



Town of Sudbury

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

Sudbury Transportation Committee

Minutes

Friday, August 23, 2024

10:30 AM

Via Town Zoom Conference Call

Core Members Present: Daniel Carty, Alice Sapienza, Bob Lieberman, Cheryl Wallace, Adam Burney

Core Members Absent: Debra Galloway

Advisory Group Present:

Advisory Group Absent: Martha Welsh, Chief Scott Nix, Carmine Gentile, Dani Marini-King, and Maura Carty

Guests: Linda Faust Sudbury resident, Lynn Puorro (Sudbury TV) , Jim Nee (MWRTA), Tyler Terrasi (MWRTA), Daniel Fitch (MWRTA)

Confirmation of Quorum: The statutory requirements as to notice having been met, Dan as Chair convened the meeting at 10:31 AM. He made an announcement that this was a public meeting, and the meeting was being broadcast live via Zoom and recorded by Sudbury TV. Roll call was taken of the quorum present.

Selection of Clerk: Dan was assigned the duties of Clerk for the meeting.

Dan began the meeting acknowledging the presence of Jim Nee, Daniel Fitch, and Tyler Terrasi from the MWRTA and asking them for an update on the CatchConnect program. Jim started by saying that the program thus far was “wildly exceeding expectations.” Daniel Fitch added that ridership was up and that in the previous week 20 different people had taken 66 rides. He stated that the target weekly number of rides was 60 and that they expected it to take longer to reach this level of ridership. He then added that they monitored the timeliness of trips; 30-minute wait time is their target maximum and thus far they have come in under this. He discussed the system of callbacks and call-aheads process that the MWRTA has been able to have ready for their CatchConnect network based on input from Sudbury and expected both to go live in the coming weekend. Discussion pivoted to a rider issue where the customer pickup spot did not match the driver expectations; he stated they would attempt to address by sending a text or call to the customer through dispatch and added that communications must go through dispatch as drivers do not carry personal phones while driving MWRTA vehicles. Alice stated that she would work with Daniel Fitch regarding quarterly or perhaps monthly reporting, including emails received from riders. Adam thanked the MWRTA for their

nimble efforts in addressing issues. Bob stated that these results should get published in the Senior Center monthly newsletter. Cheryl inquired as to how many of these riders were teenagers and with school starting those numbers may drop. Daniel Fitch stated they did not collect this level of demographic data. Bob stated age might be inferred based on pickup and drop off locations.

Dan Carty next asked for clarification on the recently passed state budget and if MWRTA services would continue to be fare free. Jim stated that the MWRTA would be fare free for the entire fiscal year ending in June of 2025. Detailed discussion ensued as to who the funding authority was and where and how the money was being held.

Linda Faust, 189 Boston Post Road, was recognized for comment. She asked for clarification on how the call backs would work and stated that the step-down on the vehicles was difficult to navigate. Jim Nee replied that drivers were not allowed to carry personal phones for safety reasons and that they would continue to work with dispatch to best ensure communication between drivers and riders where needed. He acknowledged the high step and said they were looking for lower step vehicles but that is a longer-term capital issue.

The discussion then turned to the hospital shuttle and Dan led the remarks saying existing riders of the Go Sudbury program have been emailed about the existence of the new shuttle service. Daniel Fitch said there has been a handful of signups, about 10 so far. Dan Carty added that as of September first the monthly ride limits for Go Sudbury will be curtailed, which may boost ridership. Alice asked if there were riders from both Wayland and Sudbury. Daniel Fitch was not sure but said he would find out. Next discussed was the potential option to add Tufts Medical Center as a stop in Boston. Jim Nee cautioned against adding more stops at this point as it would likely lead to service impacts, noting there were 350 healthcare facilities in Boston, and we cannot get to all of them. He did agree that it demand warranted it could be added in the future. Adam Burney suggested we take a clusters-of-facilities view and possibly having stops at clusters rather than looking at individual facilities.

The committee thanked the MWRTA team for their work and attendance at this meeting.

Next discussed were the GoSudbury! finances for the month of July. Dan Carty screenshared the finance document. Discussion ensued about the high volume and cost of rides this month, particularly with taxis. Adam Burney provided clarification on the availability of the second half of the state earmark funds and that he was putting together the necessary paperwork to request said funds. Dan Carty added that the reduction of ride caps coming September 1 was timely as spending needed to be curtailed in order to make it last as long as possible. Discussion ensued regarding who would make the necessary changes in the Uber dashboard.

Dan next recognized Adam to discuss the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program and how transportation fit into it. Adam stated that MVP outreach was starting and that there may be opportunity to address transportation issues under the MVP context. Alice asked if the outreach would target the various housing developments in town and Adam replied it might, as in the cases of flu clinics, but also there would be larger town-wide events. Alice noted that it was important that effort be made where possible to bring in underrepresented individuals. Adam stated this was a core tenet of the MVP program. Dan screen-shared a document regarding the MVP. Adam suggested that the committee send him individual comments or questions and he would get them to Dani Marini-

King, MVP project lead. Linda Faust inquired as to the possibility of remote attendance via Zoom for these meetings or Town Meeting. Dan Carty answered that it was not legal in Massachusetts to utilize Zoom for annual town meetings, and something like a flu clinic would not work via Zoom, but some of the other types of outreach meetings certainly could be hybrid. Cheryl Wallace stated that any pertinent information could be shared through the Commission on Disability and reach a wide audience.

Adam brought up a grant opportunity communicated by staff with Via regarding reconnecting with previously identified disconnected communities. Alice added that Via had a number of clients in Massachusetts and a successful program in Salem and that they came to this committee prior to Adam joining. Discussion ensued about Transportation Management Agencies (TMAs) and how a TMA may be a good locus for this grant. Adam said he would reach to Littleton, Acton, Bolton, and Stow to get their thoughts, adding time for this grant was tight but an attempt could be made.

A quick discussion about taxi vouchers was next, with Dan adding that he wanted to hold the bulk of this topic until Debra Galloway would be present. Dan stated that Wayland had vouchers, and Alice added that Weston did as well. Dan asked member to continue to research what other towns did and it would be discussed at the next meeting.

Dan stated that he had the action item to work with town staff on a press release about the MWRTA options in Sudbury, adding that he held off until he got the answer about the duration of free fares, which now would be through June 2025 per Jim Nee's earlier comments.

Minutes for the meeting of August 9 were screenshared, noting that Alcie had already contributed edits. Dan asked for a motion; Adam motioned to approve the minutes as amended and presented, Alice seconded, roll call vote by voice for adjournment was unanimous at 5-0.

Dan proposed that the next meeting be held on Friday, September 6 at 10:30 AM via Zoom.

Dan proposed the meeting be adjourned. Alice moved to adjourn at 11:38 AM; Adam seconded; roll call vote by voice for adjournment was unanimous at 5-0.