



# Town of Sudbury

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

## **Sudbury Transportation Committee**

### **Minutes**

**Friday, December 2, 2022**

**10:30 AM**

**Via Town Zoom Conference Call**

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

Core Members Absent: Adam Duchesneau

Advisory Group Present: None

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

Guests: Lynn Puorro (Sudbury TV), Ana Cristina Oliveira, Linda Faust

### **Confirmation of Quorum**

The statutory requirements as to notice having been complied with, Dan Carty as Chair convened the meeting at 11:02 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 asked from a volunteer to co-host the Zoom session. Debra volunteered to act as co-host. Dan enabled the transcription service for the meeting.

### **Selection of Clerk**

Debra volunteered to take meeting minutes.

### **Administrative Updates:**

Dan provided a recap of the action items from the previous meeting:

- Policy Changes for the Program – Debra – complete
- Discussion on Policy with Town Manager – Dan – complete as of next meeting
- Mass. Development Grant Status – Adam – not able to make the meeting
- Contract with Annex Transit – Adam – Dan shared that there are still a few details to work out on the contract. However, the good news is that CrossTown Connect can interface with Annex for taxi ride requests.

- Provide update to Select Board – Dan – complete
- Feedback to the Taxi companies – Alice - complete
- CTPS Policy documents submitted – Alice – complete
- Annual Report on Transportation Committee – Dan – due in January and will be done soon
- Problems with Meeting invitations – Alice – she did reach out to Mark Thompson; Debra notified the Planning Dept.

## **CTPS:**

Alice reported that the CTPS Scope document feedback was received by the Central Transportation Planning Staff of the MPO, and they will reach out to set up a meeting.

## **Select Board Feedback to Transportation Committee:**

Dan reported that one take-a-way from the Select Board discussion about the Transportation program is that there is not a lot of support for the GoSudbury Taxi program as it is. The Board suggested that the Committee should look into limiting the Taxi program to medical appointment destinations that are not served by the Senior Center van, or during the van's hours. The Select Board also asked about instituting some form of copays or vouchers so that riders have some cost sharing.

Several questions from the Select Board:

- What would the program look like if taxis provided service only where Sudbury van is not available?
- What would the program look like with vouchers or co-pays?
- What type of program is being run by the town of Stow?
- Could we provide the raw data that was sent to CTPS?
- Could we provide trip data for the last 3 months?
- Could we share eligibility categories and percentages of each?
- Could we share the roles of those who are managing the program and the hours spent doing so?
- Could we supply the median costs instead of average costs?
- Could we share the number of rides taken per person since sign-up?

Alice expressed concern about sharing the transportation data due to privacy issues. The data shared with CTPS (a State agency) is needed for route planning, but is identifiable for people living in the town. We could share the percentage of rides in Sudbury vs. the percentage out of town and to where. We cannot give actual addresses. The essence of what Select Board members want to know will be sharable in the aggregate.

Dan also was concerned about sharing data, mentioning the possibility of a HIPAA violation, since these are medical rides. The Committee agreed that it was not appropriate to share this type of data, to protect privacy. There may be more generalized data that provides insights to the Select Board without invading privacy.

Alice reported that Kay reminded her that the Taxi program started during the COVID emergency and was designed to keep taxi companies in business. We started the program as a free service in order to see what the need was and did not want to impose limits until we learned more. Now we know what the need is to some degree and can adjust. We can impose some limits on those who can pay. This can be shared with the Select Board.

Debra noted that the Transportation Committee has talked about the idea of imposing some limits and the Senior Center staff developed recommendations that could be reviewed.

The Select Board also mentioned other towns that operate Taxi transportation programs, and wanted the Transportation Committee to learn more. It was noted that the Transportation Committee is aware of programs in other towns, and we have considered limits of our own.

Bob stated that the underlying response from the Select Board seemed to be that the only way to sustain the program is to reduce costs with vouchers, other grants, and/or further limits on the number of rides. Bob noted that we can look at other towns, but each town is unique, with different population, proximity to medical offices and different geography. Most people going to medical appointments are going out of Sudbury. Do we want to impose more financial burden on those who may already have financial constraints?

