

**Dukes County Commission (DCC)**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, January 13, 2021**  
**4:00 PM**  
*REMOTE PARTICIPATION ONLY*

**Dukes County Commissioners Present:** Christine Todd – Chair, John Cahill – Vice Chair, Keith Chatinover, Donald Leopold, Leon Brathwaite, R. Peter Wharton, and Tristan Israel.

**Other County Officials Present:** Martina Thornton – County Manager, Ann Metcalf – Dukes County Treasurer, and Paulo DeOliveira – Register of Deeds.

**Others Present:** Karen Tewhey – Harbor Homes Director, James Malkin – Steamship Authority Governor, Geoff Freeman – Airport Commission Director, Lucas Thors – MV Times, Aaron Wilson – Vineyard Gazette, and Jennelle Gadowski.

**Christine Todd called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.**

Minutes

Tristan asked that verbiage be changed from the April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020 minutes be amended to more accurately reflect the letter sent regarding the Airport Commission Appointment. He said that the sentence that reads, “Tristan said that the DCC received a letter of resignation from Fred Fournier.” is not appropriate as he was never appointed an Airport Commissioner. He instead suggested that it read: “Tristan Israel received a letter where Fred Fournier withdrew his request to be nominated as Airport Commissioner.” **Leon Brathwaite made a motion to approve the Minutes from April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020 as amended by Tristan Israel. John Cahill seconded the motion. So voted. Leon Brathwaite aye, Donald Leopold abstained, John Cahill yes, Keith Chatinover aye, Richard Peter Wharton abstained, Christine Todd aye, and Tristan Israel aye. Motion carries.**

**John Cahill made a motion to approve the Minutes from December 2<sup>nd</sup> and December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Keith Chatinover seconded the motion. So voted. Leon Brathwaite aye, Tristan Israel aye, John Cahill aye, Donald Leopold abstained, Richard Peter Wharton abstained, Keith Chatinover aye, and Christine Todd aye. Motion carries.**

Tristan noted that he did not get a chance to read the minutes from January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021. **Leon Brathwaite made a motion to approve the Minutes from January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021. John Cahill seconded the motion. So voted. Leon Brathwaite aye, Tristan Israel aye, John Cahill aye, Donald Leopold abstained, Richard Peter Wharton aye, Keith Chatinover aye, and Christine Todd aye. Motion carries.**

Leon noted that he was absent from the February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020 meeting but present for the Steamship Authority interviews that took place, so he must abstain. Christine clarified that he could approve the motion with that exemption. **Tristan Israel made a motion to approve the Minutes from February 5<sup>th</sup>, April 1<sup>st</sup>, and April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020. John Cahill seconded the motion. So voted. Leon Brathwaite aye with the exemption, Tristan Israel aye, John Cahill aye, Donald Leopold abstained, Richard Peter Wharton abstained, Keith Chatinover aye, and Christine Todd aye. Motion carries.**

### Meeting Calendar

Christine voiced concerns about meeting three times in November 2021 and suggested eliminating one of the non-mandatory meetings. Keith suggested either canceling both the November 3<sup>rd</sup> and November 17<sup>th</sup> meetings or just cancel one of them. It was noted that there is a mandatory meeting on the second Wednesday of November – November 10, 2021 per § Massachusetts General Law (MGL) Part I, Title VI, Chapter 34, Section 9 that reads: “The commissioners shall hold meetings at the following times and places for their respective counties: ... the Wednesday next after the third Monday of May and the Wednesday next after the second Monday of November.” Tristan urged against eliminating more than one meeting in November, as it sends the wrong message and need enough time to complete tasks such as lengthy budgets. **Leon Brathwaite made a motion to eliminate the November 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 meetings, with the option of calling additional meetings that month if necessary. Richard Peter Wharton seconded the motion. So voted. Leon Brathwaite aye, Keith Chatinover aye, Richard Peter Wharton aye, Tristan Israel no, Donald Leopold aye, John Cahill aye, and Christine Todd aye. Motion carries.**

