



Town of Sudbury

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

Sudbury Transportation Committee

Minutes

Wednesday, July 30, 2025

11:00 AM

Via Town Zoom Conference Call

Core Members Present: Daniel Carty, Alice Sapienza, Mary Brauer, Cheryl Wallace, Nickole Boardman

Core Members Absent: Adam Burney

Advisory Group Present: Jill Dube (Sudbury Senior Center Asst. Director/Outreach Coordinator)

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

Guests: Nina Lurie (Town Social Worker)

Confirmation of Quorum: The statutory requirements as to notice having been met, Dan Carty as chair convened the meeting at 11:03 AM. Dan 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; a quorum was present. Dan assigned Nickole as co-host.

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

Administrative updates

Dan started by acknowledging the flexibility of the group regarding the failure to meet quorum last week and the subsequent rescheduling. He noted that a meeting was proactively posted for Friday August 1 in anticipation that there were still open items after this session.

Dan stated the memorandum of understanding with the MWRTA was progressing and noted they too were flexible with regards to addenda in the future. He added that he had discussed Dial A Ride with the MWRTA and that it is something that could be considered in the future, but it would not be feasible to get up and running by September first. Nickole added that it currently only ran a couple hours a week and ridership was low.

Today's topics

Dan stated that in order to be ready for September 1 the program enrollment had to be set up and Uber vouchers piloted. Dan stated that he would work on the revised program update form with Nina and Kirsten Wilcox (Social Worker) and that he would reach out to Adam to get an Uber "sandbox" environment set up to pilot vouchers. The need for communications to riders about program

changes was acknowledged. Dan added that he'd like to discuss potentially adding other wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) providers and as time allowed discuss a Transportation Fair in the fall.

Finances

Dan screen shared the most recent financial tracking spreadsheet. He reviewed the June spend to be approximately \$9,400. He added that our dispatch contract terminated at the end of August, but even though we still had to pay for our programs in July and August prior to the September 1 changes there would be funding available for Catch Connect and the stripped-down Go Sudbury.

CatchConnect

Expanding the CatchConnect service was discussed next. Dan said the MWRTA suggested expanding the weekday noon to 6pm hours to an 8am to 6pm window and that the cost of additional hours would follow a rather linear pattern. He inquired about other desired changes. Alice inquired about 8am vs 9am as demand seemed to build up around 10am and tailed off at 4pm and if the MWRTA was willing to experiment we may be able to cut back hours. Dan confirmed they would be flexible with our requests. Alice noted there was \$36,000 left in the hospital shuttle grant and, although Wayland had accounted for most of the ridership, the shuttle was still available to Sudbury. Jill stated this would be part of the rider communications. Dan asked Alice if she had what was needed for the final reports on the Hospital Shuttle and Catch Connect grants, and she confirmed that she did. Cheryl stated she had some rider feedback from someone using Catch Connect who said if it ran earlier they would use it.

Program Changes September 1

Dan repeated that dispatch was ending August 31 and that communication would need to go to riders soon. The desire for riders to self-book seemed at odds with vouchers, and that distribution of vouchers would be complicated. He stated he met with the taxi companies, and they would be able to work with a virtual voucher, which is essentially how things currently work with our dispatch. Alice discussed how Wayland operated, which did not involve people coming in to pick up vouchers. Dan continued with a recap of a discussion he had with Jill and Nina whereas a simpler solution may be to have one single program enrollment rather than separate ones for Uber and taxi, with Uber as the primary ride source and taxi used only as-needed. He added that the low projected number of taxi rides may not merit a complicated system and rather the rides are coordinated through the Social work team or the Senior Center. Jill added that we need to ensure access to a WAV vehicle as the taxi companies were not always reliably able to provide. Dan stated that a WAV company could work as a taxi company in this scenario. Nickole opined that a WAV company may be more economical than a taxi company. Alice added that this made a good case for expanding Dial A Ride. Dan stated that he saw all of these as viable "plan B" options if a rider could not take an Uber and we could manage them all essentially the same way. Jill gave the case where a rider signed up for our program and wanted a ride but could not take an Uber, then the Sr Center or Social worker would arrange a ride for them from the options we had, which could change in the future if we were to add options.

Jill noted that she still received applications to the existing program and showed concern that the program was going to change shortly after they enrolled. She added that she was communicating the pending changes as people enrolled. Mary asked why people used taxi rather than Uber, and Alice replied, "It's free." Dan added that from a financial sustainability perspective we just couldn't

continue to offer free rides. Jill opined about possibly using Sr Center vans and drivers differently to fulfil some of the need. Discussion ensued about various options; Dan noted they were all good ideas, but the focus needed to be on the changes coming in just over a month.

Discussion pivoted to rider communications. Alice noted that the objective of the new program, this being a safety net of sorts, would have to be crafted and communicated well. Dan suggested he work on the program signup with Nina, and that he could work on communications with Jill and Nina. He requested that they work on it, bring it to the meeting on Friday for review with the committee, and hopefully send it to riders that same day. Nickole asked that the marked-up version of the communications be sent out, and Dan replied he would send as soon as the meeting was over.

Alice brought up Uber vouchers. Dan asked for clarification on the voucher amounts – was it \$30 towards a ride, or a ride for \$30 and the town picks up the balance? His understanding was \$30 off a ride. Nickole likened it to a \$30 coupon. The group was in agreement on the intent. Nickole asked about the timing of when vouchers would be assigned – would they be assigned in advance of booking a ride, or would it happen together? She also wanted to ensure we had a way of dealing with people who took vouchers but did not use them. Alice stated we could give vouchers more frequently than monthly, which could help this situation. Dan noted that there was weekly analysis of the Uber rider data and occasionally Jill had to reach out to a rider, and that is likely to continue to some extent. Cheryl asked for confirmation that vouchers would not carry over to the next month. Alice said they would expire. Nickole asked if there was a way to make the voucher distribution more timely relative to when rides were booked. Dan stated he wasn't sure this was feasible as our program signup was not integrated with Uber. Discussion ensued regarding the expected monthly spend and split between Uber and taxi. Alice suggested that as taxi rides cost more we may want to offer more than \$30 but cautioned about offering rides that were free.

A quick discussion regarding WAV vehicles was had and Dan screen shared a document about a service from Ashland.

Dan recapped action items and set up time to meet with Nina and Jill.

Minutes

Minutes for the May 30 meeting were reviewed. Alice motioned to approve as amended and presented, Cheryl seconded. Roll call vote resulted in a 5-0 approval.

Minutes for the July 11 meeting were reviewed. Cheryl motioned to approve as amended and presented, Alice seconded. Roll call vote resulted in a 5-0 approval.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the committee will be Friday, August 1, at 10:30 by Zoom.

Adjournment: Alice moved to adjourn; Cheryl seconded. Roll call vote to adjourn was unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 11:58 AM.