

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
5:00PM, Thursday, December 5, 2109
Chilmark School**

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Present: Chair – Kate DeVane, Roxanne Ackerman, Robert Lionette, Skipper Manter, Alex Salop,
Others: Supt's Shared Services Office: Matt D'Andrea, Richie Smith, Amy Tierney,
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Susan Stevens, Mary Boyd,
Aquinnah FinCom – Mark Foster, Allen Rugg, Tom Murphy,
Aquinnah Police – Chief Randhi Belain,
WT FinCom – Greg Orcutt, Doug Ruskin, WT Accountant – Bruce Stone,
Parents – Sam Look,
Press – Lynn Christoffers – MVTV,
Recorder: Marni Lipke *Late arrivals or early departures

Call to Order (Agenda item #I)

The Up-Island Regional School Committee (UIRSC) meeting was called to order.
(Recorder's Note: Some discussions have been grouped for clarity and brevity.)

Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) Budget (See documents on file.) (Agenda item #III)

(Recorder's Note: This discussion was split in two parts see also p.3-4.)

The UIRSC considered establishing a Reserve or contingency line item at the amount of Excess and Deficiency (E & D) (FY19 estimated at \$108,000) in order to fund emergencies without returning to the Towns (see 3/18/19 Minutes p.4 #E). Any residual from the line would revert to E & D at the end of the year. The discussion covered both practical and philosophical aspects.

- Skipper Manter strongly advocated for returning all E & D to the Towns as a cleaner process and then funding the Reserve line. The Reserve or Contingency Line was a more transparent and less cumbersome process, especially as:

- E & D spending was only available between certification and the May 15th cut off and
- the 45 day waiting period was too long for a true emergency.

- Kate DeVane suggested E & D be retained, with Towns' trust that the UIRSC would use it wisely. In addition she advocated for continuing the policy to commit remaining E & D funds to the Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB) Trust (see 4/4/16 Minutes p.2). It was clarified that OPEB funding was also in the Budget (see 11/12/19 Minutes p.3 #II).

- Robert Lionette suggested that the UIRSC report contingency spending to all three Boards of Selectmen monthly. Others suggested it be reported when spent.

- Roxanne Ackerman was satisfied with the current system, pointing out that the UIRSC had authority to transfer lines within the budget to cover emergencies that could be then be reimbursed by E & D.

- Business Administrator Amy Tierney noted the FY18 close call when the budget was spent to within \$41,000 of deficit and reported that Mass. General Law stated regional school districts should not certify budgets until February after the Governor's budget and E & D certification.

- Current E & D process was inefficient, time consuming, and annoying to the Towns.

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- There was a debate on the amount needed for contingencies including:
 - E & D spending history;
 - Administrative advice that \$100,000 was not a safe amount for a catastrophic event, and could be exhausted by a single unexpected special needs student;
 - amount set by hard figures or percentage;
 - dependent on the amount of E D & up to \$100,000, with anything over returned to the Towns.
- E & D could be returned to the Towns by sending checks or by reducing the following year's assessments.
- Supt. D'Andrea advised that the cleanest way was to offset the Reserve/Contingency line with E & D, so as not to spike the budget.
- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO ADD A \$100,000 RESERVE LINE IN SECTION B DISTRICTWIDE PART OF THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT FISCAL YEAR 2021 BUDGET FOR ONE YEAR ONLY TO BE DIVIDED INTO DIFFERENT PARTS AS APPROPRIATE THE FOLLOWING YEAR; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 1 NAY—ROXANNE ACKERMAN, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

Amy Tierney reviewed FY21 revenue concerns because several resources were in flux.

- Chapter 70 (State education reimbursement based on district enrollment) was undergoing legislative changes, including raising foundation levels and looking at low-income districts closely. FY20 Ch. 70 was \$892,132.
- Ch. 71 (regional transportation reimbursement) for to-and-from school trips only (field trips were not reimbursed) was usually 70% to 75%, here conservatively estimated at 70%.
- Charter School tuition (number of UIRSD students at UIRSD per pupil cost) was also changing (see 10/21/19 Minutes p.4). Tuition was taken off the top of the Ch. 70 reimbursement and guessing UIRSD 2020-2021 Charter School enrollment (this year 49 students) by subtracting eighth graders, estimating kindergartners, and including per pupil cost increases at the UIRSD FY21 budget increase, Ms. Tierney suggested a \$1,157,000 charge—slightly offset by Charter reimbursement (FY19 at \$44,000).
- Medicaid regulations were changing so rapidly neither Special Education nor financial staff were able to follow it. It had partially paid for a residential placement that was no longer needed so Amy Tierney estimated a reduction to \$50,000 and hoped it would be sufficient.
- Similarly Circuit Breaker was reduced to \$0 as it had reimbursed for a single eligible student no longer in the District and no other eligible students were projected.
- The FY20 School Choice projection was ~ \$77,000 short, and estimation was compounded by:
 - sending and receiving eighth grade students;
 - nine Tisbury School students—three of whom lived in West Tisbury, who might or might not return to Tisbury School this January;
 - fluctuations during the school year when student families moved in or out of the District but could remain in their school for the remainder of the year.
- FY20 interest increased due to changing banks “sweetheart” start-up deals, but was not likely to be as high in FY21.
- Miscellaneous revenue (preschool income, rebates, refunds, etc.) was usually small and unpredictable. In FY19 it included, the unexpected Cape Cod Municipal Health Group

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(CCMHG) drug rebate (see 5/20/19 Minutes p.3), also not likely to be repeated.