### Appointments

Martina gave an update that she placed the same advertisement from December 2020 in both Island newspapers (MV Times & Vineyard Gazette), as discussed. All appointments are due Sunday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. The applications that have been received thus far are: 1 for Airport Commissioner, 1 for Cape & Vineyard Electric Cooperative, 1 alternate for Cape Cod Municipal Health Group, 1 for Dukes County Regional Housing Authority from Oak Bluffs, and several for the Dukes County Health Council. A majority of the members of the Dukes County Health Council whose appointments are up would like to continue. She said that Dukes County Health Council is taking care of their own members. Those interested in reappointment must submit their request in writing via email to Martina, as she does not require them to submit a new application.

She further said that on the [Dukes County website](#) she posted the available volunteer positions, deadline for applications, and a notice that interviews will be held at the DCC meetings scheduled for both February meetings – February 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 starting at 4:00 PM. Interested parties who submit an application must be available for an interview one of these two days.

### Grants Search Update

John gave an update on the grant search and reported that they have been underway for approximately a month and have raised over \$15,000 thus far. Three grants opportunities are being looked at – 1 at a State level and 2 at a Foundation level. If anyone would like to make a donation, checks can be sent in. He further added that research in education is important and helped Martina acquire ~\$14,000 that is currently under review. He found that you can be reimbursed for COVID-19 expenses at a municipal level, so Martina applied for the County reimbursement.

### Manager's Report

Martina reported that On December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 she submitted a request to the Department of Administration and Finance for a reimbursement of \$14,607 for expenses that the County incurred in response to COVID-19. These include for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and

protective measures that were not anticipated in the FY2021 budget. The first review of the A&D staff was positive, and they are working on detailed review before approving the reimbursement.

The County participated in the procurement for electricity bid and at the December 2020 meeting selected the most attractive bid. Municipal Competitive Electric Supply Agreement (MCESA) with NextEra Energy Services Massachusetts, who was selected to serve all RFP Participants' load beginning with July 2021 meter read dates and ending on July 2024 meter read dates at a price of 8.798 cents/kWh was signed and is in place.

After many years of service, Connie Andrade's employment with Dukes County ended a couple week ago as she was unable to return to work. A job description for the Assistant to County Manager is being revised at the next Personnel Board meeting as part of the compensation and classification study. She is expecting the Personnel Board to finalize the job description and rate it soon so it can be placed on the pay scale. The Personnel Board will be discussing implementation of the compensation study and recommendation to the DCC at the meeting on January 13<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 AM. The recommendation will be brought to DCC with the budget implications at the next meeting. Christine suggested honoring Connie's commitment to the County by having a plaque made. Martina instead suggested something such as a Gift Card might be more appropriate and beneficial for her, but that it could not be done at a County level but at an individual level. Keith volunteered to initiate the procurement of such a gift for Connie.

Since Connie on the Personnel Board, Beth Kaeka has since been appointed in her place and participating actively at her first Personnel Board meeting on Wednesday, January 13, 2021. In this position she is representing Dukes County employees. Martina reported it as a success that she [Beth] was able to vote on crucial recommendations that were made. A memo regarding said recommendations will be sent out and added to the next DCC meeting's agenda.

Martina presented that the Regional program's financial requests for FY2022, budgets and explanations have been submitted to most of the towns. Although in most towns the deadline for submitting warrant articles is not until the first week in February, some towns already scheduled their Financial Committee (FinCom) meetings. So far, all meetings will take place virtually via Zoom. The budget hearings with their FinCom meetings are as follows: Tisbury's already took place on January 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM, Chilmark's will be on January 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM, and Edgartown's will be on January 27<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 PM. Oak Bluffs and West Tisbury's FinCom meetings are to be determined. She clarified that all information was sent to Town Administrators with the reprisal that FY2022 budgets for Healthcare Access and Social Services are not final because the County is in the middle of implementing a compensation study as proposed by the Personnel Board.

