



# Town of Sudbury

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

## Sudbury Transportation Committee

### Minutes

Friday, September 23, 2022

10:30 AM

Via Town Zoom Conference Call

Core Members Present: Daniel Carty, Alice Sapienza, Adam Duchesneau, Kay Bell, Bob Lieberman, Debra Galloway

Core Members Absent: None

Advisory Group Present: None

Advisory Group Absent: Martha Welsh, Scott Nix, Carmine Gentile, Bethany Hadvab, Silvia Nersessian, Mary Warzynski

Guests: Lynn Puorro (Sudbury TV)

### **Confirmation of Quorum**

The statutory requirements as to notice having been complied with, Dan Carty as Chair convened the meeting at 10:30 AM. Dan Carty made an announcement that this was a public meeting, and the meeting was being recorded via Zoom and by Sudbury TV. He took roll call, noted a quorum was present, and announced that he was making Adam Duchesneau co-host of the Zoom session.

### **Selection of Clerk**

Debra volunteered to take meeting minutes.

### **Administrative Updates:**

Dan thanked everyone for attending the Select Board meeting at which Dan and Alice presented the Transportation Committee recommendation for Sudbury.

Dan reviewed the planned agenda for today's meeting:

1. Recap the Select Board meeting
2. Review updated financial status of GoSudbury (Adam),
3. Acknowledgements that Committee members have been reappointed for another year

4. Sudbury Foundation Grant application, Community Compact Grant, other Grants
5. Annex Transit Next Steps
6. Report from Debra on meeting with Jim Nee, MWRTA Administration
7. Survey of Riders
8. Follow up from Last Meeting

### **Recap Select Board Meeting**

Dan thanked Alice and other Committee members for assistance with preparing for the Select Board presentation, and for attending the meeting.

Two themes: Next Steps and Whether the Transportation Recommendation fits into the Select Board's Goals

We were asked to come back to the Select Board with more information, which should include feedback from the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) about technical assistance on regionalization, ridership, and unique numbers of riders, as well as information on the MassDevelopment tax grants.

Many on the Committee felt that there was a lot of information for the Select Board to absorb in the meeting. Alice feels that it's important for the Select Board to understand the complexity of what we are hoping to do. She wonders if there is a better way to share this information, perhaps in a one to one format. This may be difficult to do given the need to conduct business in Open Meetings.

There was disappointment that the Select Board did not vote to recommend level funding for the GoSudbury programs for the next fiscal year. Debra noted how important the two programs are for the riders, especially the Taxi program for medical rides. It will be important for the Committee to ensure that the effort toward an efficient, cost-effective regional service, not supersede the current programs. Adam suggested that perhaps we can get rider statements to share at the next Select Board meeting.

Alice noted that there are other towns who are operating similar programs to what we proposed (and had modeled on Newton's program using Via). Some towns are smaller like Sudbury, such as Salem's program using Via that is running successfully. Alice also referred to the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC) Focus Group report that she had shared with the Committee.

Alice stated that if we don't work toward a regional approach now, we will possibly be continuing with band-aid solutions and not really solving the transportation problem for Sudbury. Another town, Somerville, which has public transportation, also started a taxi program and considers it essential. Continuing as we are, without support for a regional approach leaves the program without the infrastructure and assistance we need, for example, with crossing RTA lines.

Dan thought it might be helpful for him to discuss the Transportation Committee recommendation directly with Select Board Chair Charlie Russo. Dan noted that the Select Board will be meeting to discuss Goals for the new year near the end of October. He suggested that Debra and Adam discuss the

latest recommendations with the Interim Town Manager. The many overlapping goals between the Transportation Committee's recommendations and the Town's Master Plan should be emphasized.

## **Financial Update**

Dan shared his screen with the latest accounting spreadsheet for GoSudbury (Taxi and Uber). At this time, the program has expended \$29,579 taking into account the invoices for the first two months (July and August) of the fiscal year; and including a portion of the dispatch fee (\$2,859) that is paid to CrossTown Connect for the Taxi program. The JFK Taxi service invoice for August was higher than in previous months at \$4,515 as opposed to the last three months average of \$2,940. JFK Taxi service tends to be more expensive due to being a longer distance from Sudbury, as well as providing our handicapped accessible Taxi service. However, the overall monthly costs were nearly \$10,000 per month. At this rate of usage, the program may exhaust the Town Meeting allocation of \$100,000 by March according to Dan's chart.

