**Dukes County Commissioners**

**Minutes**

**Wednesday, February 6, 2019**

**4:00pm**

Dukes County Administration Building

9 Airport Road, Edgartown, MA

**Dukes County Commissioners Present:** Gretchen Tucker-Underwood—Chair, \*Tristan Israel—Vice Chair, \*\*Keith Chatinover, Christine Todd, John Cahill, John Alley and Leon Brathwaite

\*\*participated via conference call

\* left the meeting early

**Other County Officials Present:** Martina Thornton—Dukes County Manager, Connie Andrade – Asst. to the County Manager, Chuck Cotnoir – Dukes County Emergency Manager, Paulo DeOliveira – Register of Deeds, Ann Metcalf – Dukes County Treasurer

**Others Present:** Joanie Ames—MVTV, Rich Saltzberg—MV Times, Bob Rosenbaum – Chair Martha’s Vineyard Airport Commission (MVY), Beth Tessmer – Applicant for MV Airport Commissioner, T. George Davis – Clerk of Court/County Clerk, Brian Smith - Resident , Kristen Zern – MV Airport Commissioner, Don Ogilvie - MV Airport Commissioner, Robert Fuller – Applicant for MV Airport Commissioner

**Gretchen called the meeting to order at 4:00pm**

**Dukes County Commissioners (DCC) – Swearing In:**

T. George Davis swore in the Dukes County Commissioners (all except John Cahill and Keith Chatinover as they were sworn in at an earlier date).

