

**Dukes County Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 6, 2020
4:30 – 6:13 PM
REMOTE PARTICIPATION ONLY**

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

Other County Officials Present: Martina Thornton – County Manager, Ann Metcalf – County Treasurer, and Forrest Fuller -Asst. Emergency Manager.

Others Present: Mr. Ensore & Robert Rosenbaum – Martha's Vineyard Airport, Donald Leopold, Cindi Martin – Airport manager, James Malkin – Steamship Representative, Woody Williams.

Tristan Israel called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.

Minutes

There was a mutual consensus that the Dukes County Commissioner's minutes from April 29, 2020 be edited to reflect more on the discussion on health issues. The revised version will be available for approval at the next meeting.

Appointment of Assistant Emergency Manager

Forrest Fuller's previous appointment to Assistant Emergency Manager expired in February 2020. He has worked in this role for several years now, under Chuck Cotnoir's leadership. He is willing to participate and continue in that role. An agreement between Martina and Forrest was made to use the \$2,500 stipend of the FY2021 budget for the Emergency Manager to pay Forrest as a token of appreciation. **Christine Todd made a motion to re-appoint Forrest to the position of Assistant Emergency Manager and compensate him with the budgeted allowance of \$2,500. John Cahill seconded the motion. So voted. Gretchen Tucker Underwood aye, Christine Todd aye, Leon Brathwaite aye, John Cahill aye, Keith Chatinover aye, and Tristan Israel aye. Motion carries.**

Letter to Seasonal Residents and Visitors Regarding COVID-19

It was unanimously voted at the previous meeting that anything the official seal would go on would be approved before it went out. However, due to the insufficient notice of less than 48 hours, the Commissioners were unable to finalize their decision on the letter to seasonal residents and visitors regarding COVID-19 that was sent out on the morning of Friday, May 1, 2020. There was much scrutiny amongst the Commissioners of the tone and wording of the letter released. Senator Julian Cyr indicated that in future communications to seasonal residents and visitors he might adopt some of the language proposed by the Commissioners. Cyr's office informed Martina that they will be updating the signatories and if the Commissioners agree with the letter that was sent out, they will add Dukes County to the

signatory on the website and any future communications that this pertains to. The revised letter to seasonal residents and visitors contains suggestions in yellow highlighted by Christine Todd that ensure that the appropriate tone and every health and safety consideration were taken into account. Martina Thornton spoke with all Board members beforehand to verify the language was acceptable. **Christine Todd made a motion to send a letter to Julian Cyr's office asking them if they are going to send out letters to year-round residents and seasonal visitors, and want the Dukes County seal on it, that they please give ample time (at least 48 hours) to offer up suggested edits, and receive them back in such a way that will or will not be used to approve a version that will or will not have the Dukes County deal on it depending on how the Commissioners vote. Keith Chatinover seconded the motion. So voted. Christine Todd aye, Keith Chatinover aye, Leon Brathwaite aye, Gretchen Tucker Underwood aye, John Cahill aye, and Tristan Israel aye. Motion carries.** In lieu of timing, it was suggested that Christine Todd, Martina Thornton, and Tristan Israel form a subcommittee to be able to work with Senator Cyr's office when the time comes for them to look at the edits so that there would not be further delay. It was unanimously agreed to. **Keith Chatinover made a motion to co-sign and add the County's logo to the original letter that Julian Cyr sent out. Leon Brathwaite seconded the motion. Leon Brathwaite withdrew his second. Tristan Israel seconded the motion. So voted. Keith Chatinover aye, John Cahill aye, Christine Todd no, Leon Brathwaite no, Gretchen Tucker Underwood no, and Tristan Israel yes. Motion is tied 3 to 3, which means it does not pass.**

