

**Dukes County Commission
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 7, 2020
4:00 – 5:41 PM
*REMOTE PARTICIPATION ONLY***

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

Other County Officials Present: Martina Thornton – County Manager and Ann Metcalf – Dukes County Treasurer.

Others Present: Geoff Freeman – Airport Commission Director, Noreen Mavro-Flanders, Ben Robinson, Bob Whritenour, Kathy Logue, Mike Joyce, Lucas Thors, and R. Peter Wharton.

Tristan Israel called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

Disclosure Forms

Appointees to the Cape Cod Municipal Health Group on behalf of Martha's Vineyard Island are Noreen Mavro-Flanders, Bob Whritenour, and Kathy Logue (alternate). All three are required to annually submit Disclosure Forms to the Cape Cod Municipal Health Group. The Dukes County Commissioners have reviewed the particular matter and the financial interests identified by the appointees and have determined that the financial interest is not substantial as to deem it likely to affect the integrity of the appointees. Noreen is a retiree, Bob Whritenour and Kathy Logue are active employees and all receives health insurance through the Cape Cod Municipal Health Group. There have been no significant changes since they went through this process last year.

John Cahill made a motion to approve the Disclosure Form for all of the appointees with a determination that their interest is not financially substantial as to prevent them from participating in the CCMHG meetings and decision making and authorize Martina Thornton to sign on Tristan Israel's behalf. Leon Brathwaite seconded the motion. So voted. Leon Brathwaite aye, Christine Todd aye, Keith Chatinover aye, John Cahill aye, and Tristan Israel aye. Motion carries.

Martha's Vineyard Commission (MVC) Climate Change Committee Update

There is a core group of people looking at the various issues with regard to climate adaptation, becoming energy independent and mitigating all the issues surrounding climate change. Ben Robinson, Chairman of MVC Climate-related Committee/Taskforce reported that they are preparing for the warmest decade humans have ever experienced in the next 10 years and the coolest decade that humans will experience for hundreds of years. It was stressed that this a serious issue that we have to embark upon and move forward with addressing expeditiously. The MVC established this task force to start working on this issue regionally for the Island with the focus on two tasks--mitigation of energy and adaptation. West Tisbury has taken the first step as they adopted the resolution to move the Island to 50% renewable energy and electric energy by 2030 and then 100% by 2040. The adaptation side, called resiliency planning, is not only sea level rise, droughts, and forest fires, but also cultural and economic resiliency. They hope to

bring all the Towns on board this planning process. So far Aquinnah, Chilmark, and West Tisbury have all set up Town Climate Committees and the rest of the Towns are expected to follow suit with the MVC to be the liaison. This will allow things to be done regionally and take into account what the local conditions and characteristics within each town are. Carbon sequestration on the Island, understanding how the carbon cycle interacts with the Island and how land use planning and development and aquaculture might affect that. The nationally renowned Woodwell Climate Research Center has been lending technical expertise to help with carbon sequestration. They are also embarking on a pilot program to do some advanced modeling for Dukes County, Martha's Vineyard and Cuttyhunk which will show us what to expect with precipitation, drought, storms, and sea level rise on a very granular level. The Taskforce has a couple CZM Grants that are looking at coastal issues such as storm pathways for the entire Island and the second phase planning for the waterfront commercial and harbor area, which is essentially an Island-wide issue as we all use the Steamship Authority (SSA) for bulk services. The SSA port is within the flood zone given today's sea level, not even considering what the sea level rise might look like in 15 or 20 years. The Taskforce asked the state for Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grant program funds and didn't get any, so they have diversified their search for funds with grants from different foundations and different state and federal agencies. The MVP program, which all the Island towns participate in, received \$46 million in requests and gave out \$11 million and none of that money came to the Vineyard. Only one grant was issued to Provincetown on Cape Cod and most of the money ended up around Boston. Due to this, the Taskforce will be speaking with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts soon to discuss how underfunded these programs are and the need for funds regionally.

