

**Dukes County Commissioners
Minutes
Wednesday, April 29, 2020
4:00 PM
REMOTE PARTICIPATION ONLY**

Dukes County Commissioners Present: Tristan Israel – Chairman, John Cahill (John C.), Christine Todd-Vice Chair, Leon Brathwaite, Gretchen Tucker Underwood and Keith Chatinover.

Other County Officials Present: Martina Thornton – County Manager, Connie Andrade – Admin. Asst. to the County Manager, Ann Metcalf – Dukes County Treasurer, Bruce Montrose – Dukes County Veteran's Officer, Paulo DeOliveira – Register of Deeds.

Others Present: Bob Rosenbaum – Airport Commission Chair

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

Minutes:

Christine/Leon made a motion to approve the Dukes County Commissioner's minutes of March 4, 2020 as presented. So voted. Tristan yes, Christine yes, Leon yes, John C. yes, Keith yes and Gretchen abstains. Motion carries.

Letter to Seasonal Residents and Visitors Regarding Covid-19 Virus:

Christine discussed the correspondence sent from Julian Cyr on behalf Nantucket to the seasonal property owners and that the correspondence was posted on the Martha's Vineyard Chamber of Commerce's website. This letter has caused an outrage among the business owners on Martha's Vineyard. The DCC agreed that the letter in the current form is not accurate and needs revisions before being released to the Island. They agreed to modify the letter before being released since the only entities that were collaborated with were the Hospital and the Chamber of Commerce. None of the Town Administrators or the County Commissioners were involved in the wording or creation of the letter. Some concerns were if the travelers will bring their own personal protective equipment (PPE), 14 days of food for self-quarantine, cleaning supplies and health items. The DCC agreed to modify the letter before giving their approval for release and show a unified approach from the County. Christine said when Julian Cyr sent this letter, he said it would be good to get everybody together break it down and come up with ideas on how the letter can be improved. Christine volunteered to work with the business community to come up with some ideas for suggestions on modifying the letter and then the DCC should present this to the Town Administrators for their approval. The DCC would like Martina to work with Julian Cyr and report back to the DCC. Martina said if the DCC has any concerns over the wording, they should send those concerns to her. Christine would like any suggestions for changes to go to the County Manager before Friday or have the questions submitted to the County Manager so the DCC can review at the next meeting on May 6th.

Leon/John C. made a motion to sign the letter Senator Cyr created adding comments from the Dukes County Commissioners. This motion was withdrawn.

Leon/John C. made a motion to send a letter to Julian Cyr, Massachusetts State Senator created in support and the Dukes County Commissioners will submit their comments to Senator Cyr to cover some of the areas that need to be addressed. This motion was withdrawn

Keith/Leon made a motion to participate as a regional body of government with the Towns and Counties so Dukes County can have input on letters such as this, ideally so the Dukes County Commissioners have a voice if they see something they do not agree with as a signatory. So voted. Leon yes, Keith yes, Christine no, John C. yes, Tristan yes, Gretchen yes. Motion carries.

Christine/Keith made a motion that Dukes County Commissioners submits to Senator Cyr that we have significant concerns with the wording and tone of this letter and before the letter is disseminated with the Dukes County seal on it, we would like the Dukes County Commissioners to vote on it. The DCC would like any suggestions for changes to go to the County Manager before Friday. So voted. Leon yes, Keith yes, Christine yes, John C. yes, Tristan yes, Gretchen yes. Motion carries.

Veterans Agent Update:

Bruce Montrose gave the DCC an update on the Veteran's department efforts during the Covid 19 virus. He said the focus has been the Chapter 151 recipients. In March he had 32 inquiries in April it was 15. He also told the DCC how he is managing to work remotely including having the phones forwarded so he can respond in real time. The DCC thanked him for his efforts and asked for another update in a couple of months.

Treasurer Update – Audit, Bond Questions:

Ann gave the DCC an update on the audit and the allocation of overhead calculations. She said the bond question regarding the reserves has not been answered yet. FY2019 final audit is still not complete, it is only in draft form. She said she is reviewing Martina's spreadsheet regarding returning funds back to the towns. Once we agree on the numbers she will run a special warrant and get those checks out before the next DCC meeting on May 6th. As far as the allocation of overhead, Ann has spoken to the audit firm of Powers and Sullivan (who assisted the last time the calculation was done) and they advised her it will cost \$5,000 because of the May 31st deadline. There is a meeting scheduled tomorrow with Frank, Martina, and Ann to start the process. The cost increased from \$2,000 to \$5,000 because of the May 31st deadline and the audit firm not having enough time to complete. A discussion was held. Martina said she will need to get an approval from the CAB for the allocation of funds since those funds were not included in the budget and may need to come from the unreserved fund balance. The DCC agreed that the cost of the allocation of overhead calculations cost and the task falls on the shoulders of the Treasurer's Department.

