

Sudbury Transportation Commission Meeting Minutes
May 30th, 2025
Virtual Meeting

Core Members Present

- Dan Carty (Chair)
- Cheryl Wallace
- Adam Burney
- Alice Sapienza
- Nickole Boardman
- Kirsten Wilcox
- Robert Lieberman

• **Guests:**

- Jim Nee (MWRTA), Daniel Fitch (MWRTA), Jill Dube (Senior Center)

1. Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 10:30 AM by Dan Carty and roll call of members showed quorum present.
- Dan Carty advised that the meeting was being recorded and shared live thus no right to privacy should be expected.
- New MWRTA representative, Nicole Boardman, Director of the Sr Center, was officially welcomed, having already been sworn in as MWRTA rep. She was informed of an upcoming MWRTA meeting on June 26th.

2. Action Item Review

- **Farmer's Market Coordination:** Jill confirmed that all arrangements for the Farmer's Market, happening the following day, were in order. Nina Lurie (Social Worker) would provide a final count of participants needing transportation, anticipated to be a manageable two people.
- **Select Board Presentation Deck:** The action items related to the Select Board presentation deck were completed, and the information had been successfully compiled for the recent meeting.

3. Committee Leadership Re-election

- Dan Carty offered to continue as Chair.
- Bob nominated Dan Carty to be Chair, which was seconded.
- A roll call vote confirmed Dan Carty's re-election as Chair for another year.

4. Select Board Discussion Recap

Dan provided a summary of the recent Select Board meeting regarding transportation initiatives.

- The presentation focused on the "confluence of events" related to various transportation programs and the opportunity to continue with CatchConnect.
- **CatchConnect Feedback:** The Select Board's feedback on CatchConnect was generally positive. The ongoing question remains about long-term funding beyond the initial one to two years of current funding.
- **Individual Select Board Member Feedback:**
 - One member expressed interest in extending the usage of Senior Center vans.

- Multiple members emphasized the importance of utilizing ARPA money before its expiration at the end of 2026.
- One member still questioned the demand for current programs and advised against the committee focusing on bike shares, suggesting this falls under the Rail Trail Committee's purview.
- **Overall Direction:** The Select Board's collective direction indicated support for the proposed plan. Dan noted he was taking directions from the full Board rather than from individual members.

5. Discussion on Program Transitions and Future Plans

The meeting shifted to critical decisions regarding the future of Sudbury's transportation programs.

5.1 CatchConnect Program Continuation

- **MWRTA Commitment:** Jim Nee (MWRTA) expressed strong optimism about continuing CatchConnect due to Sudbury's support and the program's cost-effectiveness. He emphasized that MWRTA would work to prevent any disruption of service, even if the final financial agreement isn't immediately in place by July 1st.
- **Funding and MOU:** Daniel Fitch's cost estimates for CatchConnect (around \$41,000-\$56,000 annually for the local portion) were discussed and deemed to be in the right ballpark. Jim confirmed that a simple Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) would be needed to formalize the payment from Sudbury to MWRTA, which would be an "in lieu of local assessment" payment. Adam confirmed no significant issues were foreseen from

the town's perspective regarding an MOU.

- **Service Expansion:** Discussions about extending CatchConnect hours (e.g., earlier mornings) and potentially adding new loops (e.g., to Nobscot) were held. Jim noted that operationalizing such changes could take 2-3 months due to staffing and union bidding processes.
- **Communication:** The need to communicate the continuation of CatchConnect to existing users was acknowledged, likely to be handled by Sudbury.

5.2 Uber and Taxi Program Sunset & Safety Net Development

- **Proposed Changes:** The primary recommendation is to sunset the current Uber and taxi programs.
- **Social Worker Safety Net:** The plan is to transfer funding to Social Work Services to establish a safety net program utilizing Uber vouchers for those in need. Kirsten confirmed the social workers' preliminary agreement, and the involvement of the Senior Center was also suggested.
- **Concerns on Restrictions:** Questions arose about the level of restriction for the new safety net program and whether Uber's role would be significantly curtailed. Alice highlighted that taxis are currently the "budget breaker" in terms of cost.
- **Demand for Early Hours:** Cheryl emphasized the importance of considering the demand for early morning transportation, especially if Uber services are reduced, and ensuring CatchConnect can fill that gap.
- **Transition Timeline:** A 30-day transition period for the changes was suggested, acknowledging that stopping Uber immediately

on June 30th might not be feasible.

- **Contract Management:** Adam confirmed that extending the Uber contract for a short period is likely not a major issue, but taxi agreements will also need attention.

6. Next Steps / Action Items

- **MWRTA:** Jim and his team will draft a simple MOU for CatchConnect and send it to Sudbury for review.
- **Sudbury Transportation Committee:**
 - Continue discussions with the Social Workers and Town Manager to finalize the details and obtain approval for the Uber voucher safety net program.
 - Determine the exact scope and qualifications for the new safety net program.
 - Develop a communication plan for existing riders regarding the changes to Uber/taxi services and the continuation of CatchConnect.
 - Set a firm transition date for the program changes.
 - Address the Uber contract extension and taxi agreements.
 - Evaluate the feasibility and timing of extending CatchConnect hours to cover early mornings.

The committee will reconvene in a couple of weeks to continue working through these critical items before the July 1st target date.

7. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn at 11:44 AM by Bob Lieberman, seconded by Cheryl Wallace, and voted unanimously.

