

Dukes County Commission (DCC)
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 2, 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.

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

Others Present: Nancy Gardella – Executive Director of Martha’s Vineyard Chamber of Commerce (MVCC), Patricia “Patty” Mitrokostas – Grant Writer, Gerald Jones – Board Chairman of Martha’s Vineyard Nonprofit Collaborative (MVNC), Richard Peter Wharton – county commissioner elect, Geoff Freeman – Airport Director, Sam Hart – local director of The Trustees, Aaron Wilson – Vineyard Gazette, Lucas Thors – Martha’s Vineyard Times, and Jennelle Gadowski.

Tristan Israel called the meeting to order at 4:01PM.

Minutes

Christine Todd made a motion to accept the minutes for November 4th and November 18th, 2020. Keith Chatinover seconded the motion. So voted. John Cahill aye, Donald Leopold aye, Leon Brathwaite aye, Keith Chatinover aye, Christine Todd aye, and Tristan Israel aye. Motion carries.

There was a brief discussion about listing all participants of the Zoom meeting. An informal vote was taken to determine the Commissioner’s take on this issue. Two Commissioners voted to list everyone, while three voted to list only those who speak. Due to a majority of Commissioners liking the idea of only including those who speak, that was what was decided.

Certify Election of County Treasurer and County Commissioners

Martina Thornton said that she spoke with George Davis about certifying the election of County Treasurer and County Commissioners. Due to Tisbury not submitting the proper paperwork, he cannot certify the vote yet. Instead, he is planning on doing it next week. Due to COVID-19 the procedure has changed and does not need anything formally from the County Commissioners. Once the votes are certified, George will let Martina know. Leon Brathwaite added the only person that needs to be sworn in is Richard Peter Wharton, as the other County Commissioners have previously been sworn in.

Appointment to DCC Retirement Contributory System

There was a brief discussion about how the County did not instruct advertising the position and how there is only one candidate who is an incumbent member, Roger Wey. **John Cahill made a motion to reappoint Roger Wey. Leon Brathwaite seconded the motion. So**

voted. Leon Brathwaite aye, Christine Todd aye, Donald Leopold abstains (doesn't know him), Keith Chatinover aye, John Cahill aye, and Tristan Israel aye. Motion carries. Ann Metcalf, Chair of the Retirement Board gave no update at this time. The County Commissioners requested an update from the Retirement Board for the next meeting.

Grant Writing Collaboration

John Cahill gave a report on a collaboration between the County and Martha's Vineyard Chamber of Commerce (MVCC) to help those in need of relief due to COVID-19 by bringing funds to the Island. Approximately \$6,000 has already been raised. Leon Brathwaite expressed concern about the County's involvement and how it potentially violates Massachusetts General Procurement Laws Chapter 30B. John Cahill clarified that all funds go to Martha's Vineyard Chamber of Commerce Educational & Charitable Fund. This fund would be paying for the Grant Writer. The County would have no financial involvement. There would be a Steering Committee consisting of Ernie Reisman (an active member of this project), a member of the Dukes County Commissioners, and a member of MVCC and the committee would guide Patty Mitrokostas. She runs the grant writing workshops for nonprofits on the Island, so she is very qualified. County name might help attract grants for the community. Martina Thornton clarified that any grants identified will come before County Commissioners for approval before an application process is started. **Keith Chatinover made a motion of support for establishing a Grant Writer Fund under the umbrella of the Chamber. Christine Todd seconded the motion. So voted. John Cahill yes, Leon Brathwaite abstained (until the 30B question is answered), Christine Todd aye, Donald Leopold aye, Keith Chatinover aye, and Tristan Israel aye. Motion carries.** The Dukes County Commissioners thanked Nancy Gardella, Patty Mitrokostas, and Gerald Jones for their involvement in this collaboration and for presenting this.

Norton Point Beach

Sam Hart, Regional Director of the Trustees, updated the DCC on four main points for this year – Shore Bird Program, dune reconstruction and coastal resiliency work, revenue from the oversand vehicle trail permits, and management of technology. He reported a busy and successful season at Norton Point. Last year the County got a check for \$64,000.00. With the projected increase of \$14-15,000, that means that this year's check could be approximately \$80,000.00. There is currently \$35,000.00 in the budget, so this is good news for the County.

They have switched over to online passes and permits to comply with regulations and keep everyone safe. With this in mind there was no purchasing in person at the gate.