Since the Martha's Vineyard Hospital (MVH) closed its doors to their Dental Clinic and their patient load of about 1,500 plus 500 on waiting list was transferred to a private start up Dental Clinic in Vineyard Haven but cannot handle this number of clients. Furthermore, only a federally qualified program can be reimbursed for dental services provided to Health Safety Net Dental program (HSN) covered patients. Most of the patients eligible for HSN coverage do not have the means to pay the private pay for dentists on Island and it is an added burden to have to travel off-Island for dental care. The Oral Health Care Work Group of the Dukes County Health Council is working diligently on finding a solution to this public health issue. The clinic would have to be federally recognized and would need grant funding in order to support staffing and operating expenses. If they can identify a space at no or very low cost, it would help lower the overall need for fundraising in order to open their doors. Martina started working with the group and they are exploring the possibility of using a room at the Center for Living building for this



purpose, even though it is without a waiting room or water access. The group also reached out the Island Health Care (the tenant upstairs and a federally recognized health center to see if they would be interested to work with the group). Martina asked the DCC if they agree with her spending more time to help this group in their efforts, to which they agreed. Christine added that this public health issue is also on the next meeting agenda for the Dukes County Health Council.

When DCC is doing appointments, the following appointments that were not advertised will be also be made: DCC member to the Personnel Board (Leon's appointment is expiring 2/28/2021), County Legal Counsel (Michael Goldsmith's appointment is expiring 2/28/2021), and Emergency Manager (Martina's appointment is expiring 2/28/2021). They will be put on next meeting's agenda as reappointments.

Martina inquired about charging stations for electric cars near the County Administrative Building as there are grant opportunities available. The energy and maintenance costs are unknown at this time. Geoff added that the Martha's Vineyard Airport (MVA) is working with Eversource to procure charging stations for electric cars at several locations at the MVA. To this point Martina decided that it may be redundant to install more electric charging stations nearby, but that her and Geoff will work together on this effort and get more information.

One vehicle from the Emergency Management lot at the MVA has been sold and another is underway. There are two other interested buyers for the two remaining vehicles. No vehicle disposal costs will be incurred. Geoff added that the MVA recently released surplus vehicle using [www.GovernmentDeals.com](http://www.GovernmentDeals.com) and suggested Martina utilize this easy service as well.

The second mandatory training for County employees relative to COVID-19 safety has been conducted and now everyone has now been trained for safe in-person work at the Dukes County Administration Building. Daily cleanings will commence and affect the budget moving forward.

#### Strategic Planning Committee Discussion

Donald suggested changing the name of the Committee so that it better fits the true purpose. He mentioned that since there is no formal committee yet, he suggested one be created. Donald said that there are approximately 5 steps can be done within the next 4-6 weeks. He would like to gather some additional input from external stakeholders (MVC, BOS, etc.) DCC to share thoughts about their priorities and overall picture of what they wish to accomplish in these next 2 years. Put together an Operating Plan to decide the implementations taken, everyone's clear roles, and focus on staying task-oriented at all meetings. Tristan reminded everyone that he asked that this Committee be created to set up a process for DCC in order to move forward with the problematic areas (such as the relationship with the MVA and DCC) and assess important priorities, and not to act on them yet. He also added that they waited to formalize the Committee in order to see if Richard wanted to join. Richard declined the offer but said he will be available for input if needed suggested that 2/3 of the Committee be seasoned people that have experience on DCC and a clear understanding of the current issues. He also firmly agrees that setting the priorities be something the Committee looks at first. Donald suggested they take a few weeks to put all of the ideas to the table and then set the priorities. He also added that this is a high participation effort of all DCC, not just the Committee. Leon agrees but hopes the DCC can have a full initial discussion regarding the issues at hand before the Committee meets. Donald, John, Tristan, and Christine all offered to be on the Committee. Christine appointed Donald, John, and Tristan to said Committee. Christine requested that the Committee meet before the next week to

discuss the questions and concerns that came up so that at the next meeting the DCC can discuss this further.

