

**Dukes County Commission (DCC)**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, March 17, 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 – Dukes County Manager and Paulo DeOliveira – Register of Deeds

**Others Present:** James Malkin – Steam Ship Authority; Liz Durkee – Martha’s Vineyard Commission; Bruce Montrose; Sam Hart – Long Point; Jeff Kristal; Aaron Wilson – Vineyard Gazette; Lucas Thors – MV Times; and Jennelle Gadowski.

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

Minutes

Meeting minutes were not voted on at this meeting.

Steamship Authority Update

James Malkin reported that as of March 14<sup>th</sup> passengers are down 20% and vehicles are about flat. The budget for this year was set up based upon 9 months of 2019 and first 3 months of 2020 in order to remove the Pandemic from the numbers. He also reported that so far aside from passenger revenue, the first 3 months of 2021 are tracking well against 2019. Data shows fewer residents are going off-Island than the excursion people coming on-Island. The Oak Bluffs pier was inspected twice this Winter with no unusual reports. Pier work will begin in April and the tentative loading start date is May 15, 2021 with the same loading capacity. Although there have been a couple of recent ferry breakdowns, there has been increased preventative maintenance, quick passenger notification of delays, and minimal disruption to service. There are still traffic and noise complaints from those that live nearby the Terminal. SSA working groups are dealing with these issues by collecting input for the Port Council and Board of Governors where they will review and make recommendations. Electrified ferries are being discussed by SSA and consultants, but there is a potential issue of ticket price increase and delay. The SSA website will be updated, making it more user friendly. Construction is still ongoing; the marine side is expected to be completed at the beginning of this Summer and the terminal is expected to be a several year process as it is going through design iterations and community review. There was a brief discussion about looking into more diverse hiring and procurement processes for goods and services. Mr. Malkin said that SSA met with Martha’s Vineyard Diversity Coalition and the Black Economic Council of Massachusetts regarding this matter and were provided resources and proposed changes to their procurement policy in order to attract a more diverse selection of bidders. For items that do not have to go out to bid, the SSA is looking at hiring local minority owned businesses. He further reported that they are still maintaining COVID-19 safety guidelines, such as cleaning and training.

#### Martha's Vineyard Commission Climate Change Planner

Liz Durkee, Martha's Vineyard Commission's new Climate Change Planner, discussed the request for a letter of support from the County to pursue a grant for a climate action plan. She reported that this is especially necessary since the Northeast USA is projected to see the higher seas, hotter weather, and more precipitation than global average. She urged the need to decrease the use of fossil fuels and transform to renewable energy in order to decrease the severity and impact to all of society. Education and informed decisions are key. **Tristan Israel made a motion to support the application for the grant. Leon Brathwaite seconded the motion. So voted. R. Peter Wharton aye, Tristan Israel aye, Keith Chatinover aye, John Cahill yes, Donald Leopold aye, Leon Brathwaite aye, and Christine Todd aye. Motion carries.**

#### Veteran's Services Officer

Bruce Montrose gave a brief status update report on Veteran's Services, such as how all veterans enrolled in VA Healthcare have been contacted to get vaccinated, but access and transportation is limited. They have been relying on several entities, such as MV Community Services and Dukes County Sheriff's Office to provide free weekly rideshares to Hyannis to be immunized. His biggest accomplishment is assisting in annual recertification to the Department of Veteran's Services to remain eligible for benefits. He noted that the best way to communicate with veterans is through the newspaper since many do not have computers or smart phones and Legion meetings have not occurred due to COVID-19.

#### The Trustees of Reservations

Sam Hart reported that final designs have been chosen for the Norton Point Beach Dune Restoration Project that will add 800 feet of dune back to the Norton Point West/Over-Sand-Vehicle (OSV) Trail. Snow fencing and/or dune grass plantings may be done for the other entrance of Norton Point Beach. Since 1897, climate impacts have been recorded for Norton Point Barrier Beach that show extreme erosion rates are extreme. In 121 years, 167 acres have been lost. Mr. Hart is requesting signatures on their permits and a letter of support for Coastal Zone Management when the time arrives. **R. Peter Wharton made a motion for a letter of support as requested for grant funding. Tristan Israel seconded the motion. So voted. R. Peter Wharton aye, Tristan Israel aye, Keith Chatinover aye, John Cahill aye, Donald Leopold aye, Leon Brathwaite aye, and Christine Todd aye. Motion carries.**