Dan shared his chart on screen showing a projection of program usage and how quickly funds could be exhausted if the rate of use continues at the same level. If we do not get additional funds, we may need to reduce usage or find other ways to support the program. Debra wondered if we might offer riders the opportunity to donate to the Taxi program, as is done in Needham. Adam reminded the Committee members that there is potentially additional funding available. The Making the Connections grant has some funds that may be available (a portion of the \$10,000 awarded by MAGIC), as well as remaining funds in the ride subsidy amount of \$3,000 that could be used for the GoSudbury program. Still, the Committee will need to closely monitor the funding balance.

Kay acknowledged the time and effort of the members of the Committee, both Town staff and Town volunteers who are contributing toward this project and are not counted in the budget. Alice mentioned that Concord hired a Transportation Coordinator before moving forward with a transportation project.

## **Grants**

### **Sudbury Foundation**

Dan shared that he and Alice will attend the Sudbury Foundation Coffee on Thursday, October 6. Kay will also be attending. Dan asked about the Committee's interest in the November 5 "Sudbury Doing Good" event at the Goodnow Library. Debra will be hosting a table there. Dan will let the Sudbury Foundation know that the Transportation Committee will be represented at the Sudbury Senior Center table. Kay will be there hosting the Sudbury Commission on Disability table.

The Committee agreed that Dan should resubmit the Sudbury Foundation Grant proposal to support GoSudbury. Kay Bell made the motion and Alice seconded it, the Committee voted unanimously to resubmit the grant proposal.

### **Mass Development Grant**

Alice submitted a Grant application to Mass Development and awaits a response, expected in early October. The grant includes Sudbury, Acton and Stow and requested nearly \$250,000. Alice is also awaiting a response from the MPO route planner, who has data on Uber and taxi usage, as well as MAPC (which will analyze taxi route data).

### **Efficiency and Regionalization Grant**

Alice hopes that the Committee can also apply for the Efficiency and Regionalization grant funding. This grant has potential to provide substantially more money to support our regionalization effort. It is unfortunate that there is a need for extra work in advance to overcome the differing policies between towns; for example, difficulty with accepting Uber's dashboard agreement for collaboration, and contract language regarding liability insurance.

### **Community Compact Grant**

Adam report that this grant will be closed and finalized 31 December. The Program Manager will be working with collaborating towns to provide a final report to the State.

### **Report on MWRTA Meeting**

Debra met with the new Administrator of the MWRTA, James (Jim) Nee as well as MWRTA Asst. Administrator Eva Willens. She reported that the discussion focused on the GoSudbury Pilot Programs, the MWRTA Microtransit programs (using Catch Connect app) and the possibility of linkage through Sudbury, to existing fixed routes in Marlborough and Framingham. Mr. Nee was interested in learning more about the ridership patterns of both the GoSudbury Uber and Taxi programs, including the "heat map" that assists in visualizing the most frequent destinations and origin points.

Debra reported that the MWRTA operates 4 Microtransit pilot programs in: Wellesley, Framingham/Natick and Hudson. There are 4 Ford Transit vans in use in Wellesley and Framingham/Natick areas, and one van in Hudson. The Framingham/Natick service operates on Saturdays and Sundays, while the Hudson service operates on Saturdays. These are all grant funded programs.

Debra will share a written report with the Committee before the next meeting.

### **Annex Transit**

Adam reports that the contract is ready for signature, though the Town is awaiting answers to a few questions. We will discuss Annex more at the next meeting. The Committee may want to discuss options for using Annex's wheelchair accessible service for additional rider needs.

### **Survey of Riders**

Dan shared the previous questionnaire used to survey our Taxi riders last year. The Uber program was not in operation at the time so a survey was not conducted for Uber. The Committee agreed that Debra can update the Taxi questionnaire and create a similar one for Uber. Debra will send a draft of the questionnaire to the Committee. Debra and Ana Cristina will conduct the survey over the next few weeks and report back to the Committee.

## **Go Sudbury Registration Update**

Dan provided an update on Go Sudbury registration, since riders were asked to register anew and review the new policies.

For the Taxi program:

Before the new policies – 187 riders; Since the new policies – 162 riders

For the Uber program:

Before the new policies – 117 riders; Since the new policies – 118 riders

## **Meeting Minutes:**

The Minutes were reviewed from the 9/7/22 Meeting. After sharing his screen for these, Dan requested a motion for acceptance. Kay moved to accept the Minutes, Debra seconded, and roll call agreement was unanimous.

## **Next Meeting:**

The group set the next Transportation Committee meeting for Wednesday, October 12, at 10:00 AM, by Zoom. Debra reported that she will be out of the office and unable to attend, but expects that Ana Cristina will be able to attend.

## **Adjournment:**

Alice moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:45, Debra seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.