

Approved 10/21/26
Town of West Tisbury
Select Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 14, 2026

Select Board: Skipper Manter, Jessica Miller, and Cynthia Mitchell (participating remotely).

Town Staff: Jen Rand, Town Administrator; Shawn Ramoutar, Board Administrator; Tara Whiting (Town Clerk); Chief Greg Pachico.

Others in Attendance: Ben Cabot, Michael Miller, Cathy Brennan, Louis Perdemo, Nicola Blake, Lily Echeverria, and MVTV.

Call to Order and Approval of Minutes

Mr. Manter called the Select Board's weekly meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. He said the Board would postpone approval of the minutes until the following week. He noted that the public hearing was scheduled for 4:45 p.m. and that the Board could take up other business before then. The Town Clerk had not yet arrived, so the Board proceeded to cemetery marker height limits.

Cemetery Marker Height Limits

Ms. Rand shared an illustrative image of the type, size, and shape of a cemetery marker requested by an individual considering purchasing a cremation lot. The proposal involved a five-foot granite post topped with a great horned owl. Mr. Cabot explained that the applicant wanted the bird near eye level. The applicant was away, had not yet purchased a lot, and was willing to consider a larger or double lot.

Ms. Rand explained that Alan Gowell, who oversees the cemetery, was concerned that the marker could overwhelm a lot's five-foot boundary and affect adjacent grave owners. Cremation lots measure five feet by five feet, while single grave lots measure five feet by ten feet. Two adjoining grave lots provide a ten-foot boundary, which Mr. Gowell did not consider the same concern. Existing cremation markers did not exceed 36 inches; taller monuments generally stood on family plots. Mr. Gowell suggested a 36-inch limit for cremation and single grave lots. Although some cemeteries require flat cremation markers, he was not recommending that restriction.

Ms. Rand presented two options for the Board, acting as Cemetery Commissioners: establish a height regulation or review proposals individually according to location. Ms. Mitchell and Ms. Miller supported considering exceptions where appropriate. Ms. Miller said a marker along a fence might preserve sight lines, while the same marker in an open area could overwhelm its surroundings. She emphasized considering overall size and visual impact without becoming "keepers of taste." Mr. Cabot said granite posts commonly measure approximately eight inches by eight inches or eight inches by ten inches and could blend with existing posts separating the present and future cemetery areas.

Mr. Manter favored a standard maximum height, with taller proposals brought before the Board for a variance, rather than reviewing every marker. He also noted that varied monuments contribute to cemeteries' character and questioned whether this narrow post would overwhelm adjoining lots. Ms. Rand explained that closely spaced cremation lots generally belong to different families, and multiple tall markers could collectively create visual clutter and diminish the cemetery's open views.

The discussion also addressed footprint and volume. Mr. Manter suggested considering how much of a lot a marker could occupy. Mr. Cabot noted that a monument covering an entire five-foot-by-five-foot

lot could still meet the 36-inch height limit. Ms. Miller agreed that overall visual presence mattered but cautioned against excessive regulation.

Ms. Miller suggested allowing markers up to 36 inches by right on cremation and single grave lots, with taller proposals reviewed individually. Mr. Manter and Ms. Rand did not want to encourage applicants to purchase unnecessary burial space solely to accommodate larger monuments. Ms. Rand noted that this was the first such issue in her 22 years and recommended beginning with that height standard and review process. She asked Mr. Gowell to flag the proposed cremation lot, and potentially a grave lot, for Board inspection before deciding on this marker, hoping to identify a suitable cremation location without requiring an unwanted larger purchase.

Ms. Miller moved to allow cemetery markers up to 36 inches high by right on cremation lots and single grave lots, with the Board reviewing requests for taller markers on a case-by-case basis. Ms. Mitchell seconded the motion.

***Roll Call Vote: Ms. Miller - Aye, Ms. Mitchell -Aye, and Mr. Manter - Aye.
The motion passed unanimously. (3–0).***

Public Hearing on Propane Storage at 140 Merry Farm Road

Mr. Manter opened the public hearing, noting that it was a few minutes past the scheduled time. He read Donald Hendricks's petition to amend the license to store 2,990 gallons of propane by adding 1,000 gallons, for a total licensed storage of 3,990 gallons, on Map 8, Lot 22, at 140 Merry Farm Road in West Tisbury.

Ms. Rand said Mr. Perdemo was managing the request and that Chief Pachico could speak to it. Mr. Perdemo explained that the property already had a 1,000-gallon tank for the main house and a 2,000-gallon tank for generator backup. The request was for another 1,000 gallons for the greenhouses. Ms. Mitchell noted that those amounts totaled 4,000 gallons rather than 3,990. Mr. Perdemo said the tank was sold as a 1,000-gallon tank, but the actual capacity was approximately 990 gallons. Chief Pachico explained that licensing is based on water capacity and said he had no issue with the application. Ms. Miller asked whether he was comfortable with the application.

Ms. Miller moved to approve the amendment to the propane storage license. Ms. Mitchell seconded the motion.

***Roll Call Vote: Ms. Miller - Aye, Ms. Mitchell -Aye, and Mr. Manter - Aye.
The motion passed unanimously. (3–0).***

Mr. Manter thanked Mr. Perdemo and Chief Pachico and returned to the Town Clerk's business.

November Election Warrant

Mr. Manter said the first item was to vote on the November election warrant. Ms. Miller clarified that the action was to vote to sign the warrant and said the State had asked the Board to take that vote.

Ms. Miller moved to vote to sign the November election warrant. Ms. Mitchell seconded the motion.

Discussion: Mr. Manter asked the Town Clerk whether, because he was on the ballot, he could vote in the affirmative or should abstain. He then said he would abstain.

