

Dukes County Commission (DCC)
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, Feb 18, 2026
4:00 PM
Remote Meeting

Dukes County Commissioners: Doug Ruskin, Randy Milch, Don Leopold, Tristan Israel, Peter Wharton, Juli Vanderhoop
County Staff: Juliet Mulinare, Martina Thornton, Paulo DeOliveira

Other: Sue Silk, Norm Werthwein (Finance Committee member), Cameron Naron, Jeffrey (Skipper) Manter, Kathleen Samways, Richard Toole, MV Times, Brian Smith

Don called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.

Minutes from 2-4-2026

Randy/Peter moved to approve the minutes from February 4, 2026. Doug- yes, Don – yes, Peter- yes, Randy- yes, Tristan- yes. Motion carries.

Annual Appointments

The nominating committee recommends appointing:

Associate Commissioner for Disabled – Sue Silk - **Chair appointed**

Dukes County Personnel Board – Jeffrey (Skipper) Manter and Brian Smith (both are incumbents)

Randy/Tristan moved to appoint Skipper Manter and Brian Smith to the Dukes County Personnel Board (3 year term).

Doug- yes, Don – yes, Peter- yes, Randy- yes, Tristan- yes. Motion carries

Starting a Charter Study Commission - ballot question

Doug brought up that today is the last day to vote on if a charter study commission should be created to study the present governmental structure, stating that we assume we can ask that it be removed from the ballot with sufficient notice, should it be determined if it's not needed or wanted. Failing to do so now would add significant delay should it be needed, as the next opportunity to vote would be the 2028 ballot.

Peter and Tristan do not think we are ready to take on this process.

Randy wants to know the deadline to withdraw the resolution. He would be for moving forward if enough work is done before that withdrawal date. If the work and information are not ready, he feels the task force should be disbanded until we are ready to move on it.

Doug/Randy moved to file a resolution with the Secretary of State to place the following prescribed question on the November ballot "Shall a charter study commission be created to study the present governmental structure of the County of Dukes County, to consider and make findings concerning the form of government and make recommendations thereon?"

Doug- yes, Don – yes, Peter- yes, Randy- yes, Tristan- no. Motion carries.

Endorsement for the Attorney General Guidance

Randy feels we should share the guidance on the rights of individuals concerning ICE on the County website, but he feels that the County has no role in endorsing an explanation of the law by the state's highest legal official. Tristan felt we should endorse the guidelines. Martina shared a letter that can be sent out by Christine, asking other community leaders to support this Guidance.

Tristan moved to endorse the Attorney General Guidance letter. No second.

Doug/Don move to ask Martina to put the guidance on the website. Doug- yes, Don – yes, Peter- yes, Randy- yes, Tristan- yes. Motion carries.

Committee Updates

Finance Committee – The FY25 audit should be done the end of next month. Doug would like to get an opinion from legal counsel about the Veterans’ Services assessment being placed in the budget by the towns instead of as a warrant article. Randy & Martina will work on how to phrase the question to the legal counsel.

Land Use Committee- The Land Use Committee is recommending the Healthy Aging License Agreement for approval. Healthy aging is providing some space to the youth task force, which, per counsel, is done as a licensing agreement. **Doug/Tristan moved to approve Healthy Aging License Agreement for Youth Task Force. Doug- yes, Peter- yes, Don – yes, Randy- yes, Tristan- yes. Motion carries.**

Communication Committee - A press release was put out on next week’s meeting to interview the SSA candidates.
Governance Task Force - They have met and are reviewing the steps that will need to be taken to gather information.
Nominating Committee – still working on the housing authority and the health council.

Regarding the interviews at next week’s meeting, the commissioners reviewed the format. There was no objection with the league of women voter’s style. Randy questioned what the allotted time for the full meeting will be. It was agreed to be 90 minutes. Don and Peter feel individual interviews are clearer and more informative. It was agreed on the league of women voter’s format. The group cannot go into executive session to deliberate after the meeting. Deliberating, voting and the appointment will be made after the conversations on the 25th.

Manager’s Report

Elections: all 7 county commissioner seats are up for election at the November state elections. Voters registered with a party must run in the Primary elections (September 1st); unenrolled voters will only appear on the ballot for the November 3rd election. Martina will alert the commissioners when the nomination papers are available for pick up at the West Tisbury Town Clerk’s office. You can pick it up there (NOT YET), or you can request the State Election’s office to mail it to you directly. The deadline for submitting papers to the town clerks, according to the election division’s calendar that was shared with you appears to be April 28th. It was confirmed by the Elections Division that the Dukes County Treasurer’s position will not appear on this year’s ballot and going forward.

Emergency Management – MV Emergency Management Consultant: Key Stakeholders in person conversations with Michael West happened this week. The dates are being picked for the end of March/beginning of April to have an in-person workshop to review the proposed strategic plan.

Buildings:

Breakdown Lane

Martina has selected a vendor to do the repairs of the roof and gutters at the building, and the work will get done as soon as the snow melts off the roof.

Calendar - The next county commissioner’s meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 25th at 4pm at the Hebrew Center for SSA Representative applicant interviews.

Randy/ Doug moved to adjourn. Doug- yes, Don – yes, Randy- yes, Peter- yes, Tristan- yes. Motion carries.

Meeting ended at 5:26pm

Certified by:

T. George Davis, Clerk of Courts

