

**Dukes County Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, November 4, 2020  
4:00 PM  
REMOTE PARTICIPATION ONLY**

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

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

**Others Present:** R. Peter Wharton, John O’Hara – Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Representative, Geoff Freeman – Airport Commission Director, Bob Rosenbaum – Airport Commission Chair, Aaron Wilson – Vineyard Gazette, and Jennelle Gadowski.

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

Minutes

**John Cahill made a motion to accept the Dukes County Commission’s minutes of October 21, 2020 as presented. Donald Leopold seconded the motion. So voted. Donald Leopold aye, Christine Todd aye, John Cahill aye, Leon Brathwaite aye, and Tristan Israel aye. Motion carries.**

Appointment to Martha’s Vineyard Commission (MVC)

Christine Todd gave some remarks regarding her position on the Martha’s Vineyard Commission. **John Cahill made a motion to re-appoint Christine Todd to the Martha’s Vineyard Commission Board. Leon seconded the motion. So voted. John Cahill aye, Leon Brathwaite aye, Donald Leopold aye, Christine Todd aye, and Israel aye. Motion carries.**

OPEB Trust Report

John O’Hara gave a report on Dukes County OPEB Trust. He said that the performance for the fiscal year ending September 30th is 6%, which is top 16% of all public plans. He reviewed actuaries from KMS Actuary and reached out to find out others’ funding practices, such as the Barnstable County Treasurer. The County has a legal obligation to cover future costs for employee benefits. Dukes County has a hybrid approach of “pay-as-you-go” and payment installations. He recommended that Dukes County create a policy statement. Currently the towns are funded OPEB as follows - Oak Bluffs - 1%, Edgartown - 6%, Tisbury - 6%, Chilmark - 49%, and West Tisbury - 58%). He noted that West Tisbury has adopted a formal OPEB policy that allows them to contribute \$200,000 a year to OPEB Trust and if there are extra funds then those will be contributed too. The Dukes County discount rate is approximately 2.2% (based on a 30-year general obligation municipality bond rate). He said that the County wants that rate to be preferably closer to 7%. The KMS Actuary offered to create a schedule for Dukes County units of payments over the next 30-years. Leon Brathwaite and Geoff Freeman agreed to spending \$500 for the analysis. West Tisbury’s discount rate is 7%, their future liability is half of what the County’s is, with a similar number of employees as the county. West Tisbury invested \$2.6M to the Trust while County contributed \$1.3M. John suggested for the County to contribute to OPEB Trust earlier. Every Massachusetts municipal entity must abide by Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) and the OPEB obligations are part of the municipal audit every year as

is the Trust, which is a public document. Martina Thornton added that Dukes County's OPEB liability is split by the actuary between 5 units/Departments, totals approximately \$11 million – of which \$6.3 million is assigned to the Martha's Vineyard Airport, \$1 million to the Retirement System, \$3.6 million to general County Government, \$270,000 to Center for Living, and \$234,000 to Vineyard Healthcare Access. Several Commissioners asked: if Dukes County puts together a policy statement with all 5 units to fund OPEB and one unit does not fund their portion during a given year, if the County is still liable for that unit and their employees during that period that they cannot fund? The answer was yes, Dukes County is liable for all retirees. John O'Hara continued on to say that this past Fiscal Year the County of Dukes County contributed \$84,000, (it was actually \$112K but fees were taken out...note by Martina Thornton), while the Martha's Vineyard Airport contributed \$0. The prior year the Martha's Vineyard Airport contributed \$150,000. It was mentioned that this may affect the bond rating and borrowing for the County, so there is a need to have a consistent approach. Geoff Freeman, Airport Commission Director, said that while the Martha's Vineyard Airport is largest Department with the largest OPEB contribution, creating a policy that takes into account a potential drop down in a contribution year such as with seasonality and COVID-19's effect on budgets so that no one is locked into something that is unobtainable every year is crucial. He also added that the Airport is committed to participating the best that they can and want to work together as a group to come up with a policy. Martina Thornton suggested drafting a policy and sending it to involved sub-groups and for the policy to be further discussed at the upcoming County Advisory Board (CAB) meeting, if DCC is comfortable with the policy at their meeting on Wednesday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020. It was decided that Donald Leopold, Leon Brathwaite, Martina Thornton, and Ann Metcalf, and involved County Departments would work together to create a OPEB funding policy and have all parties agree so it can be implemented when budgets are being created.

#### Steamship Authority Updates

There was a request for more information regarding the costs for additional staff that exceeds the Coast Guard's minimum. The Steamship Authority is meeting to discuss their budget on November 4<sup>th</sup> and November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

#### FY2021 Budget Amendments

Martina reported that the line for temporary help in the County Commissioners' budget (Dept. 300) is halfway depleted due to long term absence of her assistant and the hiring of temporary help. She requested \$8,000 from her regular Assistant's salary line be moved and \$5,000 to go to the Temporary Employee line and \$3,000 to Miscellaneous Contractual for minutes taking.

