

Dukes County Commission (DCC)

**Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 18, 2024**

4:00 PM

Remote participation only

Dukes County Commissioners present: Christine Todd, Randy Milch, Don Leopold, Juli Vanderhoop, Peter Wharton, Tristan Israel, *Doug Ruskin arrived 4:16pm

Staff: Martina Thornton, Juliet Mulinare, Paulo DeOliveira

Others: Patrick Hickey – Oak Bluffs Wastewater, Drew Belsky

Christine called the meeting to order at 4:00PM

Minutes 9-4-24

Randy/Don moved to approve minutes of DCC meeting on 9-4-2024. So voted. Randy – yes, Juli- yes, Don- yes, Peter-yes, Tristan- yes, Christine – yes. Motion carries.

Committee Updates

Finance Committee- Peter reported on recommendation regarding the ARPA next steps:

Tristan/Randy moved to approve the recommendation of the Finance Committee to allocate \$240K to each town – Edgartown, Tisbury, Oak Bluffs for their wastewater projects that were already identified, \$100K to the Airport for their wastewater projects and the rest of the funds will stay with the county to pay administrative costs, unexpected expenses and used as revenue replacement as needed. **So voted. Randy – yes, Tristan – yes, Don- yes, Peter-yes, Juli –yes, Christine – yes. Motion carries.**

Peter reported that the Finance Committee is looking at how to best report income and expenses that will also be used as forecasting tool. Doug will talk about the Administrative Cost Reimbursement Policy proposed changes when he gets on.

Land Use Committee – Tristan reported that the County received one proposal to lease the New York Ave back lot land in Oak Bluffs – from the Greenhouse. Document was shared with the commissioners (document on file).

Tristan/Randy moved to accept the lease proposal of the Greenhouse at the terms as presented. So voted. Randy – yes, Tristan – yes, Don- yes, Peter-yes, Juli –yes, Christine – yes. Motion carries.

There was no proposal submitted for the RFP regarding long term real estate needs of the County. The Land Use Committee will have to talk about next steps at the next meeting.

Policy of how to approve the leases over 20 years was shared at the last meeting (document on file). The Commissioners agreed to send it to the Airport and notify them that DCC will be voting on it at the next meeting. Tristan was asking to get a new member and Randy volunteered to participate.

*Doug joined the meeting.

Administrative Code – Reimbursement Policy change (document on file)

Doug introduced the recommended draft that was prepared by Finance Committee that was shared. Randy commended that he believes that \$50 is low and would suggest raising it to \$100. He was working on the Administrative Code in general and is proposing a thorough revision. He does not believe that such a policy belongs in the Administrative Code, which is a county organizations document and proposes it to have as a standalone policy.

Randy/Doug moved to move the new Reimbursement Policy for employee expenses from the Appendix of the Administrative code and put it as a first policy that is posted on the county website. So voted. Randy – yes, Tristan – yes, Don- yes, Peter-yes, Juli –yes, Doug – yes, Christine – yes. Motion carries.

Don/Tristan moved to increase the reimbursement limit from \$50 to \$100 in the proposed policy. Discussion followed and motion and second was withdrawn.

Dough/Juli moved to approve the policy as written. So voted. Don – no, Tristan – no, Peter – yes, Randy – no, Juli – yes, Doug – yes, Christine – no. Motion failed.

Don/Tristan moved to approve the proposed policy and to increase the ceiling from \$50 to \$100. So voted. Don – yes, Doug – no, Juli – no, Randy – yes, Peter – yes, Tristan – yes, Christine – yes. Motion carried.

Legislative Committee– Christine reported that she worked with Senator Cyr’s office on creating a small working group from the island to meet with DCR to talk about State Forrest issues including the pending legislation. Tristan is interested to participate on behalf of the County.

Improvements Committee – Martina and Don are meeting later this week.

Communication Committee – Doug reported that they are working on the “county story” and that they are also looking forward to work with the Z Studios. Tristan also proposed to look at utilizing social media and Doug said it will be part of the overall strategy.

Steamship Authority Concerns

Doug and Christine went to Nantucket to attend the SSA meeting. In an executive session Bob Davis, the CEO offered his resignation and the Board accepted his resignation. The County is looking for SSA to start search for replacement and hope that the new change will bring opportunity to work on the raised issues in a collaborative manner.

Manager’s Report – Martina (document on file)

Tristan/Doug moved to pay the Phased One of the proposal by Z Studio as already approved from the Cape and Island License Plate Fund. So voted. Randy – yes, Tristan – yes, Don- yes, Peter-yes, Juli –yes, Doug – yes, Christine – yes. Motion carries.

Tristan/Don moved to authorize the Land Use Committee to finalize the lease with the Greenhouse and authorize the Manager to sign the finalized lease on behalf of the County. So voted. Randy – yes, Tristan – yes, Don- yes, Peter-yes, Juli –yes, Doug – yes, Christine – yes. Motion carries.

Budget

FY2026 Budget process was started. The COLA for FY2026 is calculated at 4.65% - the county uses the median of the COLA awarded by the island towns. Draft budget will be shared with Finance Committee no later than at their October 8th meeting and with DCC at their October 16th meeting. The regional program forms are being finalized as well and I am hoping to send it out later this week and give the programs about a month to fill out and send back.

Doug commended that the recent legal opinion explains that the budget could be increased as a sum of 2.5% over prior year plus actual increases from prior year. Doug proposed to have an in-person meeting on October 16th when we are reviewing budget draft. Christine said that if we can get everyone in person we could, otherwise we will run a hybrid meeting.

New business- none

Public Comment & Announcements- None

Next DCC Meeting is scheduled for October 2, 2024 at 4pm

Tristan/Doug moved to adjourned at 5:01 pm. So voted Doug – yes, Peter- yes, Tristan- yes, Randy – yes, Don-yes, Juli – yes, Christine – yes. Motion carries.

Certified by:



T. George Davis, Clerk of Courts