#### Harbor Homes Contract Approval

Martina presented a contract between Harbor Homes and Dukes County for Karen, an Associate Commissioner for Homeless, for DCC's approval. This will be retroactive to July 1, 2020 as many of the homelessness activities took place already and Harbor Homes staff did it in anticipation of being reimbursed from the town funding. The funding for Karen will come from the \$25,000 the towns provided Dukes County in FY2021 for Substance Use Disorder and homelessness prevention.

Karen added that the plan was for her to vacate the Case Worker position as of July 1, 2020. Martina was going to keep that position open through the County. However, from July 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup> she was still continuing to have a homeless hotline. During that time she was able to have referrals from 37 individuals and families in housing crisis. There have been 1-2 families or individuals who have called weekly in crisis during the past 5 years, so homelessness continues to be an ongoing issue. The new Homeless Shelter in Edgartown is now active with 17 paid staff and about 17 individuals who have used the program to date. They are aware of the names of about 27 individuals who have been at one time or another in and out of the shelter and remain on the Island. This is the first time they have combined the night shelter and the warming center, and some people are there every night. Out of the 80-100 people estimated to be homeless this year during COVID-19, she said 24-27 of those will end up being serviced by the shelter and 12 have been staying at hotels as they are medically fragile (which is being funded by a State Grant). Others are cost sharing hotels during COVID-19 due to having no other place to socially distance or isolate themselves. The congregate house is full and there is a waitlist for opening a women's house. Those in vehicles, sheds and unheated garages are staying put where they are for now. Furthermore, the Board has drafted and finalized a Request for Consultant (RFC) to address the long-term needs. It goes for Board approval on January 14, 2021. It will be sent to 6-8 people who are recommended from a housing program on Cape Cod or Martha's Vineyard. A targeted report will be written on how to eliminate chronic homelessness on the Island.

When asked, Martina clarified that the contract is being backdated because the funding for Karen's previous position as the Homelessness Coordinator for Dukes County was ended by the County at the end of last Fiscal Year on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Prior to that a request went to the towns for additional funding. During this time Harbor Homes nonprofit was commenced and Karen and others that were previously assisting the County with these efforts were now helping Harbor Homes. As of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 Karen was hired by Harbor Homes, a newly created nonprofit, as their Executive Director. Martina and Karen worked on homelessness support activities throughout the summer of 2020. The priority was to establish a homeless shelter for this winter. After they secured the funding from MVH and private donations to Harbor Homes, the Board embraced the idea to expand their focus and committed to running the winter shelter along with supporting homelessness prevention activities. As soon as the shelter was in place and running, they finalized the contract between Dukes County and Harbor Homes for the homelessness prevention work. The Harbor Homes Board already approved said contract on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020. She also added that there is an article of \$50,000 being put forth to the towns that is sponsored by the County to anticipate the collaboration to continue into the next Fiscal Year, as the County Advisory Board (CAB) approved it. Harbor Homes will be the recipient of said funding when it comes. The money expended for homelessness prevention in FY2021 is

\$25,000 but has not been utilized yet until the contract gets approved. Karen has already submitted 2 invoices for homelessness prevention case manager's services. The recipient of those funds will be Harbor Homes. Leon stated that Karen might be in violation of Massachusetts General Law Conflict of Interest Code of Conduct Chapter 268A. He said that he will call for a reconsideration of his abstention at the next meeting if everything checks out by then. **John Cahill made a motion to approve the contract between Dukes County and Harbor Homes in order to provide the services needed for homelessness prevention that will be funded by the towns. Keith Chatinover seconded the motion. So voted. Tristan Israel aye, Leon Brathwaite abstained pending 268A, Keith Chatinover aye, Richard Peter Wharton abstained pending 268A, John Cahill aye, and Christine Todd aye. Motion carries.**

### Buy Local Initiative

Tristan would like members of the Buy Local group to attend a DCC meeting to speak to their initiative. Christine agreed that it would be a great idea to have members of the business community speak and give a picture of the local economy. She proposed putting this on the meeting agenda at one of the next upcoming meetings.