Access to Beaches

Massachusetts' Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) owns and manages the state parks and public beaches. They released a statement that reads, "As of Friday, April 3, 2020, State coastal beach parking areas have temporarily closed. State managed beaches remain opened for passive recreational activities that only involve transitional movement – walking, jogging, running, etc. and for and solitary beach fishing. Sitting, sunbathing, and other stationary recreational activities are prohibited. Additionally, athletic and recreational activities that bring participants into close physical contact are prohibited. Visitors to state parks should follow these additional guidelines: Minimize outdoor recreational time to limit potential exposure to COVID. Stay within solitary or small groups. Avoid gatherings 10 or more people. Practice social distancing of at least 6 feet between individuals. Administer healthy personal hygiene such as handwashing for at least 20 seconds. Participate in only non-contact recreational activities. Leave a park or area should large gathering being to build. Stay home if ill, over 70, and/or part of a vulnerable population." Local towns have their own Orders that are more restrictive than this guidance. The state also has a Stay-at Home Advisory in place. There is no update of Towns having any specific regulations when it comes to beaches. Sheriff's Meadows has signs posted. Basic rule everywhere: ensure social distancing or wear a face mask when in public. It was suggested that anyone who manages/operates public beaches (Towns, Boards of Health, Dukes County, etc.) have a discussion to all have clear and consistent regulations regarding public safety during COVID. It was reminded that Beach Patrol doesn't get hired until the last week of June 2020.

Manager's Report

The Cape Light Compact extension proposal was due May 6, 2020. They reviewed and discussed that the pricing was higher than originally suggested, so they rejected the proposal. There is no extension of their contract at this time. The regular RFP will be going out later this year. The pricing is still continuing until the end of July 2021, which is when the current contract expires. In this year they will be doing the RFP for the new contract starting July 1, 2021.

Treasurer Update – Audit, Allocation of Overhead, and Bond Rating

The Treasurer's Office is still waiting to hear back on the audit and bond rating. On May 6, 2020, Martina Thornton and Ann Metcalf were reconciling the town payments. Everything is almost finished as the spreadsheet is being updated. Payments will be put out this week for everything except social services and Vineyard Healthcare Access. Ann reported that after Friday's Airport Finance Committee meeting, she is hoping to have the audit. There was a successful test on Time Clock Plus with the Registry of Deeds. The Airport will be starting the FY2021 accounting transition to the new general ledger. It was decided that moving forward Ann would provide a monthly update on expenditures, revenue and reserve fund during the middle of the month meetings. John Cahill reported on the allocation of overhead update. There have been several meetings with Powers & Sullivan, Leon Brathwaite, Ann Metcalf, Martina Thornton, and John Cahill. Ann was able to find \$5,000 from expense funds in order to pay for Powers and Sullivan, so they are ready to go forward. They wrote the last document 18 years ago on the allocation of overhead. In order for this project to work, Martina, Cindi and Ann must all be involved throughout the entire process. Robert Rosenbaum reiterated that the goal is to work collaboratively to find an acceptable plan for everyone. If there is an agreement to spend the \$5,000 for the contract with Powers and Sullivan to help with allocation of overhead plan, you would need transfers within and between departments in order to get the necessary funds in the Treasurer's budget. Martina sent the transfer request to John Cahill and Ann Metcalf. The request details: \$200 coming from miscellaneous contractual fund, \$1,000 from department 1800 retiree health), \$3,000 from Treasurer's health insurance, and \$800 from the Treasurer's in-state travel fund. **John Cahill made a motion to approve all of the transfers. Keith Chatinover seconded the motion. So voted. Leon Brathwaite aye, Keith Chatinover aye, Christine Todd aye, John Cahill aye, and Tristan Israel aye. Motion carries.**

Old Business

Keith Chatinover drafted several documents for the media. A prospective Letter to the Editor regarding the 2020 Census, and another regarding the vacancies on the Airport Commission and County Commission. The only edits on the document were from Leon Brathwaite. The edits on the vacancies letter was for the end of the line about the Airport Commission position being a "3-year term", which now reads "to complete the vacancy until February 2023". The edits on the 2020 Census letter are grammatical errors; addition of specific language about completion via online or telephone; addition that the census answers remain protected and are confidential for 72 years; examples of how the census affects federal funding for hospitals, school lunch programs, after school services, daycare services; and how Massachusetts lost a congressional seat beginning with the 2012 elections. **Leon Brathwaite made a motion to approve and send the letters to the editor to both local newspapers. Christine Todd seconded**

the motion. So voted. John Cahill aye, Christine Todd aye, Leon Brathwaite aye, Keith Chatinover aye, and Tristan Israel aye. Motion carries.

