



Martha's Vineyard Land Bank Commission

MINUTES REGULAR SESSION MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 8, 2025

11 A Street. Edgartown, Massachusetts

CALL TO ORDER: 3:09 pm

LAND BANK COMMISSIONERS PRESENT AT CALL TO ORDER

Steven Ewing, Frederick Khedouri, Wesley Mott, Kristen Reimann, Sarah Thulin

LAND BANK COMMISSIONERS ABSENT AT CALL TO ORDER

Nancy Weaver, Peter Wells

STAFF PRESENT AT CALL TO ORDER

Harrison Kiesel, James Lengyel, William Veno

OTHERS PRESENT DURING THE SESSION

John Abrams, Sharon Cooke, James Graham, Mary Elizabeth Pratt, Laura Silber

PRESENTATION OF THE WARRANT

Warrant no. 2026-11 was made available for the Commission's inspection.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Hearing no proposed additions, Mr. Mott declared the agenda approved as presented.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 25, 2025

By a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted in a roll call vote four in favor, none opposed and Mr. Khedouri abstaining to approve the minutes as written.

COUNTY AND LAND BANK COMMISSION TREASURERS' REPORTS

None

TRANSFER FEE REVENUES

Revenues for the week ending August 29, 2025: \$728,210.00

Revenues for the week ending September 5, 2025: \$226,935.00

NEW BUSINESS

1. Agency Administration: Affordable Housing

John Abrams and Mary Elizabeth Pratt of the Coalition to Create the Martha's Vineyard Housing Bank were present, as was Laura Silber of the Martha's Vineyard Commission, in order to discuss the proposed housing bank.

Mr. Abrams stated that they were present to ask the land bank to endorse the housing bank. Of the three germane bills pending before the legislature the coalition is focused on the particular bill that would allow a housing transfer fee for designated "seasonal communities." He recommended that commissioners do "everything you possibly can do" and noted that the coalition has "fiercely declined" to support proposals to funnel off any portion of the land bank's existing conservation transfer fee.

Ms. Silber reported that the emphasis is on supporting the towns' efforts to secure such a fee; she noted that towns have affordable housing trusts but that what is needed is a nimble entity — like the land bank — that can act quickly.

Mr. Abrams stated that the goal would be to recover some of the many houses that "have been swept into the short-term rental" market and, in so doing, "to buy back the Vineyard."

Mrs. Thulin spotlighted the land bank's long-established work and engaged collaboration, within the confines of its law, in assisting in the creation of affordable housing; she noted that when the land bank makes statements/endorsements on public affairs they always concern conservation matters only.

Mr. Khedouri asked if there was a risk that legislators may seek to siphon off some of the land bank's 2%, in order to avoid any fresh levies; Mr. Abrams stated that the island's legislators would "stand in the way of that."

Commissioners agreed that they would reflect on what the land bank could do that would have the mien of an endorsement, without actually taking a public political position on a non-conservation matter. Mr. Abrams and Mss. Pratt and Silber departed the meeting at this time.

2. Agency Administration: Receipt of Gifts

Staff reported that the land bank had received (1.) a \$100 gift from Tammy Kallman, in memory of Wayne Kallman; and (2.) a gift of a brushcutter from Margaret Pinney. After discussion and by a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted unanimously to accept the donations, with gratitude.

3. Agency Land Management: Procurement of Equipment

Commissioners reviewed bids received for the purchase of a trailer, arrayed here in descending order by price: (1.) BTT Trailer, Swansea, \$9,500; (2.) Wright Trailers, Seekonk, \$8,375; and (3.) Kingston Trailers, Middleborough, \$7,065. Mr. Kisiel recommended the Wright Trailers bid, as its trailer has better features than the others such as a standardized galvanized steel frame. \$15,000 had been budgeted for this purpose.

After discussion and by a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted unanimously to accept the staff recommendation.

4. Agency Administration: Municipal Taxation

The Commission discussed letters received from the West Tisbury Board of Assessors dated May 13, 2025 and August 13, 2025 regarding the proposed payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOT) program, plus a draft response prepared by staff. This matter had been most recently discussed at the Commission's June 2, 2025 meeting.

Staff reported that the West Tisbury Town Advisory Board, at its July 25, 2025 meeting, agreed to discuss this matter at a future meeting. The Commission's response to the assessors could be useful to the Board in its discussion.

After discussion and by a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the draft, as printed, and to direct staff to post it.

5. Oak Bluffs Trail Planning

The Commission discussed the status of the Old Back Way to Oak Bluffs and, in particular, whether it should offer to enter into a management agreement with the town for its oversight. It is an integral part of the Cross-Oak Bluffs Trail. The land bank already has a like agreement in town for the Old Holmes Hole Road.

Mr. Veno detailed the route and its importance in island-wide cross-town trail planning. It would cover the portion of the ancient way between Grovedale Avenue / Alpine Avenue and the Southern Woodlands Reservation.

After discussion and by a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted unanimously (1.) to endorse this concept; and (2.) to refer this matter to its Oak Bluffs Town Advisory Board.

PUBLIC INPUT

1. Agency Administration: Public Input

James Graham spoke to (1.) the proposed housing bank; (2.) the PILOT request by the West Tisbury assessors; and (3.) the care of the Scrubby Neck Path ancient way that the area homeowners' association provides.

Sharon Cooke spoke to (1.) the proposed agreement with the town for the Old Back Way to Oak Bluffs; (2.) the plan to burn exotic and invasive species on the concrete pad at the former Webbs Camping Area, now the Southern Woodlands Reservation; and (3.) the land bank's livestock herd.

ENDORSEMENT OF THE WARRANT

The Commission endorsed Warrant no. 2026-11.

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. Mr. Mott 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. He further announced that the Commission would not reconvene in regular session after the conclusion of the executive session. The Commission entered executive session at 4:09 pm.

certification: _____


Kristen Reimann, Secretary