County Manager Update:

- **Building Repairs:** The construction ban has been lifted by the Island towns, so the County will be continuing with our construction projects that we have had previously started. They are replacing the mini splits down in the courthouse basement and repairing the heating and cooling system at the County Administration building in the coming weeks.
- **Census:** Martina received information that the rest of the State is at 56% and Dukes County responses are only 12%. The County needs to encourage people to respond. A discussion was held. Keith said with the funds we received from the State we are hoping to do a mailing using a mailing appeal, because when the census information was mailed, it was mailed to street addresses as opposed to mailing addresses. He again wanted the residents to know they can do the census online. The DCC wanted to stress the importance of doing the census as it affects the amount of monies the State gives to the Island. Christine said she has been trying to get the message out using Facebook, it only takes three minutes to do the census online.
- **Courthouse:** The Courthouse will probably be opening for business on June 1st. Currently, all recordings are being done electronically and now the Land Bank can process electronically as well.
- **Administration Build Upgrades:** Martina is researching how to best protect employees from the Covid-19 virus when the buildings open to the public. We will be providing a barrier (most likely plexiglass) and maybe creating couple half doors. A discussion was held. The DCC asked Martina if she has enough PPE equipment for employees to safely return to work for a 60-day period. Martina said the County has been trying to get more, but right now they are using supplies the Emergency Manager had in storage. She will try to obtain more thru the Emergency Management system; however, right now masks are in a very short supply. The County tried to order some masks a couple of months ago and we

have not received them because supplies are depleted. Martina said to ensure the safety of the employees, County buildings cannot open to the public if the County is unable to ascertain more PPE supplies.

- **Town Annual Meetings:** the Towns are still in discussions regarding how to conduct their Town meetings and Martina may need some of the DCC members to attend a Town meeting in case there are four town meetings occurring at the same time. The DCC agreed to assist. Martina said she has heard from the Town of Edgartown that the County should be revising their proposed budget, perhaps cutting COLA and or freezing salaries or implement similar measures in response to their own budgets. Martina also sent a request to the regional programs about revising their budgets too. Any budgets amended at this point, will need to be amended on the Town floors.
- **Homelessness:** Martina said the funding shortage has been rectified. Karen was able to obtain donations from private donors to cover the shortage and will now have the funds to provide housing thru June 30th. Martina is also working with MEMA on possible funding options.
- **Steamship Authority Listening Session with Jim Malkin:** The DCC asked Martina to work with Jim to setup a Zoom meeting for the public that will be an informational session and will take place right after the DCC meeting.
- **Airport Commission Appointment – Fred Fournier:** Tristan said the DCC received a letter from Fred Fournier. He withdrew his request to be appointed to the Airport. The DCC agreed to run an ad for a replacement appointment. A discussion was held. Keith asked if the DCC could revisit the appointment procedures. Martina said George Davis will be unavailable to swear in the new appointees until after June 1st when the Courthouse opens. Keith recommended writing a letter to the newspaper editor to help gain interest from the community. Tristan said the County should run an ad by May 20th.

Leon/Keith made a motion to advertise in the Legal Notice section of the newspaper for the vacant Airport Commissioner seat and the deadline for application is May 18th at 4:30pm and write an editorial to both newspapers advising the community the deadline is May 18th at 4:30pm. Leon yes, Keith yes, Christine yes, John C. yes, Tristan yes, Gretchen yes. Motion carries.

Christine/ Keith made a motion to send a letter to editors of both newspapers expressing the vacancies and availability spelling out what we need in the Gazette and the MV Times. So voted. Leon yes, Keith yes, Christine yes, John C. yes, Tristan yes, Gretchen yes. Motion carries.

Dukes County Commissioner Replacement for John Alley: The DCC agreed to discuss a replacement for John Alley separately to be able to show respect for John and the position he held for decades. Martina read the statute “Upon the declaration of a vacancy in the position of Commissioner, the surviving Board members and the County Clerk should direct that a public notice be prepared announcing the vacancy and requesting interested and qualified citizens to apply to the County with a letter of interest, according to provisions in the Law”, “Qualification will consist of: Residence in one of the towns which, at the time of the vacancy, has less than two representatives on the Board of the Commissioners; and minimum age of 18 years.”, “Within sixty (60) days of the declaration of the vacancy, the Commissioners shall name a replacement who shall be sworn to fill the remainder of the vacant term.” Martina said that based on this language it's only the DCC that are naming the replacement.

Christine/Keith made a motion to declare one vacancy on the Dukes County Commissioners board on April 16, 2020 due to the passing of John Alley. The term would be the remaining term which expires Jan. 1, 2021. Deadline to apply is May 28th. Interviews will be on June 3rd via a Zoom meeting. So voted. Leon yes, Keith yes, Christine yes, John C. yes, Tristan yes, Gretchen yes. Motion carries.

New business: - Tristan told the DCC that he and Martina received a letter of resignation from Chuck Cotnoir who works in the Emergency Management Department. Tristan said both he and Martina have reached out to

Chuck, but as of the time of this meeting, Chuck has not returned either of their phone calls. The DCC will discuss this matter at their next meeting.

Calendar: Dukes County Commissioners Meeting 5-6-2020 at 4PM
SSA listening session - May 6th

Leon/Christine moved to adjourn. So voted. All in favor. Motion carries.

The DCC meeting was adjourned at 6:20PM

Certified by:



T. George Davis, Clerk of Courts

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

- Agenda
- Minutes 3-4-2020 for Approval
- Letter to Nantucket Regarding Seasonal Residents
- Letter to Dukes County Commissioners