- In consequence revenue was projected at negative \$52,360 (due principally to the Charter School tuition), raising the assessed Budget to \$666,466 or exactly 5%: (~ \$127,000 Aquinnah decrease, ~ \$279,000 increase for Chilmark, ~ \$454,000 increase for West Tisbury).
- The above Reserve/Contingency vote would raise the total to \$766,466 (~ 6% increase).
- West Tisbury School (WTS) Principal Donna Lowell Bettencourt recommended the following action on the proposed warrant articles.
 - Having just repaired the elevator at some expense, replacement could be postponed.
 - The WTS decks had been reviewed by the Building Inspector and found safe. In consultation with the UIRSD Owners Project Manager (OPM) it was found that four were in need of total replacement and one was in fairly good shape. \$93,820 voted last year (see 12/17/18 Minutes p.4) had not been spent due to the short summer timeframe and consequently could be used for the current phase of work. Second phase cost might be greatly reduced or not needed.
 - Alex Salop felt these were better reductions than cutting instructional programs.
 - Skipper Manter suggested the article should remain in case the decks were not safe and/or the work could be completed in one season.
- *KATE DEVANE MOVED TO WITHDRAW THE WARRANT ARTICLE FOR THE WEST TISBURY SCHOOL OUTDOOR DECKS; ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 3 AYES, 2 NAYS—ROBERT LIONETTE, SKIPPER MANTER, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*
- *KATE DEVANE MOVED TO WITHDRAW THE WARRANT ARTICLE FOR THE WEST TISBURY SCHOOL ELEVATOR REPLACEMENT; ROBERT LIONETTE AND SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*
- Both items were on the FY22 capital improvement list.

School Resource Officer (SRO) Discussion (Agenda item #III)

(See documents on file.)

The UIRSC discussed the budgetary and philosophical aspects of the SRO, referring to the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) drafted by Chilmark Head of School Susan Stevens, which codified the current practice (see 10/21/19 Minutes p.1 #V C). A parent letter was read, objecting to SRO as an intrusion that posited a violence prone world. The UIRSC debated:

- the concept of students learning to accept police as a familiar, important part of the community;
 - Chilmark part-time situation versus WTS full time SRO;
 - objections to SROs as untrained counselors (UIRSD had three certified counselors);
 - SRO protection versus student familiarity/support roles and whether a full-time (and expensive) SRO was the correct vehicle for such support;
 - concerns about adding further costs to the FY21 budget.
- The UIRSC liked the idea of a non-binding warrant article to spark wider Town discussion.

Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) Budget (See documents on file.) (Agenda item #III)

(Recorder's Note: This discussion was split in two parts see also p.1-2.)

Supt. Matt D'Andrea, perceiving UIRSC silence in the face of alarming budget numbers asked if the UIRSC wished to direct the Administration to consider reducing the percentage.

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- Members felt line item cuts were the purview of the Administration.
- The remaining warrant articles (Chilmark windows Phase II and the WTS Roof design) totaling \$280,736, were necessary and forward looking repairs that had been planned for some time.
- There was a suggestion to cut OPEB spending.
- Some members considered the increase too high and suggested drafts reducing the increase to \$250,000 or to 2.5% as an exercise.
- Prin. Lowell Bettencourt stated that both such exercises would mean dramatic programmatic and staff cuts, likely to be unpopular with voters.
- Total Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) regionalization would produce substantial savings.
- Chair Kate DeVane maintained the UIRSC had finished the FY21 Budget. Changes had been extensively discussed and thoroughly examined: the Chilmark School Nurse, the Technology investment, the Middle School expansion, the Reserve line; and spending reduced by eliminating two articles and not adding an SRO.

Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair - None (Agenda Item #IV)

Adjournment

- *ROXANNE ACKERMAN MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:02PM; SKIP MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.*

Meetings/Events

- **UIRSC/Budget Hearing/Certification – 5:00PM, Monday, December 16, 2019–WTS**
- **MVRHSC - 5:00PM, Monday, January 6, 2020 – MVRHS**

Documents on File:

- Agenda 12/5/19
- Sign In Sheet 12/5/19
- Up-Island Regional School District Fund Balances 12/5/19
- Up-Island Regional School District, Excess & Deficiency History – Fiscal Years 1998-2018 as of April 29, 2019
- UIRSD – FY21 Warrant Articles (5 p.)
- UIRSD FY21 Budget Draft #2C, December 5, 2019
- Up-Island Regional School District FY21 General Fund Budget – Draft #2C, December 5, 2019 (13 p.)
- Up-Island Regional School District Employee List for 2019-2020 for FY21 Budgeting Purposes Draft #2C 12/5/19 (4 p.)
- UIRSD FY2021 Assessment –Draft #2C – December 5, 2019 (8 p.)
- Stone cover email re: SRO MOU Draft 12/4/19
- Memorandum of Understanding between The Chilmark School and The Chilmark Police Department for the School Resource Officer Program (2 p.)
- Silva letter...Dear UIRSD School Committee...

Minutes approved 1/27/20.