

**DUKES COUNTY CHARTER STUDY COMMISSION
APPROVED ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS
As Amended May 29, 2008**

Massachusetts General Law (MGL) allows a Charter Study Commission to make recommendations to improve the efficient and effective administration of the county. The Dukes County Commissioners may adopt these recommendations in whole or in part, regardless of whether a new charter is recommended and approved by voters.

Improve the Accountability of the Dukes County Commission to the Voters

- Require that a question calling for the creation of a Dukes County Charter Study Commission be placed on the County/State ballot every eight years beginning from the election of November, 2008.
- Incorporate provisions for voter-initiated recall of county commissioners into the Administrative Code and pursue special enabling legislation, if needed.
- Conduct annual County-wide public meeting(s) to discuss county programs and the budget, prior to formal approval by the County Commission.
- Require representative County Commissioners, the County Manager and/or the County Treasurer to participate in the meetings of the Island Finance Association.
- Hold County Commission meetings in different towns from time to time during the year.

Recommend Ways for the Dukes County Commission to Strengthen its Relationships with Town Governments

- Expand the County Commissioners collaboration with the County Advisory Board in establishing County objectives and in preparing the annual budget.
- Work with town Selectmen to strengthen the All-Island Selectmen organization as a forum for addressing issues of multi-town and regional concern.
- Require representative County Commissioners and the County Manager to hold periodic meetings with individual Town Boards of Selectmen.
- Expect the County Manager to participate actively in all regularly held meetings of the Town Administrators group.

Strengthen the County's Relationship with Other Regional Organizations

These regional organizations include the Martha's Vineyard Commission (MVC), the Island's Public Schools, MV Regional Transit Authority, MV Refuse Disposal District, Dukes County Housing Authority, and other functions that might be more efficiently provided on a regional basis.

- Assign to each County Commissioner a liaison responsibility with one or more inter-municipal/regional organizations, including Planning (MVC), Affordable Housing, Water Protection (including Waste Water Management), Solid Waste Management, Economic Development (including Agriculture), Energy, Transportation, Public Safety, and Health & Human Services.
- Create an All-Island "Roundtable" made up of representatives from key functional areas to improve the understanding of the County's needs for regional/intermunicipal collaboration.

- Form ad hoc working groups of community and subject matter experts as needed to address specific issues of regional concern.
- Conduct joint meetings of Martha's Vineyard Commissions and Dukes County Commissioners at least once annually and conduct regular joint meetings of MVC and DCC staff for the purpose of identifying and working on issues of mutual interest, including the possible sharing of services.
- Participate in an analysis of the services currently delivered by the County, other Island-wide or multi-town public entities, etc., as well as best practices off-Island, in order to identify the criteria that can be used to determine which entity is best placed to deliver specific services, including the possible transfer of existing services.
- Continue to pursue the current efforts of the County Commission to develop opportunities to collaborate with the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) and urge the Commission to identify "mutually agreeable" mechanisms for creating a productive partnership.

Continue to Explore Opportunities to Enhance County Revenues and/or Reduce Operating Expenses

- Consider income generating opportunities including fee-based services; full State funding of the State's portion of the Courthouse assessment; aggressive pursuit off Federal, State and private grants, including Federal grants for the preservation of historic buildings; fees for use of County properties; the sale or leasing of County assets, participation in a regional power or other utility as well as other innovative and creative ways for raising revenue.
- Obtain a definitive written opinion from legal council regarding the County receiving lease payments from the Airport.
- Work with the State legislature to pursue revenue sources that would require special legislation, such as a County room's tax.
- Ask the Department of Revenue (DOR) to conduct an operational assessment of the County, similar to the DOR studies performed for several Vineyard Towns

Revise the County Manager Form of Government

- Seek special legislation that would exempt Dukes County from the language in MGL ch. 34A §18 that states that the County Manager "shall serve for an indefinite term" and "that the position is and shall be a full-time position".
- Require that the County Manager reside on Martha's Vineyard after the incumbent's initial probationary period without allowing a waiver by the Commission.

Revise the Dukes County Commission Appointment Process

- Unless otherwise restricted by MGL, limit to one the appointment of a County Commissioner to a given organization.
- Prohibit the appointment of any County Commissioner to an agency that compensates its members (e.g. the Retirement Board).
- Delay appointments from January until March, except where specified to the contrary by MGL.
- Commence advertising all open positions after the holidays.
- Clearly specify the purpose of each position.
- Consider all applicants for all positions on an equal basis, including incumbents.

- Make all appointments by the full Dukes County Commission in an open meeting, including those appointments that MGL specifies be made solely by the Chair.
- Require that all appointees periodically communicate to the Commission at least once annually a given agency's issues of concerns and vice versa.
- Require that all organizations appointed by the Commission periodically brief the Commission at least once annually on their functions, activities and issues, including the submission of a written report for inclusion in the Dukes County Commission's Annual Report.

Create a Process for Encouraging a Broader Range of Candidates for the Dukes County Commission

- Publicize by the beginning of April of each state/county election year the requirements, schedule and deadlines for seeking election as a Dukes County Commissioner. Use a variety of publicity techniques, including county website, press releases, advertisements, community announcements, and other tools to widely communicate the information.
- Provide all of the forms that must be completed by potential candidates in readily available locations at the County Administrative Office, the Courthouse and the offices of all Town Clerks.