

Dukes County Commission (DCC)
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 6, 2023
4:00 PM
Remote Participation Only

Dukes County Commissioners Present in person: Christine Todd, Peter Wharton, Doug Ruskin*, Jim Klingensmith, Tristan Israel.

Other County Officials: Martina Thornton – County Manager, Sarh Kuh – Director of Health Care Access Program

Others Present: Bob Johnston, Liz Durkee, Adam Turner, Emma Green-Beach, Cindy Trish

Christine called the meeting to order at 4:01PM

Approval of minutes

Tristan/Doug moved to approve minutes for November 15, 2023. So voted. Doug – yes, Peter – yes, Tristan – yes, Christine – yes, Jim - abstained. Motion carried.

Shellfish Group FY2024 proposal for Shellfish Propagation State Grant \$50K – document on file
Budget continues to grow. They added a new position. They don't own any of the facilities but lease them and take care of them. They received money from the towns, private donations, and fundraising. On Nantucket hatchery is owned by the town, on Cape there are several facilities. All the shellfish constables on the island are on the MV Shellfish Groups board of directors. Discussion followed on standardized reporting that would be useful and Emma will get back to Doug to clarify some of the information shared.

Doug/Tristan moved to approve the proposal as presented. So voted. Doug – yes, Peter – yes, Jim – yes, Tristan – yes, Christine – yes.

ARPA Septic Systems Contracts with direct pay provision – details are in the managers report.
Doug/Tristan moved to approve the two grant agreements (one for installation and one for design) to allow for direct pay to the vendors for eligible homeowners with document amendment as suggested by Peter Wharton (clean up a typo inconsistency). So voted. Doug – yes, Peter – yes, Jim – yes, Tristan – yes, Christine – yes.

Letter of support for Comcast application for Broadband Infrastructure Gap Networks Grant Program requested by the MV Cable TV Negotiation Committee

More information is in the manager's report. County is not part of the Cable TV negotiation committee. Tristan suggested that we could inquire about being at least a non-voting member and he will explore it.
Doug/ Tristan moved to send the letter as drafter. So voted. Doug – yes, Peter – yes, Jim – yes, Tristan – yes, Christine – yes.

Climate Action Plan update and related project discussions – Liz Durkee

Liz shared her PowerPoint presentation – on file regarding activities that are taking place in various areas identified by Climate Action Plan. In Economic Resilience there is a need for a big income source that would pay for the activities that need to take place. She also updated the DCC on the Towns Vulnerability plans and NOAA Regional Resilience Grant Proposal – one of the sites of interest would be State Beach Road. Discussion followed. MV Commission would like County support of the proposal and for the County Manager to participate with town administrators on collaborating around it.

Tristan/ Jim moved to approve to support the proposal and collaboration on the grant. So voted. Doug – yes, Peter – yes, Jim – yes, Tristan – yes, Christine – yes.

Healthy Aging updates – Cindy Trish & Adam Turner

Our older adults' population is growing and aging. There was a summit a few weeks ago with representatives from the community organization on a panel discussion on how the 5 key areas are being addressed on MV and discussion on future challenges and planning for the next 10 years. 85 plus group would be by 2040 about 20% of the island population and over 65 about 40% of population. It will be critical to increase the level of services to older adults with the increased demand island wide. Cindy asked for review of the service landscape to allow for foundational planning, collecting data and financial planning to build capacity and she sees the County having a seat at the table as current provider of certain services for older adults.

*Doug left the meeting.

Committee Updates:

The Finance Committee met yesterday, and the Treasurer submitted a written report. In general, the new payroll system is working well. One outstanding issue is for Airport to start using the time clocks. Right now, the Treasurer's office is hand keying the timesheets into the system. The treasurer is also working on resolving dual SAM account, we can only have one and cannot renew until that is resolved. At the next meeting they will be reviewing the proposed FY25 budget. There is no update on the closing of the fiscal year.

The Land Use Committee met a couple of times. They received some updates on the New York Ave project and on the lease appraisal. They are working on the RFP for county real estate long-term needs and considering the scope.

Legislative Committee – Letter was sent to Select Board to ask for support for the legislation to change County Treasurer from elected to appointed. West Tisbury and Chilmark already met and expressed support. Oak Bluffs Selectmen will be meeting regarding this next Tuesday. Tristan asked about any efforts regarding the increase of the 10% we can keep. Christine suggested that we first get support from the CAB before going to the towns.

Communication Committee – Doug submitted written report – on file. Christine noted that we have not received any response to our letter to the Steamship Authority Board.

Manager's Report (document on file) - Martina mentioned a couple things from her manager's report worth noting on the report. Discussion followed on Emergency Management Coordinator position and why the County is not able to host the position at this time.

New business - Anything the Chairman did not reasonably anticipate for discussion when filing the meeting notice to be posted.

Tristan asked if Leon could come and report to us on Transportation Improvement Committee activities.

Senate bill 1315 - An Act Relative to Municipal Equity in Steamship Authority Operations -there was a hearing scheduled on December 5th and testimonies are open until December 12th.

Peter/ Tristan to Work with Jim Malkin and send a letter of testimony before the deadline of December 12th at 5pm. So voted. Peter – yes, Jim – yes, Tristan – yes, Christine – yes.

Calendar: Dukes County Commissioners Meeting 12-20-2023 at 4:00PM

New business – discussion was held on some presentation at the recent Health Aging Summit. Cindy Trish and Adam Turner were invited to the next DCC meeting to talk about their presentation and ideas.

Public Comment – none

Tristan/ moved to adjourn the meeting at 538:00pm. 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:

- Presentation by Liz Durkee – Climate Action Plan
- Letter regarding rezoning Oak Bluffs
- Manager's Report
- Communication Committee Update
- Letter of support for Comcast grant application
- MV Shellfish Group proposal for FY2024
- Title 5 Design Grant Agreement with direct pay
- Title 5 Installation Grant Agreement with direct pay
- Testimony letter re S1315
- 2023 Eastville Shorebird Season Summary report
- 2023 State Beach Bird monitoring report
- 2024 proposed meeting calendar
- Healthy Aging presentation – Looking to the next 10 years