

**Tisbury School Committee**  
**8:30AM, Tuesday, May 12, 2020**  
**By Zoom Conferencing**

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**TSC Members Present:** Chair Amy Houghton, Janet Packer, Michael Watts,  
**Staff:** John Custer – Principal, Melissa Ogden – Asst. Principal;  
Matt D’Andrea – Superintendent, Richie Smith – Asst. Supt.  
Mark Friedman – Interim Business Manager,  
Student Support – Nancy Dugan,  
Catherine Coogan, Emily Levett,  
**Town:** Melinda Loberg – Selectman, Jynell Kristal – FinCom,  
**Others:** PTO - Siobhan Mullin,  
Marni Lipke – Recorder

\* Late arrivals or early departures of TSC members

The Tisbury School Committee (TSC) meeting was called to order at 8:32AM. Chair Amy Houghton expressed the Committee’s appreciation and praise to the Martha’s Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) Administrators, for their long labor on the front lines during the Covid-19/Corona pandemic.

- At the end of the meeting Ms. Janet Packer agreed to remain on the TSC and Martha's Vineyard Regional High School Committee (MVRHSC) until the Town election.  
*(Recorder’s note: some discussions are summarized and re-grouped for clarity and brevity.)*

I. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes – Tabled

II. Superintendent’s Report

Superintendent Matt D’Andrea in his turn thanked the School Committees, staff, support staff, food service workers and everyone in the education community for their work and dedication.

A. All Island School Committee (AISC)

An AISC Negotiations Subcommittee meeting was called as a mechanism to bring together School Committees and Town Representatives to coordinate planning for the financial impact on Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) budgets. At the moment all six Towns had separate directives making it difficult to proceed without clear guidance.

III. Financial Report

A. Fund Balances (See documents on file.)

- The Circuit Breaker balance of \$12,832 was being used to pay residential costs.
- \$169,296 remained in School Choice after spending ~ \$133,000, mostly on residential tuition.
- Revolving Lunch Fund -\$21,784 deficit, originated in the fall School split, that disallowed State reimbursement for grades 5 through 8 at the MVRHS and was further expanded by the Covid closure.
- Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) were awaiting State guidance on lunch deficits prevalent throughout the State since the Covid closure—possibly amortizing them over three years.

- In an effort to return to as much as possible to the Town, the FY20 Budget was frozen except for urgent spending.

- Field trips were funded through the Student Activities account.
- Unexpected retirements generated significant separation costs.
- MVRHS Transportation would return \$24,275 to Tisbury School from the Covid closure bus service stoppage (see 5/4/20 MVRHSC Minutes p.4-5 #VI E).

#### B. Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) Budget (See below: Actions.)

- A Residential student returned home and was doing well in a Shared Services program. The TSC expressed concern about:

- students' progress, setbacks, prognosis;
- any projections for near future placements;
- financial planning for unexpected residential expenses (see 12/10/19 Minutes p.2-3);
- Annual Town Meeting (ATM) planning (see below: Meetings/Events);
- possible postponement of the Residential Stabilization article to a fall Town Meeting.

- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. PACKER AND SECONDED BY MR. WATTS THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY VOTED (3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS) TO REMOVE \$131,700 FROM THE FISCAL YEAR 2021 BUDGET RESIDENTIAL CARE LINE: MS. PACKER—AYE, MR. WATTS—AYE, MS. HOUGHTON—AYE.**

- The Tisbury Finance Committee (FinCom) voted to recommend elimination of Town staff Management/Professional increases and Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs). The MVPS were looking at contractual and other savings (see above #II A).

- The FinCom discussed the School budget, in particular the \$300,000 Maintenance line increase, some supporting it, some in favor of eliminating it. Selectman Melinda Loberg, asked if it might be reduced and/or postponed to another Town meeting.