Dukes County Contributory Retirement System (DCCRS) Lease

The Martha's Vineyard Airport asked the County, which is the landlord of Dukes County Contributory Retirement System, to provide them with a copy of the sub-lease with the Dukes County Retirement System. The signed 20-year rent-free lease between the County and the Retirement System was unable to be located so the DCCRS's lawyer provided a version of said lease. The Dukes County Retirement System Board met and voted to verify the authenticity of this lease form. The terms of the lease for a DCCRS office space that is approximately a third of the Dukes County Administration Building for two employees began January 1, 2001 and will end December 31, 2021. In the spring/summer of 2021 both parties will work together on a plan to renew the lease with a new set of terms.

Christine Todd made a motion to verify the authenticity of the presented lease and authorize Martina to sign the lease on behalf of the County Commission. Keith Chatinover seconded the motion. So voted. John Cahill aye, Leon Brathwaite aye, Keith Chatinover aye, Donald Leopold aye, Christine Todd aye, and Tristan Israel aye. Motion carries.

Airport Borrowing from FAN

Out of only two bidders, the winning bid came in at a net interest rate of 0.623%. **Leon Brathwaite made a motion to accept the winning bid from Oppenheimer. Christine Todd seconded the motion. So voted. Christine Todd yes, Donald Leopold aye, Keith Chatinover aye, Leon Brathwaite aye, John Cahill aye, and Tristan Israel aye. Motion carries.**

Participation in Collective RFP for Power Supply under the Cape Light Compact

There is an offer for Dukes County to participate in the Cape Light Compact for the collected procurement of power supply. The contract would be starting July 1, 2021. It was noted that due to the prices of electricity there are currently cheaper and greener options available. It was requested that Martina ask for Cape Light Compact representative Eric Peckar for his opinion if the county should join before signing on to it. Martina will be participating in meeting where the bids are presented to evaluate how competitive they are compared to the current market.

Leon Brathwaite made a motion to participate in the collected procurement of electricity with Cape Light Compact and Martina representing the County in this process. Christine Todd seconded the motion. So voted. Keith Chatinover aye, Christine Todd aye, Donald Leopold aye, Leon Brathwaite yes, John Cahill yes, and Tristan Israel aye. Motion carries.

Budget

Due to the approaching deadline for the budget, there will be a separate meeting held on October 14, 2020 at 5PM.

Proposed Guidelines for the Borrowing Process

There is no update at this time. This matter will be discussed at the meeting on November 18, 2020.

Article Explaining County Treasurer Ballot Question

The Communications Committee will draft a Letter to the Editor explaining the ballot question on behalf of the County Commission.

Minutes

John Cahill made a motion to approve the Dukes County Commission's minutes from September 16, 2020. Leon Brathwaite seconded the motion. So voted. Leon Brathwaite aye, John Cahill aye, Keith Chatinover aye, Donald Leopold abstains, Christine Todd aye, and Tristan Israel aye. Motion carries.

Manager's Report

West Tisbury held a Special Town Meeting and approved the contribution to the County Stabilization Fund. Oak Bluffs is the only town that did not fund the shortfall. They have scheduled a Special Town Meeting for November 14, 2020 to discuss their contribution to the fund and other articles that were not funded. The shortfall has been lowered to \$30,000. The County Stabilization Fund is \$50,400. The Town of Oak Bluffs' share of the County Stabilization Fund is \$7,389.00 and the budget shortfall is \$4,398.00. Since they have underbudgeted \$2,560 for healthcare access, Martina has requested that they amend the budget to increase their share to the correct amount.

Martha's Vineyard Hospital has agreed to give a grant to Homelessness Prevention Coalition. The County is acting as the fiscal agent for that initiative. Martina is working with Harbor Homes and Houses of Grace to properly allocate the \$150,000 pledge for housing the winter homeless population in night shelters and warming centers. Due to lack of resources Houses of Grace will not be able to open up this year, so the Coalition is trying to find a space to utilize for

the homeless. If anyone of the public has a place available for a sleeping quarters, they should contact Martina Thornton or Karen Tewhey as soon as possible. There have been some funds in the budget set aside for staffing and coordination. Some of those funds will be matched with some donor funding to the Harbor Homes to help with this effort along with some long-term planning. Some shelter alternatives were suggested and explored. There is a total need to house 15-20 individuals. There will be two staff per site. Everyone must maintain safe social distancing, get tested, and adhere to the safety protocols. Couple smaller spaces that can house three to five individuals on regular basis would be preferred.

