



# Truro Talks

TRURO'S OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

June 2023 Edition

## From the Town Manager's Desk

*Town Manager Darrin Tangeman*

***Getting to know the true Town Manager of Truro, the roles and responsibilities of our governmental bodies, and clarifying key issues for our town.***

Since arriving on January 4, 2021, the impacts and protocols of the COVID pandemic have made it challenging for me to connect and engage our broadly talented and involved community. In fact, our elected Select Board just recently met for the first time in person since the COVID pandemic began for a Select Board meeting on May 23, 2023. With COVID restrictions lifted, I feel strongly it is time to reintroduce myself and generate opportunities to meet and improve communications with our local residents. I look forward to meeting you and I hope you will take the opportunity to discuss your concerns and love for the Truro community with me.

***A little about myself:*** I am a single father to two strong-willed teenage girls currently in the Nauset school system and an incredibly smart and friendly four-year-old Boxer named Ginger who enjoys working in the accounting office, greeting visitors, and opening doors at Town Hall. As a child, I grew up on a rural route gravel road across from a hay barn in Newton, Kansas where I came from a long lineage of Tangeman Dairy Farmers in Kansas (see Tangeman Sealright) and a father who learned his strong work ethic from farming and military service, and who has been a Beekeeper his entire adult life. Likewise, my mother came from Cherokee Native American ancestry in Oklahoma, and her family tree includes famed lawman Patrick Garret.

I graduated high school in Kansas and went on to college as a track and cross-country scholarship athlete, before taking on the family tradition of defending democracy and serving our country in the U.S. Army.





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I graduated from the University of Kansas on an ROTC scholarship and entered the military as a Medical Service Corps Officer where I deployed to Bosnia-Herzegovina on a peace-keeping mission in 2001.

While in Bosnia, the 9/11 attacks occurred which changed the trajectory of my career. I would return to the U.S. and deploy to combat in Afghanistan, where I worked closely with members of the U.S. Army Special Forces. I returned from combat and entered and completed the Special Forces Selection and Qualification Courses and Ranger School and ultimately became a Green Beret. Over the course of my military career, I would earn a master's degree in public administration from the University of Colorado – Denver and a Master of Science in Public Security Policy Analysis (Defense Analysis) from the Naval Postgraduate School.

As a Special Forces Officer, I spent the next 12 years deploying overseas in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. In Africa, I would deploy as the first Special Forces Commander in support of Operation Observant Compass, the mission to counter the atrocities committed by Joseph Kony and the Lord's Resistance Army (KONY 2012) in Uganda, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Central African Republic. It was during that Operation I met and collaborated with many local government and law enforcement leaders, and it is where I first became interested in working in local government. Upon my return to the United States, I planned and prepared for military retirement after 21 years of service and my eventual transition to a local government career.

Since retiring from the military, I founded and promoted a nationwide Veterans Local Government Management Fellowship (VLGMF) with the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) for veterans who wish to serve in local





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government after transitioning from military service. I also founded and served as the first Chairperson of ICMA's Veterans Advisory Committee. In addition to my advocacy in assisting veterans in finding local government jobs, I also advocate on behalf of veterans who are often subjected to discriminatory hiring practices based on false and misleading stereotypes perpetuated by popular culture and movies.



These (often false and misleading) accusations stereotype and label veterans as autocratic, barking orders, or leading with an iron fist. As a result, I strive every day to be a collaborative and inclusive manager and leader by leading by example, so that other veterans will have an easier path than I did in local government.

During my first six years in local government, I served as the Chief Administrative Officer for the community of Pueblo West, Colorado, and as the City Manager of Woodland Park, Colorado. I also

graduated with my MBA from the University of Kansas and attended Harvard University's Senior Executives in State and Local Government Program in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It was at Harvard that I had the opportunity to visit Martha's Vineyard on a weekend where I fell in love with the natural and historic landscape of our Cape Cod communities.

In 2020, a friend and colleague sent me the job posting for Truro's Town Manager position, which piqued my interest from my previous visit to Cape Cod. I applied shortly thereafter and was selected and conducted an initial interview, but contracted COVID just prior to the selection committee interviews. I finished the selection committee interviews, but my illness from COVID forced me to drop out as a finalist. When contract negotiations failed with the town's previous finalist, the recruiter contacted me and urged me to re-enter the recruitment. I jumped back into recruitment, and I am incredibly thankful and appreciative that the Select Board gave me the opportunity to serve as Town Manager. Prior to the New Year, I moved my family 2,000 miles from Colorado to Truro to begin my tenure as Town Manager in January of 2021.

