

Dukes County Commission (DCC)
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 20, 2023
4:00 PM
Remote Participation Only

Dukes County Commissioners Present in person: Christine Todd, Peter Wharton, Doug Ruskin, Jim Klingensmith, Tristan Israel, Don Leopold, Juli Vanderhoop*

Other County Officials: Martina Thornton – County Manager, Sarah Kuh - Director of Health Care Access, Geoff Freeman – Airport Manager, Judy Soules – County Treasurer

Others Present: Bob Johnston – Future Works

Christine called the meeting to order at 4:00PM

Approval of minutes

Jim/Doug moved to approve minutes for December 6, 2023. So voted. Doug – abstained, Don - yes, Peter – yes, Tristan – yes, Jim – yes, Christine – yes. Motion carried.

Appointments

MV Commission

Tristan/Don moved to re-appoint Peter Wharton to the MV Commission for another year. Discussion: MV Commission is very happy with Peter. If reappointed Peter will be a Vice Chair next year. So voted. **Doug – yes, Don - yes, Peter – yes, Tristan – yes, Jim – yes, Christine – yes. Motion carried.**

Dukes County Contributory Retirement Board – there were no other candidates and James Hegarty is interested in being reappointed.

Doug/Tristan moved to appoint James Hegarty to the board for the next term. So voted. Doug – yes, Don - yes, Peter – yes, Tristan – yes, Jim – yes, Christine – yes. Motion carried.

OPEB Trust Board alternate

Doug/Tristan moved to appoint Judy Soules as long as she is a County Treasurer to the OPEB Trust Board as an alternate. Discussion: If she runs and wins the elections there will not be a need for reappointment. John O'Hara is our appointee to the OPEB Trust Board. **So voted. Doug – yes, Don - yes, Peter – yes, Tristan – yes, Jim – yes, Christine – yes. Motion carried.**

Committee Updates:

The Finance Committee met yesterday, the Time Clocks at the Airport are up and running and people are punching in.

The Land Use Committee met today. The RFP for long-term real estate needs of the county is finalized and will be advertised with responses due in February. The Committee should have some recommendations regarding the lease of land at New York Ave for the second meeting in January. County received a proposal for the installation of new health pumps in the Courtroom and it was shared with the State.

Legislative Committee – The legislation to change from elected to appointed treasurer was supported by three Select Boards already and meetings are scheduled with the remaining Selectboards in the next three weeks. We did send a testimony letter opposing Senate Bill 1315 relative to the SSA (document on file).

Communication Committee – Doug is working with Suzanne on website improvements. There was also an article last week regarding county ARPA project as follow up to the editorial from prior week. The Committee is working on a plan to make more changes to the website and to better explain what the County does.

Improvements Committee – Don and Martina met and had good discussions and Don will be meeting with department heads as a follow up.

*Juli joined the meeting.

Manager's Report (document on file)

Norton Point Beach – there was over wash in many areas of the beach but according to Jane Varkonda (Conservation Commission agent in Edgartown) the access road will still be useable once the sand dries out. Martina explain that although the County does not have a requirement for beach maintenance after erosion it is in the County's best interested to maintain the access to Norton Point Beach as it is a big revenue generator for the County, as well as maintaining the dunes stabilized on State beach in the best interest of the public and as prevention for erosion that would eventually impact the beach road. There is no stable funding from the State (County received a grant for \$30K every year which was eliminated during COVID) but the DCR, owner of the beach has supplied the County with \$30K in the past couple of years to keep the maintenance work going. At Eastville the County property is in the middle between properties owned by Oak Bluffs and Tisbury. There is also a question of who owns and is supposed to maintain the stone jetty (it might be Mass DOT as part of the bridge and channel engineering structures). The NOAA study proposed by MV Commission would include Tisbury Harbor and we should make sure that Eastville and the jetty is part of it. The Beach Road on State beach is also part of the study. Hopefully the MV Commission will come up with some solutions and potential funding sources for improvements and continued maintenance. Jim also mentioned to investigate the FEMA Mitigation funds Oak Bluffs received for the repair of the bluffs.

Martina mentioned a couple other notes from her manager's report on file.

West Tisbury Board of Selectmen are meeting today to discuss hosting the Emergency Management Coordinator position.

Calendar

The proposed 2024 meeting calendar was discussed including if two meetings per month are necessary.

Tristan/Doug moved to eliminate the June 19th, November 6th and November 20th and adding meeting on October 30th. So voted. Doug – yes, Peter – yes, Jim – yes, Tristan – yes, Juli – yes, Christine – yes.

New business – Doug Ruskin said that our state representative (Dylan Fernandes) is not going to run for that seat at next year's elections and he suggested to start thinking about who a good candidate for that

position would be. This was with the understanding that the County Commissioners cannot publicly endorse any candidate and that any initiatives in this area would be strictly private matters.

Jim raised that the Steamship Authority did not address the issue that DCC asked the SSA Board to address. Jim Malkin did ask the board to address the incident of the boat drifting off, but it was not discussed at the SSA meeting. DCC agreed to ask Jim Malkin to come to our next meeting on January 3rd to give an update.

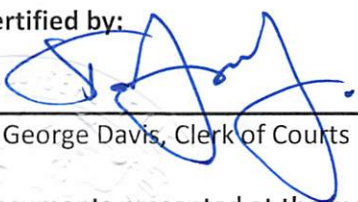
Martina noted that the job description for the new Director of Health and Human Services was finalized, revised by the Personnel Board, rated, and placed on county pay scale. The funding for the position is included in all the necessary budgets (Health Care Access, Public Benefits Access, and the county general budget). The Department of Health and Human Services is listed in the County Administrative Code and therefore there is no need to create such a department. However, since there was no position associated with that department in the past, she wanted to make sure that DCC is supportive of creating the position and allowing Martina to plan for hiring. Martina suggested asking CAB for FY2024 budget amendment to include funds to hire a new person at least a month before Sarah Kuh's departure on July 1st to allow for training and start the search early spring. Martina and Sarah will be interviewing the candidates and she invited DCC to appoint a representative to join the search committee.

Doug/Juli moved to have Martina present her detailed recommendation for financial need to accomplish what she is proposing at the second January meeting of DCC. So voted. Doug – yes, Peter – yes, Jim – yes, Tristan – yes, Juli – yes, Christine – yes.

Public Comment – none

Tristan/Doug moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:03pm. So voted. Tristan – yes, Doug – yes, Peter – yes, Christine – yes. Motion carries. The meeting was adjourned at 6:50pm.

Certified by:



T. George Davis, Clerk of Courts

Documents presented at the meeting and part of the official record:

- Manager's Report
- 2024 proposed meeting calendar
- S1315 Testimony letter