



# Town of Sudbury

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

## Sudbury Transportation Committee

### Minutes

Friday, December 6, 2024

10:30 AM

Via Town Zoom Conference Call

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

Core Members Absent:

Advisory Group Present: None

Advisory Group Absent: Martha Welsh, Chief Scott Nix and Carmine Gentile, Maura Carty

Guests: Jill Dube (Sudbury Sr Center), Linda Faust and Kay Bell (Sudbury residents)

**Confirmation of Quorum:** The statutory requirements as to notice having been met, Dan as chair convened the meeting at 10:32 AM. He made an announcement that this was a public meeting, there should be no expectation of privacy, and the meeting was being broadcast live via Zoom and recorded by Sudbury TV. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was present. Adam agreed to be co-host.

**Selection of Clerk:** Bob volunteered to take meeting minutes.

**Administrative Updates:** Dan summarized topics for today's meeting: approval of minutes, review of October, 2024 financial ridership information, continued discussion concerning donations, potential uses of vouchers for Uber services, submission of the 2024 Transportation Annual Report and Catch Connect rider feedback

He began with notification to the committee that a note was sent to the Select Board acknowledging the allocation of unused ARPA funds in the amount of \$135,000 which needed to be identified before the end of the calendar year. Further discussion is warranted as to the specific use of funds. Adam commented on a group of upcoming seminars via zoom concerning transportation justice. Each meeting requires individual registration with the first session to be held on December 9, 2024, at the Lexington Community Center. Debra and Alice are setting up a follow up meeting with Jim Nee, the Director of the MetroWest Regional Transit authority (MWRTA's) to discuss the Hospital Shuttle. Dan began a discussion by showing the finance worksheet and noting that the October expenses were \$12,494 which is consistent with the past four months of ridership. Adam mentioned that he had the paperwork ready to submit for the reimbursement of the balance of state funds earmarked for Sudbury transportation in the amount of \$31,250. It was further noted that Uber ridership was

down by approximately one third and Alice mentioned that could be the result in a shift in ridership to Catch Connect.

Dan then shared his screen as the conversation moved to an app for the “Uber Experience.” He mentioned that he chose “UberX” app and noted that there were changes which were causing users some anxiety. Debra noted that she sent out emails concerning the changes since some users thought there was a change to the co-pay platform. It was also noted that once confirmation was sent to the user after booking a ride that the correct information was noted. It was mentioned that the changes to the app occurred at the client level and that there wasn’t much that could be done. There was mention that the cap on taxi rides was reduced to four per month. Alice mentioned that we had 34 riders and only one exceeded the cap in November. Alice stated that changes in the Uber software have additional implications, as we have three programs according to Uber terminology (within Sudbury, up to 10 miles and 11-25 miles)

A lengthy discussion followed on the potential use of vouchers for Uber rides during a month. Essentially, funds would need to be set aside for the number of riders who are likely to take Uber during a month. We would need to look at prior data and get a sense as to how many people and rides and what the amount per rider and then decide if we can afford to provide vouchers to that monthly amount. The voucher would identify how much the user has available and that they can use it for any kind of trip. In addition, another concern is that we currently review the data on a monthly basis and perhaps this would need to change to a more frequent basis. A question was raised as to whether any unused amount could be carried over to next month and if the software had the ability to do this. With the recent changes in the software, it could be a challenge to modify any part of the application. It was noted that since we have so many variables in our program it could be very difficult to manage and communicate with the users. Another lengthy conversation concerning average rides and copays and the difficulty to be equitable since a longer ride with only an average ride factor could end up paying more since the voucher amount is limited. Examples of different ride lengths and the potential amount of a coupon may not be equitable for all uses and was another potential concern. Dan reminded the group that we were not deciding to go to a voucher system yet and not setting any limits. These discussions were simply hypothetical and for discussion purposes only. As a placeholder we talked about having 300 users and issuing a voucher for \$50 would be a monthly cost of \$15,000. That scenario would have program wide issues as all available funds for the month would be spent on Uber with no funding for taxi programs. How we would implement this to be equitable to all users was also a question raised during the discussion. Another concern was whether Uber was still a viable program and perhaps the committee should go back and explore the possibilities presented by VIA as an alternative provider of transportation services. It was noted that we were not compelled to move to the voucher system and could leave the program as is for now. Bob mentioned the potential impact on Town staff to measure and monitor a program of this magnitude. There is limited funding and technology resources for changes of this nature. Debra mentioned the need to look at sustainability and perhaps scaling down the current level of options being offered.

Dan then addressed some action items from the previous meeting including 1) Uber surge pricing no longer applies, 2) donations less than \$500 can go directly to the transportation committee and those over \$500 need Select Board approval, 3) potential changes to programs having as legal implication for liability concerns and legal contracts would need to be reviewed by town counsel, and 4) potential to have an ad run on Sudbury TV relative to transportation opportunities and services. Flash vote

questions presented as a draft were mentioned with four multiple choice questions and one open-ended for free comments.

**Minutes:** Dan shared the minutes from November 15 and, after review and discussion, asked for a motion to approve as amended. Alice moved to approve and Debra seconded that motion; roll call was unanimous.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting was set for 9:30 AM on December 20, 2024, via Zoom.

**Adjournment:** Dan stated he was thankful for the committee's work and asked for a motion to adjourn; Adam moved to adjourn. Alice seconded the motion, and roll call was unanimous. The meeting was adjourned at noon.