



Town of Sudbury

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

Sudbury Transportation Committee

Minutes

Friday, October 29, 2021

10:30 AM

Via Town Zoom Conference Call

Core Members Present: Daniel Carty, Alice Sapienza, Doug Frey, Debra Galloway

Core Members Absent: Adam Duchesneau, Dan Nason, Sandy Lasky,

Advisory Group Present:

Advisory Group Absent: Charlie Dunn, Scott Nix, Beth Suedmeyer, Carmine Gentile, Bethany Hadvab, Silvia Nersessian, Mary Warzynski

Guests: Amy Loveless (Maynard CoA), Lynn Puorro (Sudbury TV), Linda Faust

Confirmation of Quorum

The statutory requirements as to notice having been complied with, Dan Carty as Chair convened the meeting at 10:33am. 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.

Agenda and Focus

Dan reviewed the agenda and suggested the following order of topics: Making the Connections meeting update, review of Select Board meeting and use of ARPA funds, Metco query and Uber service, administrative items.

Because of the Select Board's request for a basic "business plan" on transportation services in Sudbury—to be delivered for review in November (in order to meet the budget cycle)—Dan recommended that we focus the meeting on the second agenda item and the business plan.

Making the Connections

The Steering Committee met last week on 26 October. Alice noted the difficulty the collaborating towns were experiencing in starting new transportation initiatives (taxi and TNC) and reminded the group of the importance of Sudbury's dedication and commitment to planning (starting in 2018). Amy Loveless (Maynard CoA) stated that one difficulty they ran into, unexpectedly, was inadequate

liability insurance for JFK, based on Maynard standard. Tommy's Taxi does meet that standard, and a contract is being crafted between the company and town.

For taxi transportation, Alice said that Sudbury would request an extension of the MAPC second grant funding to March 2022. The collaborating towns agreed that this would allow them to provide and learn about providing such service. Adam and Alice will get in touch with MAPC in November, and Dan reminded the group that unspent money by the collaborating towns can be used by Sudbury in the interim. If other towns draw down their original allocation, Alice said, we may need to go back to the CoA for permission to draw down from the Meadow Walk mitigation so that taxi services do not need to be stopped.

Ana Cristina emphasized the importance of the taxi service for a subset of residents who need the ability to reserve a ride for medical, court, and similar appointments and be sure of transportation to them. Although the average wait time for Uber appears to be stable at between 15 and 20 minutes, the general service provided by these companies does *not* allow for reservation. (These are on-demand businesses.) Dan clarified a question on that by Linda Faust, stating that it is company policy and not dependent on Sudbury's contract with the company.

Select Board Presentation and Follow-up

Dan reviewed the request by Charlie Russo on the Select Board that we provide a business plan with three scenarios that he termed "low, medium, high." Dan cautioned that giving a very detailed plan, to the Board in November (for budget purposes), would not be feasible but that we could provide (1) a figure for what would maintain certain services over the coming year, and in the interim allow (2) an intelligent set of options to be crafted and presented to the Board and Town Manager for the next budget year.

Dan shared his screen to show the material compiled by Alice and Debra showing important issues for developing a business plan, as well as examples of three area municipalities that provide transportation: Lexington, Newton, Acton. Alice suggested that one of the big issues to be resolved quickly, for us, is that of copay, and she noted that Sudbury is one of the top towns in MA by median income, and that copays should not deter residents. All of the prior municipalities also offer highly subsidized services for residents qualifying as low income (SNAP benefits, etc.), and Alice emphasized Sudbury's commitment to serving those who need it regardless of income.

In reviewing the list of issues on page 1 of the file, Alice suggested that a missing item was marketing/communications (and that Sandy would certainly have pointed that out). Dan reminded the group that details on the important items such as outsourcing and staffing would require a fair amount of work and time to compile. In addition to reflecting on rider copays, Alice urged the group to consider what associated volume of rides might define "low, medium, and high" scenarios. Debra added that she highly recommended a consistent menu of copays across levels of service, to avoid rider confusion as well as concern should the copay increase.

For the next meeting, Dan suggested coming with suggestions about appropriate copays (and tying them to a metric, such as miles), targeted residents (and linking the targets to levels of service in a business plan; i.e., "low" = small target group), and likely volume of riders and services. The latter might be extrapolable from the Town's experience to date.

Dan then summarized the ARPA bill and that funding will be available through 2024. He will examine the stipulations of the bill and come to the next meeting with areas relevant to transportation. Briefly, the state budget agency reported:¹

- ARPA fiscal recovery funds (\$5.3 billion to the state and \$3.4 to municipalities) could also support transportation needs, such as cutting or eliminating transit fares or quick construction projects.
- The infrastructure bill moving through Congress could provide significant one-time transportation funding, but the Commonwealth will still need longer-term revenues for operations and upkeep.
- The Fair Share Amendment ballot question coming before voters in November 2022 can provide longer-term revenues to help sustain improved transportation systems.

How ARPA funds in Sudbury could be used for transportation will likely involve our regional transit authority (the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority/MWRTA), and Debra offered to invite representatives from the authority to our upcoming Transportation Committee meeting (see date, below). Alice and Debra will discuss, offline, what areas the MWRTA might come prepared to address.

Metco and Uber

Some weeks earlier Jennifer Vlacovsky (School Social Worker and Adjustment Counselor) sent an inquiry about use of Uber services for Metco students and parents. A careful review of the Transportation Committee minutes revealed that it had been agreed to make this service available for “financially insecure individuals in the community” (July 9, 2019). At a previous meeting Adam had clarified that not all Metco families were financially insecure, but those who were should apply via the GoSudbury! form as any other resident.

However, one issue is that some families living in Boston may be beyond the 25-mile current limit for subsidized Uber services. Dan stated that he would find out what an appropriate radius would be, such as 30 miles, and the group agreed that a change to the policy for everyone could then be made and the contract with Uber modified to the larger mileage. Alice noted that, still, no subsidized rides would be provided to Logan Airport (somewhat over the 25-mile limit), because effective transportation is available from Logan Express, to which service can be provided.

Public Comment

There was no public comment today.

Meeting Minutes

Because of time limitations, Dan tabled the review of minutes for the next meeting. Note the earlier start time.

¹ <https://massbudget.org/2021/08/24/federal-relief-and-recovery-funding-and-massachusetts-transportation-future/>

Next Meeting

The next Transportation Committee meeting will be **Friday, November 5, at 10 AM** via Zoom.

Adjournment

Alice made a motion and Doug seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 11:31 AM.