There was a previous vote to accept the extension of the Youth Task Force grant. Martina signed the extended contract and filed it with the State. The total amount of the grant for this year by the Department of Public Health is \$100,000 and will be continuing until June 30, 2021. The County is the fiscal agent for this grant.

Alchemy Restaurant's use of the Edgartown District Courthouse lawn has ended, and the tent has been taken down. Grass sod has been placed to replenish the lawn. It was reported to be a successful collaboration.

The County previously approved the funding to replace the faucets at the Courthouse. Touchless faucets have since been installed.

Budget

Martina increased the assessments by 2.5%, which would go towards the OPEB contribution because there is no other funding of it budgeted. Martina also decreased the Cape and Islands license plate revenue showing in the budget is only \$74,000 as the true revenue through a formula that has been used for years within the County budget. In the past the full anticipated revenue from Cape & Island License Plates was shown in the general budget as revenue, but only portion of it was counted as spent on economic development and tourism within the budget because there are only certain expenses that has been historically counted as such (15% of county commissioners budget, natural resources expenditures, the economic development expenditures, and ¼ of the website cost), leaving some funds unspent. The other variable is the revenue from the Northern Point from the Trustees. For the FY19 summer season we received \$64,000. In FY20 we lowered revenue expectation of \$35,000 due to COVID. Martina will try to get information about 2020 season revenues so far. As of now there is a balanced budget with no need to go to the towns for any budget shortfall.

When asked about additional coverage in the County Administration Building, Martina mentioned needing a County Advisory Board vote in order to take some money from line for her Assistant to put into some temporary help. There has been an ad placed for temporary help (couple of months) in the newspaper and there is some remaining money in the budget to hire someone. Martina has allotted some funds in next year's budget as a placeholder for a family health plan for her Assistant.

Appointment Process

There is no update at this time. This matter will be discussed at a later meeting.

Old Business

Ann and Jeff spoke about the allocation of overhead and it was determined that it is moving forward. The Subcommittee (Leon Brathwaite, Donald Leopold, and Ann Metcalf) will meet soon to discuss charging some of the outside agencies, such as the Land Bank, a fee for county services.

The Courthouse Planning Subcommittee (Martina Thornton, John Cahill, Christine Todd, Paulo DeOliveira, Judge Barnes, Liza Williamson, and Skip Finley) had a conference call to discuss long term financials, building maintenance, and utilization of services. Those at the courthouse feel it is working well. A representative from the State offered to do an inspection of the Courthouse for long-term maintenance planning. A follow up meeting will occur after that inspection.

There has been no luck in contacting the State Senator, Julius Cyr, regarding the lack of coverage for the Manuel F. Correllus State Forest. Kaley said they are aware of the issue and are working with state agencies to see if they can get them to hire someone new for the position of State Forest Superintendent. They are filing legislation allowing that person to live in the house. Currently a woman named Karen with the Department of Conservation and Recreation commutes from the mainland 5 days a week to monitor the State Forrest. There was a suggestion for an independent analyst to give an independent assessment of the State Forrest.

Christine, Tristan and Martina will try to meet with the Emergency Management Directors to discuss the future of Martha's Vineyard Emergency Management. The Department of Conservation and Recreation will be scrapping any remaining vehicles and equipment left in the previous Emergency Management lot at the Airport. The Airport Commission added that they are willing to assist with that effort as need be.

New Business

The Steamship Authority is discussing significant rate increases. The Steamship Authority Representative has been invited to attend the October 21, 2020 meeting to discuss this further.

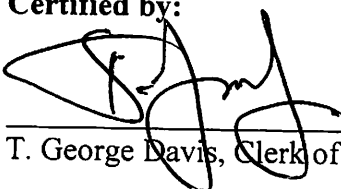
At the December meeting there will be a discussion about the County and Airport's relationship and model.

Adjournment

Christine Todd made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Leon Brathwaite seconded the motion. So voted. Leon Brathwaite aye, Christine Todd aye, Keith Chatinover aye, Donald Leopold aye, John Cahill aye, and Tristan Israel aye. Motion carries. The Dukes County Commission meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:41 PM.

The next Dukes County Commission meeting is on Wednesday, October 14, 2020 at 5:00 PM.

Certified by:



T. George Davis, Clerk of Courts

Documents Discussed

- Dukes County Retirement System Lease
- FY22 Draft County Budget