FY2021 Budget

Martina Thornton proposed that the Dukes County Commissioners authorize a budget transfer from the 'Associate Commissioners Travel Fund' into the Dukes County Health Council budget to cover the \$70.50 Steamship Authority trip cost for their travel overage for rural scholars. **John Cahill made a motion to approve. Donald Leopold seconded the motion. So voted. Donald Leopold aye, Keith Chatinover aye, Leon Brathwaite aye, John Cahill aye, Christine Todd aye, and Tristan Israel aye. Motion carries.**

Manager's Report

The Community Ambassador Partnership (CAP) requested support from the County for their submitted application to Permeant Endowment Fund (PEF) for additional funding for Island

interpreters. This program, founded by Leah Palmer and Sheryl Taylor, trains local English and Portuguese interpreters and translators to service the Island community in particular sectors such as public health services, COVID-19 testing site, and translating public service announcements and press releases. The County has been their fiscal agent since their initial stage. If the PEF awards the funding, the County will be the recipient, and disperse it according to the grant proposal. **Christine Todd made a motion to support the concept. Keith Chatinover seconded the application. So voted. Christine Todd aye, John Cahill aye, Leon Brathwaite aye, Donald Leopold aye, Chatinover aye, and Israel aye.**

Appointments will be advertised in the newspapers next week. The deadline, supported by the Dukes County Health Council, is January 31st, 2021. It was decided to advertise twice before and after the holidays.

A report came in today from Eastville Beach regarding a protected bird species. There was a successful Piping Plover pair of hatched chicks. These three chicks hatched were the first in many years. Tristan Israel brought up the informal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the County, the Oak Bluffs Department of Public Works and Tisbury Department of Public Works that would address the need for periodic parking lot work at Eastville. Christine Todd added that equipment is being stored by White Lynch Bros. as they do work on State Road by Eastville Beach. She hopes that White Lynch Bros. will contribute to the restoration of the parking lot. Tristan Israel further suggested having porta potties placed there. Martina Thornton received an email from the Dukes County Retirement Board notifying her that they have formally adopted Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) policy. It states that they will fund OPEB using a formula of the difference between the ADEC and the Employer Contribution, of no less \$2,000 annually. Martina sent the proposed county policy to the Martha's Vineyard Airport.

Strategic Planning

Tristan Israel proposed creating strategic planning committee to look at the County and how to bring in more revenue and/or grants and interacting in a more positive way with other agencies/departments such as the Airport Commission. Donald Leopold, Christine Todd and himself would be look at how to plan to plan. There was a brief discussion regarding open meeting laws – if there are only three people in a Subcommittee, they can avoid violating the open meeting law. Keith said he is not opposed to having more than four people on the Subcommittee so that there can be meeting minutes and open to the public. Suggestion was made to wait for formal creation of this committee until Peter Wharton comes on board. It was agreed that at the first meeting in January this proposal will be finalized and DCC will take a vote.

Old Business

Geoff Freedman and Ann Metcalf reported that they have had a recent conversation about the Allocation of Overhead Plan. There will be more updates at the next meeting.

Ann Metcalf reported that in regard to the Guidelines for Borrowing Process she is still awaiting info from Nantucket and Barnstable. She said that she would follow up with them.

Martina Thornton mentioned the funding for the part time Community Outreach/Communications Coordinator. Donald Leopold created a job description for this new position. Further discussion on this matter will take place at the next meeting.

John Cahill gave a brief report on the Beach Committee. They noted English/Portuguese signs have been taken down due to weathering. Christine Todd added a proposal to consider installing porta potties for the beaches.

New Business

Keith Chatinover once again inquired about an All-Island Selectmen's meeting. He is requesting that the County call for the meeting as hosts. He said there has been inadequate public health messaging, noncompliance, and community spread. Tristan Israel suggested having a written formal request for the Chair of the All-Island Selectmen meeting to have a meeting.


Christine Todd made a motion requesting an All-Island Selectmen meeting. Leon Brathwaite seconded the motion. Leon Brathwaite suggested applying pressure by calling as soon as possible and writing to each person's local representatives. It is Oak Bluffs' turn to host. Leon Brathwaite added that this meeting should be County-wide, Gosnold should be included. Christine Todd said that several groups are advocating for a regional approach for issues such as COVID-19, climate change, Emergency Management, etc. and that the County needs to step forward with a symposium that invites Dukes County Health Council, Boards of Health, Boards of Selectmen, Martha's Vineyard Commission, etc. She noted that Barnstable County holds these types of meetings every Tuesday morning at 9:45 AM with Police, EMS, Fire, Boards of Selectmen, Chamber of Commerce, etc. from all 15 towns. She suggested consistent and reoccurring communications. **Christine withdrew her motion. Leon Brathwaite withdrew his second.** Martina added that communications with Emergency Management and Boards of Health have been happening frequently, but never as a public forum to address the issue of COVID-19.

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

The Dukes County Commission meeting was adjourned at 6:08 PM.

The next Dukes County Commissioners Meeting is on Wednesday, December 16th, 2020 at 4:00 PM.

Certified by:



T. George Davis, Clerk of Courts

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

- Meeting agenda
- Meeting minutes for Wednesday, November 4th, 2020
- Meeting minutes for Wednesday, November 18th, 2020
- Grant flyer
- Ecologist report
- Email request from CAP
- Advertisement for appointments
- List of Dukes County appointment openings
- Job description for Dukes County Community Outreach Coordinator