Appointment Process

To be discussed at a later meeting.

New Business

No new business.

Steamship Authority Monthly Report

The public is encouraged to listen into the weekly and/or monthly Steamship Authority meetings for full updates. James Malkin reiterated the need to hire a COO to take over some of Davis' responsibilities and help ease the burden. Even though the other 4 Governors were not in favor of this, James insisted he will continue to push the issue. The current status for the month of April is estimated that there is 16% of last year's passengers, 23% of last year's automobile's, and 40% of last year's trucks. The status of current reservations compared to what they were last year are about 66.66% for June, 90% for July, and 90% for August. The SSA has gone up for money since the figures are between \$1 million and \$1.5 million of cash drain per week. James has asked that the SSA business plan be reviewed and revised to ensure goods and services for the residents and businesses of the Islands remain accessible. The revised plan will be spoken to at the Steamship Authority's next general monthly meeting on May 19, 2020. There are concerns about the Oak Bluffs pier project not being completed by June 15, 2020. It was known that it was going to be problem since at least October 2019. Money was allocated in the budget to do the work, but nothing was sent out to do anything about it until March 2020. No bids were returned due to concerns about the time constraint, so the SSA is looking to complete 2/3 of the necessary work to get the pier safe for cars and passengers. The tentative return of service date for Oak Bluffs is June 22, 2020 for cars, pickup trucks, and passengers. It was pointed out that there is a gap of service resumption of approximately a month from last year. Bob Davis has been working on running busses from Vineyard Haven to Oak Bluffs to provide a direct service to people in the interim of repairs. It was mentioned that two of the members of the Board of Governors voted against doing work on the Oak Bluffs pier. There was a suggestion that since the SSA is not willing to provide a ridership service to Oak Bluffs at this time, that they allow other services, such as the high-speed ferry, to fill the gap and service Oak Bluffs on a temporary basis. James said he would raise the issue. The SSA does not have their audited financials from last year, which makes it difficult to look at business models going forward. There have been requests made for the audit. The Island Queen plans to start May 22, 2020. They are not taking reservations for that vessel yet, as they do not know what the demand will be. They will reduce capacity to allow for social distancing. The currently take about 400 passengers. The Highline plans to start on May 22, 2020. Their bookings for Memorial Day weekend represent about 10% of what their capacity is. SeaStreak plans to start on May 20, 2020. They have a handful of reservations and still planning to run service from New York City. The money that they make in the summer primarily comes from passengers. The SSA will follow Governor Baker's orders, but they want to have an authority that provides transport; when they have demand they want to bring people here. The day before the Governor's orders

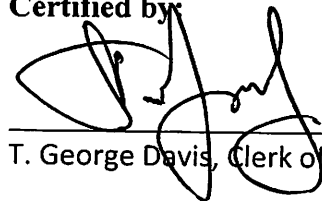
were released, the SSA issued guidelines and instructions for employees to wear masks unless there is a medical reason not to. Passengers who are not wearing masks are instructed to mask up, segregate themselves, board last, and remain outside on the upper deck for the duration of the voyage. The SSA has an agreement with their unions about the use of masks and social distancing. It was suggested that the SSA sell masks at a reduced price for passengers that do not have one. James said that the idea would be passed along for consideration and that previously masks were being handed out to passengers, although it is unclear if that is still occurring. It was suggested that the SSA post their meeting recordings on their website for transparency.

Adjournment

Leon Brathwaite made a motion to adjourn the meeting. John Cahill seconded the motion. So voted. Christine Todd aye, Leon Braithwaite aye, Keith Chatinover aye, John Cahill aye, and Tristan Israel aye. Motion carries. The Dukes County Commissioners meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:13 PM.

The next Dukes County Commissioners meeting is on May 20, 2020 at 4:30 PM.

Certified by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. George Davis', is written over a horizontal line.

T. George Davis, Clerk of Courts

Documents Discussed

- Letter to Seasonal Residents and Visitors
- Budget transfer request to allow payment to Powers & Sullivan
- Prospective Letter to the Editor – 2020 Census
- Prospective Letter to the Editor and accompanying ad – Airport Commission vacancy and County Commission vacancy