

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

Dukes County Commissioners: Doug Ruskin, Randy Milch, Don Leopold, Tristan Israel, Peter Wharton, Christine Todd, Juli Vanderhoop

County Staff: Juliet Mulinare, Martina Thornton, Kevin Brennan, Paulo DeOliveira

Other: Dan Seidman, Nancy Slate, Rise Terney, Emma Green-Beach, Suzanne Kuffler, Donna Joyce, Jane Macuen, Nancy, Ted Gavin, Cameron Naron, Peter Jeffery, Amy Cody, Danielle Ewart, Alex Kryska, Jim Malkin, Kerry Alley, Ethan Genter, Nathaniel Trumbull, Joe Sollitto, Amy Gavin, John Cahill, Eunki Seonwoo, Richard Toole, James Hagerty, Peter Jeffrey, SM Harris, Ted Gavin, Amy, Margaret Hannemann, Barbara Baskin, Simon Shapiro, JD's Iphone, Sharon Pearson, ***Gail Barmakian- joined at 5:21

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

Steamship Authority Representative interview recap

The commissioners asked questions and added their thoughts on the position and the 3 candidates.

Randy/Doug moved to nominate Ted Gavin to the Steamship Authority Board for a 3-year term. Doug- yes, Don – yes, Peter- yes, Randy- yes, Juli- yes, Tristan- yes, Christine- yes. Motion carries.

******Randy Milch left the meeting 4:25pm***

Minutes from 2-18-26

Tristan/Don moved to approve the minutes from February 18, 2026, as amended. Doug- yes, Don – yes, Peter- abstain, Juli- yes, Tristan- yes, Christine- yes. Motion carries.

DC Regional Housing Authority Appointments

Each of the candidates introduced themselves.

Daniel J. Seidman

James Hegarty

Nancy Slate

Rise Terney - was unavailable. And will be nominated at the next meeting she can attend.

Peter/Doug moved to appoint Dan Seidman, James Hegarty, and Nancy Slate to the DCRHA for a 3-year term. Doug- yes, Don – yes, Peter- yes, Tristan- yes, Juli- yes, Christine- yes. Motion carries.

Don Leopold left the meeting at 4:42pm

Blizzard Hernando Storm Response

Kevin Brennan, part-time emergency manager for Dukes County, spoke to the handling of the storm and its impacts. He reviewed the power outages and the warming centers that were opened in each town as well as communications challenges due to some loss of internet and cell services. He also highlighted a situation where an emergency generator in Oak Bluffs had virtually no fuel supply and therefore could not be used. The issue of how to better communicate to the public was raised, and how to sign up for the alerts. Also raised: the need to let the community know the

commissioners are working with a consultant to work on these very issues as part of the island-wide strategic plan for emergency management.

Shellfish Propagation Earmark Appreciation Letter to the state legislative delegation

Danielle Ewart, the president of MV Shellfish Group, asked the County Commissioners to approve the letter of appreciation for the state earmark.

Doug/Tristan move to approve the letter of support. Doug- yes, Peter- yes, Tristan- yes, Juli- yes, Christine- yes. Motion carries.

Committee Updates

- Finance Committee will meet next week
- Land Use Committee- nothing to report
- Legislation committee- Christine is working on inviting our legislators to join the meeting for an update.
- Communication Committee- nothing to report
- Governance Task Force- met yesterday and are finding out what is possible. They would like to present to select boards sooner rather than later. Tristan would like the commissioners to review the information before sitting down with any groups. Doug believed the task force was tasked with collecting information without the commissioner's approval. Doug will be more specific in his next update.

At the last meeting, the commissioners voted to put a County Charter Commission on the November ballot with the understanding that they can rescind the vote and pull it off the ballot if necessary until a certain date, however the Elections Division confirmed that once the request to place it on the ballot is filed, there is no backing out. Since that was not the intent of the vote at the last meeting, the request was not filed with the State. The next time the County can request the question about creating a County Charter Study will be for the November 2028 state elections (request must go to the state in February 2028 or earlier).

Manager's Report- report on file

New Business-

About 3 weeks ago, DCC decided to review the governing documents of the DC Health Council. Doug would like the pertinent information well beforehand, so the DCC has ample time to review before the meeting. Martina said she has most of the information requested and will share it via email. Christine will work with Kathleen Samways on presenting additional information as needed and distributing it to the group.

Public Comment-

Amy Cody would like to put a plug in for some regular process to be discussed by the Dukes County Commissioners and hopefully followed, such as creating or reviewing a list of expectations of what the commissioners are expecting and the roll and responsibility of the new board member. She believes that would include a quarterly update from the SSA representative to the DCC in person to answer the tough questions the commissioners will have for him, including the cleanup from the OIG report and posting the board rep reports on the County website. She also wants regular listening sessions not sporadic but regular sessions with the full Board and Steamship leadership. She would like the rep to have a column in the paper on a regular basis with a Q & A section. She did not like the fact that the candidate had already scheduled a listening session on such short notice without knowing if he would be appointed and without being able to give the public more notice. This is not the kind of listening session she is looking for. She felt he threw it out at the interview as a carrot, as a way to convey how he wants to communicate with the public and that did not work for her.

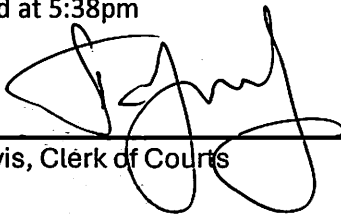
Calendar - The next county commissioner's meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 18th at 4pm.

Peter/Doug moved to adjourn. Doug- yes, Peter- yes, Juli- yes, Tristan- yes, Christine -yes. Motion carries.

Meeting ended at 5:38pm

Certified by:

T. George Davis, Clerk of Courts

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'T. George Davis', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.