I am happy to be on the Cape with so many hard-working families trying to make ends meet and I am impressed every day by the passion these same residents demonstrate in their efforts to improve



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our community through their entrepreneurial efforts and actions at Town Meeting. I am equally impressed by our talented and hardworking staff who do an incredible job with little to no fan fair for their hard work and many notable achievements.



***The roles and responsibilities of our government bodies:*** I would like to provide some clarification on recent comments circulating in the community that the Town Manager is responsible for recent increases in taxes and housing density, and a lack of civility at Town Meeting. As many community members may know, the Town Charter specifically authorizes and directs those responsibilities to other government bodies and not the Town Manager. Taxes are the responsibility of our Town Meeting legislative body, which votes to appropriate funding for specific public purposes in our community. Housing density is the responsibility of both the Planning Board and by a vote of the Town Meeting legislative body to amend our zoning bylaws. Finally, civility is the responsibility of all participants at the Town Meeting and is ultimately the responsibility of the Town Moderator who presides over Town Meeting. Town Administration and Town Counsel only assist the elected Town Moderator in managing civility at Town Meeting.

The Town Manager is responsible for enforcing the laws and regulations of the Town, implementing the goals, objectives, and policies of the Select Board, and presenting a budget for Town Meeting approval only after it has been reviewed and critiqued in public meetings by the



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budget task force, a group of elected and appointed members of the Select Board and Finance Committee, where the public is strongly encouraged to participate.

***Other issues for clarification:*** I have had several questions come up regarding Article #42 at Town Meeting. This article proposed changing the Town Charter so that the Board of Library Trustees would have a consultative role in the hiring of the Library Director. One of the chief critiques is that the comments placed on the Town Warrant were actually my comments, when in fact they were comments conveyed on this specific issue by Town Legal Counsel. If one reads the comments carefully, you can see that these comments emanated from Town Counsel who is an expert on issues of Charter changes and whose legal firm represents more than 130 other towns in Massachusetts. Town Counsel's comments were provided so that voters would be fully informed about prior concerns raised by our town's legal experts.

Town Counsel's comments were only included to provide a rounded perspective to voters because the Charter Review Committee was not allowed the time to review, deliberate, and provide a recommendation on the Town Charter change before it was presented to Town Meeting. I think we can all agree that a well-informed electorate is a prerequisite for democracy. Despite the narrative that I am opposed to the Board of Trustees' participation in the hiring process for our next Library Director, I would attest that can't be farther from the truth of who I am as a Town Manager. As far back as 2021, I personally proposed that the Library Trustees participate in the application review and interview process for the next Library Director, and I personally recommended the codification of this process in Select Board policy #35. The Library Trustees are a well-informed group of citizen volunteers that play an important role in the delivery of library services to our community and it makes perfect sense that they play a consultative role in the hiring of the Library Director.

There have also been some statements that have circulated in the town that I am opposed to citizen participation in our public decision-making deliberations and processes. Again, I would say that cannot be further from the core truth of who I am as a person and as a Town Manager. Recently, our Health and Conservation Agent presented an alternative draft proposal for a dog restraint bylaw so that the town could develop an alternative bylaw that was more measured than one being presented by citizen petition at Town Meeting. As dog owners ourselves, the Health and Conservation Agent and I felt that it was important to provide a starting point for a conversation with the community so that we could refine a bylaw with significant citizen participation over time. I was pleased to see so much citizen participation early in the process, which lends itself to a well-informed participative outcome if and when a new bylaw might be finalized. To emphasize the point regarding my support for a broad participative process, Select Board Member, Sue Areson, recommended that the TDOG advocacy group participate in a round table discussion on the refinement of this alternative bylaw. I agreed with Select Member Areson, and I further



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recommended that participation extends beyond just the TDOG advocacy group so that our full community could have a voice in the final bylaw before it is presented at Town Meeting.

***Accessibility of the Town Manager:*** There have been some comments circulating around town that I am not accessible or responsive to calls or emails as a Town Manager. I do know that mistakes happen and phone calls or requests for meetings may not reach me. As a result, I want to reiterate that I have held office hours for nearly two years every Monday from 2:30 to 4 p.m. by appointment. Please call (508) 349-7004 ext. 110 to schedule a meeting or email me at dtangeman@truro-ma.gov to schedule an alternative time to meet in person, by phone, or virtually by Zoom. I will also be available most Thursdays during our senior lunches at the Community Center and at least once a month during Coffee with the Town Manager at locations and times to be posted to our website and social media in the future. Thank you for taking the time to read this article and I look forward to meeting our residents and visitors and discussing the issues and concerns that are important to you.

Sincerely,  
Darrin K. Tangeman, MPA, ICMA-CM