**Christine Todd made a motion to approve the request as submitted by Martina. Leon Brathwaite seconded the motion. So voted. John Cahill aye, Christine Todd aye, Donald Leopold aye, Leon Brathwaite aye, Keith Chatinover aye, and Tristan Israel aye. Motion carries.**

Dept. 600 Courthouse – needs additional fund for insurance premiums - building insurance line needs additional \$5,591 and the liability insurance line additional \$3,031.90. The full premium for the umbrella policies for the whole county is allocated between the county buildings based on values to which it is insured. The budget allocation was based in a prior year, but the actual policy numbers for FY2021 changed, which created excess budgeted funds in Dept. 630 – Breakdown Lane building and not enough in Courthouse budget. The funding for Dept. 630 is from the towns based on 50-50 formula and therefore there cannot be a simple transfer of budgeted amounts between these departments. There will be money saved in the Dept. 630 for

the towns, but the Courthouse shortage needs to be covered from general county revenue sources. Therefore, Martina proposed to increase budget line for Deed Excise Tax revenue by \$10,000. This year the revenue for September and October was best ever and by far exceeded projections for these months, so she and Paulo DeOliveira are comfortable increasing the projected revenue by \$10,000, which would cover the shortfall in the Courthouse budget. Alternatively, she offered, the funds could be covered from the Unreserved Fund balance. Usually the premiums get paid at the start to the fiscal year, but this year, for the first time ever, half of the premium was paid at the beginning of the fiscal year, and the rest will be paid in installments. The first half and the first installment of the insurance have already been paid. The next payment is due January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021. **Christine Todd made a motion to increase Deed Excise Tax revenue projection by \$10,000 and Courthouse budget insurance lines to cover the actual premiums needed as proposed. Leon Brathwaite seconded the motion. So voted. Donald Leopold aye, Christine Todd aye, Keith Chatinover aye, Leon Brathwaite aye, John Cahill aye, and Tristan Israel aye. Motion carries.**

#### Ranked Choice

Previously rank choice voting policy had been approved by the DCC Board for appointments or single slots with four or more candidates. **Leon Brathwaite made a motion to get a legal opinion. No one seconded the motion. No vote taken.**

**Christine Todd made a motion to formally adopt the language as presented previously by Keith to use the method of rank choice voting in the appointment process. John Cahill seconded the motion.**

**Christine Todd amended her motion to have language consistent with State's language of rank choice voting. John Cahill seconded the amendment.** Keith pointed out that there is no minimum threshold for rank choice voting at the State level. **Christine Todd withdrew her amendment. John Cahill withdrew his second to the amendment.**

**Christine's original motion was voted on. So voted. Christine Todd aye, Leo Brathwaite no, John Cahill aye, Donald Leopold aye, Keith Chatinover aye, and Tristan Israel aye. Motion carries.**

#### Manager's Report

The surplus property left from the Emergency Management airport lot has been itemized and presented to approve for disposal as appropriately (donate or sell if possible, otherwise it will go to the dump). Forrest Filler, Dukes County Emergency Management Assistant, has been helping identify potential buyers and is recommending to hold on to item number 9 on the list for the time being and Martina agreed. **Christine Todd made a motion to approve the disposal of everything listed except for item #9 (trailer with spotlight ). John Cahill seconded the motion. So voted. Donald Leopold aye, Keith Chatinover aye, Christine Todd aye, John Cahill aye, Leon Brathwaite was unavailable, and Tristan Israel aye. Motion carries.**

#### Old Business

Geoff Freeman reports having an Allocation of Overhead Plan report at the end of December 2020. Christine Todd requested manual of regulations be emailed to her and the DCC Board in the meantime.

The Homeless Shelter in Edgartown does not yet have a lease signed. Safety protocols are being created.

### New Business

Tristan Israel is currently a member of the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) Board but offered his position up to any interested member of the DCC Board. Leon Brathwaite volunteered to be the JTC Chair, to which Tristan clarified was not an option. John Cahill volunteered to serve as an individual representing Dukes County. **Christine Todd made a motion to appoint Leon Brathwaite to JTC. Keith Chatinover seconded the motion. Keith Chatinover made a motion to appoint John Cahill to JTC. Donald Leopold seconded the motion.** Donald Leopold suggested John and Leon talk offline to discuss the position further at a later time. **Christine Todd withdrew her motion. Keith withdrew his second. Keith withdrew his motion. Donald Leopold withdrew his second.** There will be a vote at the next DCC meeting on Thursday, November 18, 2020.

Christine Todd discussed the climate change vulnerability of the Island. She researched solutions and found out that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts owns a wooded lot behind the State Police Barracks near Martha's Vineyard Hospital. She originally reached out to Senator Cyr's office to erect temporary structures for the homeless there, but since there has been other means secured, she would like to designate it for emergency shelter if needed in the future. It was agreed to continue the discussions with the State of the availability of the property for future needs.

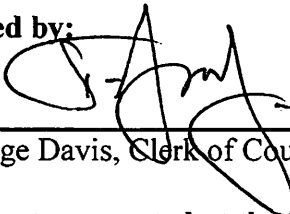
Martina mentioned that Emergency Management Directors have been discussing creation of a emergency management planner position to help coordinate planning for island-wide emergencies. The job description is being drafted and funding sources considered. Leon Brathwaite suggested having the Emergency Management Support Planner position work with the Martha's Vineyard Commission.

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

**The Dukes County Commission meeting was adjourned at 6:07 PM.**

**The next Dukes County Commissioners Meeting is on Wednesday, November 18, 2020 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
- Meeting Minutes for October 21, 2020
- Steamship Authority information
- Dukes County Budget amendment request
- Rank Choice Voting Policy
- Surplus Property List