***Roll Call Vote: Ms. Miller - Aye, Ms. Mitchell -Aye, and Mr. Manter - Abstained.
The motion passed. (2 -0- 1).***

Early Voting Hours and Poll Worker Appointments

Ms. Whiting asked Mr. Manter to read the early voting hours so the public would know. She said the hours were on the website and on Facebook.

Mr. Manter announced that early voting would take place at the Public Safety Building. He read the hours as Saturday, October 17, from 8:00 a.m. to noon; Monday, October 19, through Friday, October 23, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.; Saturday, October 24, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; and Monday, October 26, through Friday, October 30, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. The weekday hours applied Monday through Friday. Mr. Manter also announced that Saturday, October 24, was the last day to register to vote.

Mr. Manter read the names proposed for appointment as poll workers: Angela Anderson, Richard Backer, Nickie Galland, Christopher Lyons, Shawn Ramoutar, Ruth Richards, and Mercedes Kelso.

Ms. Miller moved to appoint the poll workers as read. Ms. Mitchell seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Ms. Miller - Aye, Ms. Mitchell -Aye, and Mr. Manter - Aye.

The motion passed unanimously. (3-0).

Mr. Manter thanked the Town Clerk.

Topics the Chair Did Not Reasonably Anticipate

None.

Power Pole at Old County Road and Edgartown West Tisbury Road

Ms. Rand reported that she had contacted NSTAR about relocating the power pole. The preferred location was on a corner lot, where the pole and wires would require an easement or taking. The Town would need to secure the property rights, hire an engineer to design the relocation, and complete the utility's application process. Eversource would accept an easement secured by the Town, but the Town would remain responsible for the property rights.

Ms. Miller explained that relocating the pole would turn the current split intersection into a T intersection. Ms. Rand said moving the pole alone would improve poor sight lines, particularly for drivers turning toward Edgartown, even if the larger road project never received funding. She described difficulties pulling out with a truck and trailer, while Ms. Miller cited obstructed views, conflicting vehicle movements, and the footpath crossing. Ms. Miller wanted the Police Chief or others to assess the safety benefits. A T intersection could provide a safer pedestrian crossing and possibly accommodate a crosswalk, with a stop sign on Old County Road but none on the through road.

Ms. Mitchell asked whether the objective was to slow traffic or improve safety, and whether relocating the pole alone would sufficiently address the problem. Ms. Rand and Ms. Miller considered the intersection's safety independently of the resident's complaint that accelerating vehicles caused vibration in his house. Ms. Miller said moving the pole would help but would not fully solve the problem. Although Ms. Rand initially questioned whether a T intersection would slow traffic, she later noted that requiring drivers to stop and turn could reduce turning speeds, as occurred at the other end of Old County Road. Members noted that the other intersection had experienced numerous accidents and higher speeds, including a 45-mile-per-hour State Road limit, compared with the reported 25-mile-per-hour limit at this location.

Chief Pachico supported exploring the idea but reminded the Board that the intersection is within a historic district and asked whether historic district authorities would need to participate. Mr. Manter

emphasized the historic triangle, and Chief Pachico referred to its 300-year history. Chief Pachico reported minor accidents at the intersection but nothing major.

Ms. Mitchell favored proceeding incrementally because of cost. Ms. Rand explained that pole relocation and road redesign required separate permitting and that the larger project could take years; the other end's change took ten years. Potential funding included Chapter 90, transportation funds through the Joint Transportation Committee and Unified Planning Work Program, and Complete Streets engineering funds. Advancing the project to a 25 percent design stage could position West Tisbury to receive funding when another Island project was not ready, reducing reliance on voter funding.

Mr. Manter questioned whether the benefits justified the effects on the corner property, substantial tree removal or trimming, and relocation of wires approaching from four directions. He said the Town would bear those relocation costs. Ms. Miller questioned waiting for a serious accident before taking preventative action. Mr. Manter responded that the Board needed to understand what would be sacrificed and requested a rendering showing the relocated pole and wires alongside existing trees and property features. Chief Pachico noted that staff had prepared a similar rendering for Complete Streets work on Old County Road. Ms. Rand acknowledged that the Town might reject the proposal if its property impacts proved excessive.

Ms. Rand could contact Dan Doyle about Commission engineering resources or Jane Rossi about Complete Streets funding and interest. She would need to verify whether engineering assistance previously funded by contributions from all six towns remained available. Complete Streets would have to approve using its funds for engineering and a rendering.

Although Mr. Manter initially preferred having a rendering before approaching the owners, Ms. Rand and Ms. Miller favored contacting them first so they would not learn about the proposal through the newspaper. The Board agreed that Ms. Rand would locate the current owners, explain that the Town was exploring the idea without having made a decision, and ask whether they were willing to discuss it. Ms. Miller requested that the possible future intersection redesign also be explained. Members favored starting with an easement request, which could preserve ownership and lot size; Ms. Rand said the Town could consider a friendly taking if necessary and noted that she had not seen the Town pursue an unfriendly taking. Ms. Rand would also contact the Commission about engineering assistance for a rendering. Mr. Manter supported these preliminary inquiries, and Ms. Miller emphasized that the process was only beginning.

Correspondence

None

Public Comment

Mr. Manter invited public comment. Chief Pachico announced that the Fire Department had taken possession of its new dive truck the previous day. He said it looked beautiful and thanked the townspeople for their support. Mr. Manter thanked the department for everything it does for the Town, particularly the association for the items it purchases for the department and the resulting savings in tax dollars. There was no further public comment.

Adjournment

Ms. Miller made a motion to adjourn, and Ms. Mitchell seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Ms. Miller - Aye, Ms. Mitchell - Aye, and Mr. Manter - Aye.

The motion passed unanimously. (3–0).

The meeting adjourned at 5:13 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Shawn Ramoutar, Board Administrator