

Martha's Vineyard Land Bank Commission

MINUTES
REGULAR SESSION
MEETING OF AUGUST 14, 2023

via remote technology

CALL TO ORDER: 3:00 pm

LAND BANK COMMISSIONERS PRESENT AT CALL TO ORDER

Steven Ewing, Pamela Goff, Wesley Mott, Kristen Reimann, Sarah Thulin, Nancy Weaver

LAND BANK COMMISSIONERS ABSENT AT CALL TO ORDER

Peter Wells

STAFF PRESENT AT CALL TO ORDER

Zachary Jessee, Harrison Kisiel, James Lengyel, Julie Russell

OTHERS PRESENT DURING THE SESSION

Sharon Cooke, Philip Cordella, Thomas Humphrey (*Vineyard Gazette*)

PRESENTATION OF THE WARRANT

Warrant no. 2024-07 was made available for the Commission's inspection.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Hearing no proposed additions, Mrs. Goff declared the agenda approved as printed.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF JULY 24, 2023

By a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted unanimously in a roll call vote to approve the minutes as written.

Commissioner Peter Wells joined the meeting at this time.

COUNTY AND LAND BANK COMMISSION TREASURERS' REPORTS

None

TRANSFER FEE REVENUES

Revenues for the week ending July 28, 2023: \$252,170.20
Revenues for the week ending August 4, 2023: \$545,070.20
Revenues for the week ending August 11, 2023: \$ 93,082.65

NEW BUSINESS

1. Agency Land Management: Farmland Leasing

The Commission discussed the five agricultural leases that are due to expire at the end of the year.

Three are eligible for extension through 2027: (1.) Morning Glory Farm, Inc. at the Norton Fields Preserve; (2.) Morning Glory Farm, Inc. at the Peaked Hill Reservation; and (3.) Johanna Douglas at the Wapatequa Woods Reservation. Mr. Kisiel recommended extension; after discussion and by a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted unanimously in a roll call vote to extend each of the three.

Two have reached the full end of each's term: (1.) Featherstone Farm, currently leased to Gary Stead; and (2.) Poucha Pond Reservation, currently leased to Lillian Walter. After discussion and by a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted unanimously in a roll call vote to issue a request-for-proposals for each. Mr. Stead and Ms. Walter will be so informed, as a courtesy.

2. Agency Land Management: Purchase of Equipment

The Commission reviewed an August 8, 2023 staff memorandum recommending the creation of a portable shelter for the agency goat herd.

Goatherd Zachary Jessee summarized the specifications — awnings, panels, etc. — of the proposed structure and stated that all of the work would be customized, as he himself would do the welding. He noted (1.) that the memorandum's \$10,060 price is "pretty general," as he won't have a final figure until the task is underway; and (2.) that he derived his design from conversations with MSPCA staffers but that they won't offer their final opinion until the structure is built.

Mrs. Reimann asked for the background here. Mr. Jessee stated that the commonwealth has a law requiring "proper shelter" for livestock but it is not prescriptive and cedes it to the MSPCA to specify details. Mrs. Thulin (1.) asked if the current arrangements will be adequate until the structure is constructed, to which Mr. Jessee replied in the affirmative; and (2.) stated that the August 8, 2023 letter from veterinarian Constance Breese was helpful in understanding the situation. Messrs. Ewing and Mott asked about

how the structure would operate and how the goats would react to it; Mr. Jessee noted that the goats will need to get used to it so as not to be frightened. Mrs. Goff asked about instead using a number of pre-made shelters; Mr. Jessee believes that they would not be sturdy enough.

The budget for the grazing program contains \$85,500 and staff believes that sufficient funds are available in the line item to fund both the shelter and the other expected expenses.

After discussion and by a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted unanimously in a roll call vote to approve the staff recommendation.

3. Agency Land Management: Disposal of Equipment

The Commission continued, from its July 24, 2023 meeting, its discussion of its invitation-for-bids for the disposal of its 2007 GMC 2500 pickup truck, declared surplus at its June 26, 2023 meeting. Mr. Kisiel noted (1.) that the land bank had since extended the deadline for bid receipt and expanded advertising and yet no bids were received; (2.) that the previous sole bidder had in the interim withdrawn his offer; and (3.) that during the bid period he spoke to Trevor Towher, who is willing, for no exchange of cash, to haul the truck off-island where he will part it out. Mr. Kisiel stated that the land bank hasn't equipment to do so itself and nor can it drive it, as it lacks an inspection sticker. He recommended that the land bank accept Mr. Towher's proposal.

After discussion and by a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted unanimously in a roll call vote to accept Mr. Kisiel's recommendation.

4. Quenomica Preserve (Town of Edgartown)

The Commission discussed an August 4, 2023 email from the Kanomika Road Association president in which he inquires as to whether the land bank will wish to contribute a proportional \$10,741.11 for the installation of a cistern in the event of a house fire. The land bank's Quenomica South cottage is located nearby.

Ecologist Julie Russell stated that she understood that the need for the cistern arose (1.) from a requirement from the insurers of the private homes on the peninsula; and (2.) from the town fire chief, as a result of the unreliability of access to the waters of the great-pond (e.g., overgrowth of brush leading to the shore; frozen water in the off-season; fluctuating pond levels depending on the season; sediment in the water.)

Mr. Ewing stated that it would be neighborly for the land bank to contribute. Mrs. Thulin noted that this item does not appear in the land bank budget and

asked staff for its opinion; Mr. Kisiel stated that the cistern would provide security for the land bank cottage but that no one particularly expects the humble structure still to be there in thirty years and that, were a fire to occur, the cottage would "decommission itself."

After discussion and by a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted unanimously in a roll call vote to approve the expenditure. It will be drawn from underexpended funds in the Quenomica Preserve line item and land management category.

PUBLIC INPUT


None

ENDORSEMENT OF THE WARRANT

The Commission endorsed Warrant no. 2024-07.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

By a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted unanimously in a roll call vote to enter executive session for the purpose of discussing the purchase, lease, exchange or value of real property. Mrs. Goff stated that the subjects to be discussed are the purchase or value of real property and declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Commission. She further announced that the Commission would not reconvene in regular session after the conclusion of the executive session. The Commission entered executive session at 3:55 pm.

certification: 
Nancy Weaver, Secretary