Alice noted that transportation is by nature complicated and that we need to find a better way to help the Select Board members understand some of the complexity.

Kay feels that if she were new to the program, she would question an \$80 per ride average cost, with no copay and have sticker shock and perhaps be reluctant to ask for help from the local tax levy. That may be why the Select Board has these concerns and wonders how that program can be sustainable.

Dan noted another message he garnered from the Select Board discussion is that the Taxi program should not be riders' primary mode of transportation; not plan A, or B, but plan C.

Dan explained that what seems to be a simple question, "what if someone who took the taxi, could have taken the van?", is not easy to answer. The first consideration would be - was the ride during van hours? Then we would need to look at the riders to see if they were eligible for the van, since eligibility differs between the two programs. Kay stated that there's also the concern of 6 people needing a medical ride on the same day. How do you know if the van could handle these rides? It is clearly not easy to answer this question and would take some time and effort to figure it out.

Linda made the point that the Senior Van (Sudbury Connection) prioritizes medical appointments. If taxi rides are moved to the vans there is a possibility that the vans are less available for other types of rides, such as errands.

Dan discussed the idea from the Select Board meeting that people take the lowest cost option for their rides. Without "concierge" to direct people, it is quite difficult to do this.

Ana Cristina shared that it is important to realize that if there are several requests for medical rides on the same day, that the van service may not be able to meet the need. If she were to move a

medical ride to the van, that might mean cancelling another type of ride. There are currently times when riders might be bumped from another type of ride, such as shopping, because of medical rides (medical rides are first priority).

Currently, the Sudbury Senior Center van goes to several surrounding towns, including: Framingham, Wayland, Marlborough, Concord and Maynard. Travelling into other towns for medical appointments takes a lot of time and limits how many medical rides can be offered on any given day.

Kay wondered how Medicaid rides factor in, as this was mentioned at the Select Board meeting. Debra stated that there are some people in town who are able to use Medicaid subsidies for rides, but the eligibility is strict. Most people are not eligible. Ana Cristina reported that Medicaid riders get more flexibility so they are not likely to use our program.

Dan noted that the Town warrant will open soon and the Select Board will need to decide if it will support an article to fund the program.

Alice summed up the Committee's request for funds as a bridge, an interim request to get the program covered for now while we work on the future plan. The town will need to provide support for the future program but for now, this request is a bridge.

Kay noted that the Select Board might need information on the Senior Center vans: what the limitations are, how the funding works, how costly they are, and that riders get bumped. It is also important to realize that WAV vehicles are more costly to operate.

Ana Cristina will send the Medicaid eligibility guidelines to Dan. Debra will send the Senior Center van (Sudbury Connection) eligibility guidelines and service hours, as well as statistics on ridership. All to be shared with the Select Board.

Alice will share Uber and Taxi data with Dan for the Select Board meeting. Dan will review enrollment data to compile the number of riders' in the various eligibility categories.

Alice explained that the Stow TIP grant that was mentioned at the Select Board meeting is a multiyear grant to MART involving a group of 4 towns working with Montachusett RTA (MART) to develop a Microtransit plan with an app.

The Committee discussed the roles and hours of work involved in being on the Committee and in managing the two GoSudbury programs. Kay mentioned that some other towns have dedicated staff for Transportation and for grant procurement – Lexington and Concord being two examples.

Some of the data requested by the Select Board would be difficult to figure out and may not be that useful, for example, the median cost of rides, and the number of rides per rider since registration (especially since there have been two registration periods).

Kay mentioned that a friend told her that CrossTown Connect has an outdated Sudbury transportation chart on their website. Debra volunteered to contact CrossTown Connect to correct this.

**Policies:**

Dan will send the proposed policy language to the Town Manager for Town Counsel review.

**Financial:**

Not reviewed today.

**Meeting Minutes:**

The Minutes were reviewed from the 11/18/22 Meeting. After sharing his screen for these, Dan requested a motion for acceptance. Kay moved to accept the Minutes, Alice seconded, and roll call agreement was unanimous.

**Next Meeting:**

The group set the next Transportation Committee meetings for Friday, December 9, at 11:00 AM and December 16, 11:00 AM, by Zoom.

**Adjournment:**

Bob moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:51 PM, Kay seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.