- Prin. John Custer met with Asst. Principal Melissa Ogden, Supt. D'Andrea, Town Administrator Jay Grande, Town Dept. of Public Works (DPW) Director Kirk Mettell, Building Inspector Ross Seavey and Fire Chief John Schilling on a maintenance plan and current projects necessary for student/staff health and safety. These included:

- front steps water leaks into the cafeteria;
- necessary exterior painting (main entrance, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> floor windows),
- window caulking and water intrusion.

When the building was in session there were Information/Technology (IT) issues, which could not be remediated without a large scale school project. However, Administration was fully able to provide resources to teachers and students and to manage a long term extension of the current remote learning.

- There was not much flexibility in the stringent FY21 School Budget and it was difficult to redraft it without knowing whether schools would open in regular session or continue with remote instruction; for example effected areas included: professional development (PD), IT, materials, food service, etc. It was hoped more would be known by mid-summer.

#### IV. Principal's Report

##### A. Remote Learning Plan (See below: Actions.)

- Prin. Custer emphasized the incredible creativity and care provided by the teachers, who worked to adjust curriculums to each student's and family's situation and capacity, which differed widely from household to household.

- For example it was found that traditional paper materials were more effective. Teachers were researching how to get books into students hands. Other were looking for more accessible software.

- No one liked remote learning. Teachers missed the students and students missed staff and classmates. Nonetheless teachers were adapting to new techniques and technology. Vendor generosity was noted as some software was offered without charge. All staff were working from home but many were also parenting their own children and their remote learning. Education Support Professionals (ESPs) and Unified Arts teachers were helpful and supportive.

- The TSC discussed staff mental health and support. Regular notification of available resources was posted and emailed. Teachers also met on families or students that appeared to need extra support. The TSC acknowledged the present and growing situation, spouses who lost jobs, financial anxiety, concentrated living quarters, etc. Martha's Vineyard Community Services (MVCS) offered confidential resources for those in need.

#### B. Food Service (See below: Actions.)

Pickup continued from 11:00AM to 1:00PM Mondays and Thursdays but had switched back to three days of prepared meals. Cafeteria staff prepared and brought the food to Officer Scott Ogden, Prin. Custer and Asst. Prin. Ogden, who distributed it at pick up. Meals continued to be one of the more important things schools were doing. The TSC commended the vital service and thanked everyone.

#### C. 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation (See below: Meetings/Events.)

Prin. Custer was working with the Town on sharing the ATM/STM tent. It was hoped that a small Graduation could be scheduled for the morning after Town Meeting. All due precautions would be taken.

#### D. Staffing Update (See documents on file.)

Ms. Esther Teves would move to Ms. Barbara Armstrong's 1400 hr. position on July 1, 2020 (see Minutes: 1/14/20 p.2 # IV C & 3/10/20 p.3 #B).

- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. PACKER AND SECONDED BY MR. WATTS THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY ACKNOWLEDGED (3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS) THE RESIGNATION OF MS. ESTHER TEVES FROM HER CURRENT POSITION AS OF JUNE 30, 2020;; MS. PACKER—AYE, MR. WATTS—AYE, MS. HOUGHTON—AYE.**

Mr. Kenneth Ponte was hired as the new Head Custodian starting July 1, 2020 (see 4/14/20 Minutes p.3 #C 1).

- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. PACKER AND SECONDED BY MR. WATTS THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY ACKNOWLEDGED (3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS) THE RESIGNATION OF MR. KENNETH PONTE FROM HIS CURRENT POSITION AS OF JUNE 30, 2020;; MS. PACKER—AYE, MR. WATTS—AYE, MS. HOUGHTON—AYE.**

Vacant positions had been advertised but then suspended after the Covid-19/Corona closure. Interviews would proceed when possible.

#### V. Tisbury School Building Committee (TSBC) Report

Mr. Watts reported that the TSBC viewed three different concepts and formally voted to go forward with "Option 3" which was a combination of the first two and showed a

modern school feel with some existing building traditions. The designs could be viewed on the website: <http://www.tisbury-school-project.com>.

