

July 21, 2023

TO: West Tisbury Select Board  
Skipper Manter, Chair  
Cynthia Mitchell  
Jessica Miller  
Jennifer Rand  
FROM: Susan Silk  
RE: Town governance

I wish to sincerely thank you for taking action to deal with the conflict of interest and ethical lapses brought to your attention recently. The creation of an application form that asks potential board or committee members to identify any potential conflicts is a great step forward.

However it is only the first step forward.

I would like to recommend creation of the Improving Governance Task Force (IGTF) charged with creating the West Tisbury manual for selection of board/committee members as well as the conducting of the business of those boards/committees. Taking the Commonwealth required Ethics Test is superficial at best.

Manual topics would include – but not limited to:

How to conduct meetings (training programs do exist and should be mandatory)

How to appoint subcommittees

How to assign tasks (research, preparing to Town Meetings, holding public meetings, preparing minutes, etc.)

Review of all board/committee members to identify potential conflicts, need for new members, consider term limits

This manual may well serve the needs of every island town government since my inquiry of the existence of such came up empty. Since the conflict of interest issue arose regarding the Affordable Housing Committee several people have told me that they would be interested in serving on such a Task Force.

Susan Silk