



Town of Sudbury

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

Sudbury Transportation Committee

Minutes

Friday, March 31, 2023

10:30 AM

Via Town Zoom Conference Call

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

Advisory Group Present: None

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

Guests: Ana Cristina Oliveira, 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 10:33 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 co-host of the Zoom session.

Selection of Clerk: Alice volunteered to take meeting minutes.

Administrative Updates: Dan summarized the major topics for today's discussion—not necessarily in the following order:

- February transportation program update/review of finances
- Town Meeting presentation draft
- Annex Transit pilot
- Framingham COD and MWRTA
- Community Transit Grant ideas
- Review and approval of meeting minutes.

Adam reminded the Committee that the State has officially extended the ability to hold remote meetings through March 31, 2025. Committee members agreed this was helpful.

Dan asked Adam about two earlier items; Adam responded he had not yet been able to follow up with Uber and geofencing or obtaining MAGIC \$10,000 originally proposed for the Making the Connections initiative (the amount would be shared amount collaborating towns).

Financial Update: Dan shared his screen to show GoSudbury February Uber and taxi data, illustrating the effect of ride caps on Uber (drop in number of rides, lower cost). Alice pointed out that rider co-pays are fairly stable at 30% (in February, 35%) of total costs. When asked why the increase from about 20% initially, Dan and Alice said that more rides are of longer length (the copay is based on mileage). Taxi usage also dropped in February. Kay questioned the number of cancelled rides, and (based on CrossTown Connect dispatch policies), Alice stated “canceled” are canceled by the rider and “denied” means lack of availability by a company. When a ride is labeled “deny” in one company’s data, it will likely then be listed with the other company as “delivered.”

Framingham COD and MWRTA: Kay shared her screen and the document she had sent earlier, which described comments from a Framingham COD member about the MWRTA accessible services. Kay emphasized the engagement between Framingham and MWRTA and suggested that Framingham MWRTA advisory board members are very active with regard to the regional transit agency. The document concluded with:

There is a saying about the disability community ... Don't make a decision about us, without us. Here's to hoping for a beneficial partnership between the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority and the Framingham Disability Commission to make transportation safe, accessible and enjoyable for the Framingham disability community.

Dan reiterated that Sudbury looked forward to engaging with the new MWRTA administrator, Jim Nee, especially after his collaboration in the AARP grant application.

Community Transit Grant: Alice said she had been contacted by Rachel Fichtenbaum, Manager of Grant Programs & Mobility Management in MassDOT Rail & Transit Division, about the upcoming Community Transit Grant (CTG) program. Earlier, Alice sent a summary of information on the grant (from the state website) to the Committee and recommended that Sudbury try to engage MWRTA in an application similar to what the Select Board had noted involving Stow and MART (Montachusett Regional Transit Authority). Debra said she believed MWRTA had, earlier, applied for a grant but she was not sure they received it. Alice suggested that she and Debra could reexamine the AARP application and then talk with Jim Nee about a CTG grant submission involving, perhaps, Wayland or other town(s) to provide expanded CatchConnect services. These might involve more hours of service and wider geography, as well as better connectivity with MWRTA fixed routes and MBTA transit options. Alice also brought up the Cherry Sheet amount of about \$74,000 representing what remains of the MBTA assessment for Sudbury. Jim Nee had mentioned that, although it could take more than a year to complete the transaction, the amount could be applied to the MWRTA for services the MBTA cannot provide. Again, Alice and Debra will bring this up with Jim Nee.

Town Meeting Presentation Draft for Select Board: Several days earlier, Dan sent a draft of the “article 14” presentation, which will be shared initially with the Select Board before Town Meeting (likely at the April 25th Select Board meeting). He shared the slides with the Committee and explained that about 10 minutes would be allowed for the actual presentation and then questions would follow.

Members commented on each slide, providing suggestions about how to (1) reduce “graphic density” (too many and, thus, small graphics), (2) clarify items that might be confusing or unfamiliar to the

audience, (3) explain and/or emphasize certain points, and (4) generally prepare the notes to the slides as well as additional material in order to address audience questions.

After this review, Dan said he will send the revised draft for further comments and approval. Alice agreed to be on hand for the April 25th meeting. Members agreed this was a strong and persuasive “ask” for continued funding from the Town, as the Committee moves forward both in operationalizing the transportation programs (i.e., adding staff) and in seeking other resources (cf/ the Community Transit Grant, above).

Annex Transit: The initial recommendation was to have a small “beta test” of Annex services (and CTC dispatch for them), asking a small number of qualified riders to try the company. Ana Cristina explained that it had been difficult to get enough people to try them so far, and that one individual had had a disappointing experience (wait time). And, recently, the Annex staff had sent a confirmation email to CTC but used an incorrect email address.

Although there were 12 rides provided in March for 3 riders, and comments were positive, members agreed that Sudbury should open the beta test to all qualified riders for a month (possibly starting 1 May) and, based on the results, communicate the new service or cancel the contract with the company. Adam strongly recommended that as many riders as possible be made aware of the option for that limited period, so the Town could make a final decision.

Dan clarified that Annex was chosen as a WAV option when JFK was unavailable, as well as the “reasonable accommodation” to Uber services for riders who were unable to use the latter. Alice reminded the Committee that, because of this dual function, we had to separate payment. MassDevelopment funds will pay for medical rides only; Town and other funds will pay for the Uber alternative. And, Debra reminded members that riders on Annex, unlike Uber riders, will not have a copay at least during the trial period (currently, there is no efficient way to collect copays for Annex). Bob recommended keeping processes as similar as possible, from the rider’s standpoint, for all vendors.

Dan asked Kay, Debra, and Ana Cristina to draft a communication to qualified riders, explaining Annex services, dispatch, and the trial period (beta test) and have that for the Committee to review at the next meeting.

Next Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 14, 2023, at 10:30 AM via Zoom.

Review of Minutes: The draft minutes of February 24th were shared by Dan and changes reviewed. After discussion, Alice moved to accept as amended, Kay seconded the motion, and roll call vote was unanimous. The next set of minutes (March 3rd) were shared and reviewed by Kay. After discussion, Bob moved to accept as amended, Debra seconded the motion, and roll call vote was unanimous. Because of time constraints, Dan agreed to set aside the review of minutes for March 17th until the next meeting.

Adjournment: Dan called for a motion to adjourn (Debra moved) and a second (Dan), then adjournment was unanimously approved via roll call vote at 12:13 PM.