**2019 Airport Commission Appointment Interviews:**

* **Kristen Zern:** Kristen gave the DCC a brief history of her aviation experience and her last three years on the Airport Commission. She said she has 25 years working with marketing executives in aviation and customer service. Her role on the Airport Commission was Chair of the Outreach Committee and she has been working to improve communications for the Airport. Kristen reviewed the economic impact of the Airport for the Island and acknowledged the importance of the Airport to the community for programs such as Angel Flights and assistance with medical flights. In the next 10 years, 80% of the airport staff will retire due to their age (country wide). Kristen has worked with ACEMV for a Cape Cod Community College program which has a 15 month program and become an airport mechanic (after passing FAA tests). Kristen discussed the requirement from the FAA to create a 20 year master plan. She said the airport does not intend to expand the size; they would like to expand to the back of the airport to give TSA more room (which is a requirement). This would not impact any aspect of the environment as they would just be modifying the existing area. She also said there is no need for 576 additional parking spaces but that some of the parking needs to be repositioned. A discussion was held. Christine asked about the future of the business park. Kristen said the Airport has consultants to determine what land exists and can be developed for more businesses according the FAA restrictions. John A. asked Kristen about the number of parking spaces. Kristen said this is a plan with a lot of stages, right now they are thinking about repositioning the parking places to be closer to the front and relieve traffic congestion, but no definite plans have been made. Kristen said the roof of the main terminal leaks and the airport has been “doctoring it.” She also wanted to note they the runway will not be extended, they are just resurfacing the existing ones. Kristen said most all airports use deficit spending because there are times where there’s lots of cash coming in but also times were there isn’t.
* **Don Ogilvie:**  Don gave the DCC a brief update of his last three years on the Airport Commission. He said he’s learned a lot over the last three years and promises to work just as hard as he did the previous three years. Currently, Don said he serves as Vice Chairman on the Airport Commission. He’s also served as Chair of the Finance Committee (when he was first appointed) and is currently Chair of the personnel committee. Gretchen asked Don about the 20 year master plan for the Airport. Don said he was involved in putting the plan together and is a very important document and will guide the path of the airport going forward. A discussion was held. Christine asked about the business park and the possible expansion of it. Don said Business Park as it is makes a huge contribution to the Island. The Airport has sent requests to the FAA and the Defense Department to release additional land for leasing. Gretchen asked Don what the Airport needs to do to improve and how he would be a part of that. Don said if he gets reappointed, he will continue to serve in any way the Chairman would like. He already serves on Land Use and the Budget committees. Don said the Airport is working on the well water situation. The cause is the fire-fighting foam that the FAA requires airports to use. He gave the DCC a brief description; they have 16 wells that have been identified as having issues. The costs are hundreds of thousands of dollars and it’s just getting started. Christine asked if the FAA will reimburse the costs. Don said no, so far the FAA has not reimbursed the airport. Gretchen asked Don’s opinion of deficit spending. Don said he is against it and organizations should run a fiscally tight ship and unless you are a taxable entity you should cover your costs with whatever revenue you have. John A. asked Don about the proposed parking space expansion and what is his position on the size of the terminal building too. Don said the 20 year plan has to include every possible scenario. John A. asked if Don is for the expansion of the terminal. Don said as far as the expansion of terminal. There is no proposal or plan right now; all that needs to be worked out and the Airport will have to spend some money to decide that issue. He said the TSA facilities are currently woefully inadequate.
* **Robert Fuller:** Robert said he has qualifications that would be appropriate for the commission. He has 48 years’ experience as a business owner. In the past, he has owned, operated and developed a small airport in Connecticut. With that position he has built hangars and office buildings. He is a licensed pilot since 1983 and had been based at MVY for nine years. He has attended the last two public hearings dealing with well contamination and the capital improvement plan. A discussion was held. John C. asked him about his business experience. Robert said he was a developer starting in 1994 based in Connecticut. He developed and built residential and commercial industrial buildings in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, New Hampshire and Maine. Robert said he has volunteered and been appointed to various volunteer positions, some were for a municipality. He was a founding member of MV Search and Rescue. He was also on the Chilmark Conservation Commission monitoring well water. Gretchen asked Bob about the Airport 20 year plan. Robert said one thing that should’ve been discussed and emphasized; there are nine areas of work that was presented. Seven of those nine areas deal with the safety and improvements to the facility without expanding the buildings and that should’ve been emphasized. Even if there were no of improvements the traffic to the airport will increase. The areas that deal with safety should be emphasized. Christine asked about the potential expansion of the business park. Robert said he is not aware of how much land is left for the business park so it’s difficult to answer that question. The business park has had its problems, but most business parks do as they are developing. If there’s to be a theme for the business park as part of the development, that would be helpful. Right now it’s application by application with no specific guidelines. There needs to be a theme (something that benefits the Island as a whole) for the park and better criteria for either approving or denying. Gretchen asked if there’s anything the Airport can do to improve other than establishing a theme and the business park. Robert said he agrees with the proposal plan and it should be separated into two categories. The ones that deal with safety and those that deal with the appropriate operations of the existing airport. Gretchen asked how Robert feels about deficit spending. Robert said if you spend and you don’t have the money, you will get into trouble one way or another. He said with the monies available through grants, there should be funds available for all seven items and it should not be problematic, unless it comes to expansion that will be a harder sell. John A. said he read in the newspaper about the possible expansion of the parking area and asked Robert his opinion. Robert said the expansion as presented dealt with the improvement of TSA screening and that gets to the area of safety and this is critical. The overcrowding happens in July and August and some of the customers need to plan their time a little better and we should not be increasing the size of the building to accommodate people for two months.
* **Beth Tessmer:** Gretchen asked Beth why she would like to be an Airport Commissioner. Beth said because there are certain things that can be corrected and changed in positive ways and she feels she has experience to make those changes and can spread some light on some existing issues. She said she worked nine years at the MV Airport in the FBO (fixed based operations) and was promoted in 2013. Beth also said her strongest point is customer service. She recently returned to the Airport as the property manager. A discussion was held. Leon asked what the Property Manager did. Beth said a lot of billing for rent, water and sewer. She also said that is not a one person position, there is too much work. Beth said she currently works for the Town of Tisbury in the sewer department. Gretchen asked Beth what her position is regarding the 20 year plan. Beth said she started in 2004 and she was not necessarily involved at that time, as the previous manager did not include her in the discussion. She also said the 20 years plan was not followed the way it should’ve been followed. Then the Airport Commission changed and a lot of good changes happened. She would need to study more about the 20 year plan before making a comment. Gretchen asked Beth if she had read the article in the newspaper and what are her concerns. Beth said she just moved and has not had a chance to read it but as far as the new terminal, do we need one, no. Can they adjust the one they have, yes absolutely? She also said TSA needs to be improved and all those extra parking spots are not necessary. Christine asked about how the business park is run and should it expand. Beth said it should expand and has room to expand; the well water issue is definitely a problem. She also said the costs are outrageous and it was shut down when the Town of Edgartown volunteered to pay to install their water lines, and that would bring the costs down to help bring in new businesses to the area. She asked why the costs have never been negotiated. Gretchen asked if Beth has ever been involved in litigation with the Airport. Beth said yes absolutely, you and everyone in the room know the answer to that question. Gretchen asked Beth about deficit spending. Beth said she doesn’t know if she can answer that, but that the FBO could be making a lot more money on fuel sales. There needs to be more positive changes in the future. Keith asked Beth what kind of changes she would like recommend both on the Airport Commission and at the Airport as well. Beth said if chosen to the Airport Commission, she would push hard to be on the finance committee and the personnel committee because that’s where a lot of the problems are. Right now, you will find the Airport has the ability to make the money and the necessary changes. Beth also said the Union contracts (two years out) have not been negotiated yet. Beth said whoever is on the Airport Commission needs to pay attention to the fuel sales (there have been millions of dollars lost in revenue).

