

**Select Board Update**

The Task Force was created by the Select Board to identify opportunities to strengthen the efficiency, transparency, compliance, continuity, and public trust of West Tisbury town government. As an advisory committee, the Task Force can only identify opportunities, research best practices, develop recommendations, and assist the Select Board and town officials with implementation

IGTF has created, and is already updating, a 90-page Governing West Tisbury handbook, available on the town website. The handbook brings together in one place the laws, bylaws, policies, and governance practices that previously existed in many separate sources, providing a common reference for officials, committee members, and the public.

It has identified that the Town had no practical method to communicate quickly with all town officials, including appointed committee members, in the event of emergencies or other town-wide matters. Working with town officials, the Task Force is helping establish a maintained contact list and governance framework for its use.

The Task Force is pursuing a long-term strategy to

1. **Create a common understanding** (Governing West Tisbury)
2. **Create the ability to communicate** (the contact list).
3. **Preserve institutional knowledge** (the Continuity Companion and knowledge capture).
4. **Strengthen governance** through practical recommendations and continuous improvement.

Board Action Requested

We request that the Select Board adopt a town-wide policy recognizing governance continuity and knowledge preservation as ongoing responsibilities of every department, board, committee, and office. Continuity cannot be delegated to an advisory committee. It has to become part of the Town's own expectations for how it governs itself. That's why our first request is not approval of a particular project, but adoption of a policy recognizing continuity and knowledge preservation as ongoing responsibilities of town government.

The policy would encourage the development and maintenance of practical continuity records, the preservation of institutional knowledge, and the use of governance resources that support effective transitions and long-term organizational resilience

The Improving Governance Task Force would assist the Select Board, Town Administration, and town officials in developing practical tools and recommendations to support this effort

Best regards,

John Christensen, Chair