#### US. Army Corps of Engineers - Right of Entry on Norton Point

Trustees said they coordinate monthly at all of the sites with the US. Army Corps of Engineers. Ms. Thornton requested DCC ratify the MOU/Contract for the next 2 years allowing the US. Army Corps of Engineers a right of entry on Norton Point. She noted the only change is no permits will be sold out of the County Administration Building as they are still being sold online. There was a brief discussion about permit price increase at the next MOU signing and distinguishing local access vs. tourist access. Trustees drafted a new OSV policy that once initiated they expect more permits to be sold as more cars may be able to fit depending on environmental conditions. **Leon Brathwaite made a motion to authorize Ms. Thornton to sign the MOU Contract on behalf of the County. Tristan Israel seconded the motion. So voted. R. Peter Wharton aye, Tristan Israel aye, John Cahill aye, Donald Leopold aye, Leon Brathwaite aye, and Christine Todd aye. Motion carries.**

### Allocation of Overhead Presentation of New Formula

Ann Metcalf was not able to present the formula but having served on the Finance Committee Commissioner Wharton reported that the Allocation of Overhead is a model that takes the fixed costs of Treasurer's Office and County finances and allocates them in a fair and even manner across all County Departments. Discussion ensued about approving the formula.

### Manager's Report

Martina Thornton reported that her and Commissioner Todd have interviewed seven people for Assistant County Manager, but the search is ongoing. The CAB Public hearing on the County budget will be on Friday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, at 4:30 PM. They approved the budget transfers and sent the budget to the public hearing as approved by DCC. State Beach fencing is being prepared for the upcoming season as well as a sand moving project that will be finished by the end of March. CAB did not approve transfer to pay forth bill for Eastville Beach Bird Monitoring as they wanted more information. Robert Whritenour will be leaving as Oak Bluffs Town Administrator and therefore resigning as a Cape Cod Municipal Health Group. Kathy Lobe is the alternative and interested in stepping up to fill the seat. United States Coast Guard Menemsha Auxiliary accepted and thanked the County for the donation of left-over radios from Emergency Management Department surplus.

### Planning Committee Update

Commissioner Leopold reported that invitations went out from Commissioner Todd. He conducted another interview and has several more scheduled in the coming days.

### Old Business

Commissioner Israel noted that himself Commissioner Brathwaite would like to advertise locally/regionally for a lawyer that practices Municipal, General, and Labor law. He offered to vet any incoming responses with the County Manager, Commissioner Brathwaite and another Commissioner. **Tristan Israel made a motion to explore new Legal Counsel and form a Subcommittee. Leon Brathwaite seconded the motion. So voted. R. Peter Wharton aye, John Cahill no, Donald Leopold no, Leon Brathwaite aye, Tristan Israel aye, and Christine Todd aye. Motion carries.** More discussion ensued about potentially advertising for local outside Counsel recommended that is a minority, such as a woman or BIPOC. Others mentioned not wanting to disparage Counsel's recommendation nor spend the limited funds. **Christine Todd changed her vote to 'no' and asked those concerned to reach out to the recommended Council and report back at the next meeting.**

### New Business

It was discussed that Ms. Thornton would reach out to Ms. Metcalf, Geoff Freeman, and the Finance Committee for an update and any documents regarding the Guidelines for Borrowing Process in order to ensure clarity, open communication and visibility.

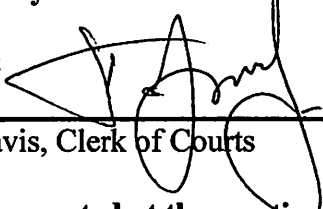
### Public Comment

There were no public or press comments.

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

**The Dukes County Commission meeting was adjourned at 6:31 PM. The next Dukes County Commissioners Meeting is on Thursday, April 7, 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
- Trustee Presentation Norton Point Beach Restoration Project Presentation
- Norton Point MOU
- Allocation of Overhead Presentation