### Old Business

Richard mentioned that he wished DCC had written a statement/letter condemning the actions that took place at the Capitol Building on Wednesday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, that caused them to adjourn and postpone their meeting for an entire week, before that meeting was adjourned on Wednesday. He said that although people keep saying "this is not who we are", historically this in fact is who we are and again and again that is proven to be true. He asked everyone to ask themselves what can be done to change that reality. He further said that as leaders in Dukes County it needs to be made clear that it is not who they want us to be. Christine suggested that the DCC take time to process what Richard said and later work on verbiage of a letter to write and send out. He was later asked by Tristan to draft the letter himself for the DCC to approve at the next meeting.

Christine said that she spoke to Geoff about the progress of Allocation of Overhead Plan. Geoff reported that Ann completed the Allocation model for FY2021. It has gone before the Airport Finance Committee for review and will go before the full Commission on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021. It was looked at as a very fair document for both the County and MVA. It is in draft form and going into conjunction with land use up to the Airport Commission and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). He has already reached out to FAA. The model will be going into effect for FY2022, so there will be time for tweaks if need be. Ann Metcalf had no update on the Guidelines for Borrowing Process.

### New Business

Richard asked that the process of appointments and their review be added to the next meeting agenda so that all DCC are aware of input that they can have and input that is expected of each position up for appointment. Christine agreed.

There was a brief discussion about the variant strain of COVID-19 and vaccinations. Richard reported that all Windemere residents and 26 members of the staff were vaccinated at MVH on January 12, 2021. The Medical Reserve Corps (MV MRC) and MVH will be conducting a Community COVID-19 Vaccination Program soon and are looking for interested

volunteers to help staff the check in and administration of this program that are civilians and healthcare providers.

James reported that the Steamship Authority (SSA) had 25 crew members that cannot work because they are awaiting COVID-19 test results or their 14 days isolation period to end. He said they have been doing vigorous reorganizing of crews and vessels to ensure reservations are conserved. However there is still a major concern of not having enough people to run the boats. He urged the DCC to authorize Martina to send the same letter as Nantucket to the Department of Transportation (DOT) that states that SSA employees are considered frontline workers and should be able to obtain the COVID-19 vaccination expeditiously. He also suggested Martina reach out Nantucket's Town Manager and if their timeline is past January 14<sup>th</sup> to send out the current draft as soon as possible. The entity responsible for actually vaccinating the crew members is currently being worked out, but he expects it to be done through Cape Cod Hospital. **Tristan Israel made a motion to authorize Martina to send the aforementioned letter in conjunction with Nantucket's to the Department of Transportation (DOT). John Cahill seconded the motion. So voted. John Cahill aye, Leon Brathwaite aye, Richard Peter Wharton aye, Keith Chatinover aye, Tristan Israel aye, and Christine Todd aye. Motion carries.**

#### Public Comments

Aaron asked for clarification on who the SSA letter would go to. John said it is not going to DOT, but to the Commissioner for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH).

Geoff suggested having a member of the MVA on the Personnel Board. Martina suggested asking an Airport Commissioner to apply to be on the Personnel Board at their next meeting. Geoff added that approximately half of their MVA staff – 12 first responders – will be getting vaccinated for COVID-19.

**Leon Brathwaite made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Tristan Israel seconded the motion. So voted. John Cahill yes, Leon Brathwaite yes, Tristan Israel aye, Keith Chatinover aye, Richard Peter Wharton aye, and Christine Todd aye. Motion carries.**

The Dukes County Commission meeting was adjourned at 5:52 PM. The next Dukes County Commissioners Meeting is on Wednesday, January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 4:00 PM.

Certified by:

  
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T. George Davis, Clerk of Courts

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

- Meeting Agenda for December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021
- Meeting Minutes 2-5-2020, 4-1-2020, 4-8-2020, 4-29-2020, 12-2-21, 12-16-21, 1-6-21
- Dukes County Commission Meeting Schedule
- Dukes County Manager Report for January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021
- Harbor Homes Contract and Scope of Services for FY2021
- Allocation of Overhead Plan
- Draft Letter for MDPH