Dan reminded the group that Uber sends out a request but does not state the pickup time until a driver has agreed to the trip, so that accounted for the ambiguity Linda experienced. She said the driver did come and was very good, although she did wait about 30 minutes.

Other ways to help support education about the Uber program included Lincoln-Sudbury students doing community service (but, Dan reminded that their availability would not be soon because of vacation and school opening full time) and the community outreach persons funded by the Community Compact grant. One persisting challenge to the latter option was determining how the town would hire “1099” people, funded by that grant. Adam volunteered to talk with HR about this.

Alice had sent out a “job description” for this role, along with questions needing to be addressed (based on input from Bethany Hadvab and her interns). Dan shared the screen so that the group

could review the issues. However, because a number of individuals had a “hard stop” for this meeting, the committee was able to discuss only the following:

- *Will the person use own phone?* Members discussed the option of transferring calls from a central publicized number out to the private phones of individuals available (a “help desk” approach with defined hours of service/response). Dan volunteered to find more information on this mechanism, so that no individual’s phone number would be publicly available.
- *Will they work remotely.* Yes, community outreach persons would provide support remotely; no in-person help would be required.
- *What hours would they be available?* Sandy and Alice described having defined hours during which calls could be made for help, with individuals setting their desired “help desk” time (e.g., morning, afternoon, early evening).

Ana Cristina asked the group to consider an emphasis on available educational materials first (printed, online, etc.), for rides with smartphones. Then, work regarding the community outreach option could be continued at the same time as the Uber services were rolled out more widely.

Final Feedback on MAPC Grant 1

Ana Cristina has reminded riders in the first taxi grant initiative to complete the feedback survey. She has provided completed forms to Alice, who will have results ready for the next meeting. Alice said this feedback would be sent to MAPC but is also an important component of the “white paper” we agreed early on to provide, based on our experience.

Meeting Minutes

Approval of the minutes for April 9 was postponed until the next meeting.

Next Meeting

The next Transportation Committee meeting will be Friday, April 30th, at 10:30 AM.

Adjournment

Alice moved to adjourn, Doug seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by a rollcall vote and the meeting adjourned at 1130 a.m.