

**VINEYARD****GAZETTE**

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## **Up-Island Selectmen Revise Bid Language, Delaying Cellular Phone Improvements**

By JACK SHEA

A plan to improve cellular phone reception for up-Island residents will likely not get off the ground now until the fall.

At a meeting this week, selectmen from Aquinnah, Chilmark and West Tisbury agreed to rewrite a request for proposals for the distributed antennae system; the rewritten language will require the winning bidder to provide complete coverage for all three towns.

The selectmen envision a proposal that would include Aquinnah as a possible hub but allow other sites in other towns at the discretion of bidders.

The three towns had hoped for an operational system prior to the 2008 summer season.

The request for proposals will seek vendors to build a distributed antennae system on telephone poles in the three towns who will act as a single regional entity on the project through an intermunicipal agreement.

At the meeting this week selectmen expressed some concern that the proposal as written would not provide adequate coverage for West Tisbury; they also rejected language that would allow the project to be completed in phases.

Selectmen also agreed to draft an intermunicipal agreement; a memorandum of understanding among the three towns has already been signed.

The meeting at Chilmark town hall was chaired by Chilmark selectman Riggs Parker and attended by Aquinnah selectmen Camille Rose and Jim Newman, West Tisbury selectmen Jeffery (Skipper) Manter and Richard Knabel, Aquinnah town coordinator Jeffrey Burgoyne and Chilmark executive secretary Timothy Carroll.

Discussion centered on a plan prepared by Mr. Burgoyne that would site the central hub of the system at the Aquinnah landfill; the permitting process is complete for the site.

Mr. Burgoyne, who did the majority of the research on the project, argued strenuously that the proposal as written would allow bidders to respond quickly and would allow the construction phase to be completed before the summer season.

But selectmen from all three towns decided that the work still to be done would push

**the project at least into the fall.**

**Mr. Burgoyne and Mr. Carroll agreed to begin rewriting the proposal and to prepare a draft of an intermunicipal agreement for the group to consider at its next meeting on May 21 at 11 a.m. at the Chilmark town hall.**

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