**\*\* Tristan and Keith left the meeting at 5:26pm**

**Personnel Board Interview of Applicant**: Brian Smith gave the DCC a brief history of his qualifications for the Dukes County Personnel Board. He said he has a degree in management, has lived on the Island for 24 years and was on the West Tisbury Personnel Board for seven years and chair for four or five of those years. Brian also said he was part of the job classification study for West Tisbury two different times.

**Manager’s Report:**

* **Island Health Care:** Martina said the County had the task of renting the upstairs at 29 Breakdown Lane. The County has supported three times with no proposals. In an effort to get a public benefit, Cynthia Mitchell from Island Health Care approached Martina on behalf of Island Integrated Health Collaborative to use that space. Martina spoke to the County Advisory Board (CAB) and they supported the proposal. Martina said the proposal is to lease the space at no cost but to cover the cost of their share of utilities. They are a federally funded health care clinic. If all the Towns agree, they would lease from the County and run the proposed health collaborative in that space. Martina said she has been to Chilmark already and the Selectmen have approved the proposal. She plans over the next two weeks to go to the other Town Board of Selectmen (BOS) for approval. She said if all the BOS approve the proposal, she will bring a lease to the DCC to sign at the next DCC meeting. A discussion was held. Leon asked how much the grant is. Martina said they will have $20k to $30k to furnish the building. Cynthia told Martina they would cover the cost of the utilities (25% of the building’s utilities costs). The DCC asked Martina in the future to come to them before taking proposals to the CAB. Leon asked Martina to put a clause in the lease that says Center for Living has the right of first refusal if they decide to expand in the future.

**Christine/Leon made a motion to allow the County Manager to pursue this and allow Martina to go to the Towns for support. So voted. All in favor. Motion carries.**

* **Courthouse Lift:** has been installed and is now in service.
* **Health Insurance Rates:** the county received the final numbers for the health insurance for FY20 and the rates are better than anticipated and she will try to adjust the budget accordingly. A discussion was held. Leon said any surplus the County has from that should go into OPEB.
* **Audit:** they are finalizing the numbers and the DCC should have the final numbers at the next meeting. Martina said if possible she will schedule the exit conference for March.
* **Equalized Value from DOR:** the FY20 and FY21 numbers have come in from the State. There is a little shift in percentage towards Edgartown and Oak Bluffs. They went up and everyone else went down.

**Martha’s Vineyard Airport Update – Bob Rosenbaum:** Bob gave the DCC an update on the airport finances. He said Ann Richart will not be renewing her contract which ends on May 5th. They will begin the search for a new airport manager. The testing of the water and remediation affected by the fire-fighting foam and the fact that they have legislation for $2.17M that was never acted on before the end of the last session to reimburse the airport for all the capital expenditures they have made over the last year and a half, they are looking at a cash flow deficit up to $350k. They need to figure out how to cover that situation so they would like to ask the County to loan the airport that money for about two months. The hope is the possibility that the legislature will act quickly, that they are trying to expedite this. The Airport had unbudgeted significant expenses tied to the well water issues. They have expended approximately $200k and expect that amount to increase up to $350k. Bob said the Airport is looking to see where cuts can be made in their budget. He also said he expects to have an updated number by the March DCC meeting. A discussion was held. Gretchen asked what the possibilities that the area are with contaminated wells is expanding. Bob said there is certainly a reasonable possibility of that. The Airport has hopes their insurance company may cover these claims. Christine asked if the Airport Manager is hands on between now and May when her contract expires. Bob said she is at a meeting right now and he thinks she is committed to seeing the process through. He also told the DCC the Airport will need to amend their budget. Their original budget has a surplus of $360k and it is impossible that the Airport will get to that number. There is a distinct possibility they will have a deficit at the end of this year.

**Leon/John A. made a motion to adjourn. So voted. All in favor. Motion carries.**

**The DCC meeting was adjourned at 6:15pm.**

**Certified by:**

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T. George Davis, Clerk of Courts

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

* Agenda
* List of 2019 Appointment Interviews
* 2019 Resumes for Airport Commission, Personnel Board and Assoc. for the Disabled
* Email Update for Steamship Authority from Marc Hanover