A. Space Needs Summary (See documents on file.)

The designs assumed average class size of 16 students at the recommended 40 sq. ft. per student or (640 sq. ft. per room). (Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) guidelines required 900 sq. ft. per room based on thorough educational research, which Tisbury had argued down to 840 sq. ft. per room on the previous project.) The TSBC requested Administrator input and TSC vote on adequate School space needs to guide further design. The TSC discussed the matter at some length.

- The School had a long standing School Choice cut off policy on class size (see 4/9/13 Minutes p.3-4 #VI B) at 18 students per section for grades kindergarten (K) through 4 and 22 students for grades 5 through 8.

- Current enrollment averaged 16 per class. The smallest class was 23 (11.5 students per section) and the largest was 44 (22 students per section).

- Two housing developments were being planned in Tisbury and this year's New England School Development Council (NESDEC) projections showed some enrollment growth (see 2/11/20 Minutes p.1 #II A).

- 21<sup>st</sup> Century education formats had radically changed from the traditional desk arrangements used when the School was built. The TSC was also mindful of the need to plan for new programs in educational growth.

- In addition Covid-19 pandemic presented possible new social distancing regulations.

- Most existing rooms exceeded 640 sq. ft. and many met or exceeded 720 sq. ft. (averaging 18 students per section). At average class size 16, the school was lacking 640 sq. ft. Increasing the average to 18 would mean some walls had to be moved but it would not radically change the numbers.

- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. PACKER AND SECONDED BY MR. WATTS THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY RECOMMENDED (3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS) THAT CLASS SECTION SIZE BE INCREASED TO 18 STUDENT BASED ON:**

- LONG STANDING TISBURY SCHOOL POLICY OF 18 STUDENT PER CLASS,

- DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION (DESE) POPULATION PROJECTIONS AND STUDENT SPACE RECOMMENDATIONS,

- CURRENT AND POSSIBLE FUTURE HEALTH SITUATION AROUND STUDENT DISTANCING, AND

- IN KEEPING WITH THE EDUCATION PROGRAM MINDFUL THAT THIS WILL NOT IMPACT OTHER ASPECTS OF THAT PROGRAM;

JANET PACKER—AYE, MICHAEL WATTS—AYE, AMY HOUGHTON—AYE.

Adjournment

- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. PACKER AND SECONDED BY MR. WATTS THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING UNANIMOUSLY ADJOURNED AT 10:15AM: MS. PACKER—AYE, MR. WATTS—AYE, MS. HOUGHTON—AYE.**

continued

**Appendix A: Meetings/Events:**

- MVRHSC - 5:00PM, Monday, May 18, 2020 – TBD/Zoom
- AISC – 5:00PM, Thursday, May 28, 2020 - TBD/Zoom
- MVRHSC - 5:00PM, Monday, June 1, 2020 – TBD/Zoom
- TSC – 8:30AM, Tuesday, June 2, 2020 TBD/Zoom
- Special/ Annual Town Meeting – 1:00PM Saturday, June 13, 2020 School Grounds
- Graduation – 10:00AM-12:00N Sunday, June 14, 2020 School Grounds

**Appendix B: Actions**

Prin. Custer/Mr. Friedman – bring lunch deficit information to June TSC meeting.  
 Prin. Custer – send School 2020 maintenance project list to TSC and FinCom.  
 Prin. Custer – post lunch schedules for other schools on the Tisbury School website.  
 Ms. Coogan - coordinate with guidance on a staff targeted email re: mental needs.  
 All - If you know someone in trouble reach out to Ms. Houghton.

**Appendix C: Documents on File:**

- Agenda 5/13/20
- Custer/Dietrich cover emails re: Tisbury Town Meetings June 13, 2020 5/12/20  
 - To Fund Community Preservation Act Projects Warrant Articles FY2020-21 (4 p.)
- Tisbury School Fund Balances Fiscal Year 2019-2020 5/8/20
- Teves transition/resignation letter 3/11/20
- Ponte transition/resignation letter 5/7/20
- Tisbury School Building Space Summary Draft Tappé Architects (3 p.) 2/10/20
- Tiger Tales May 2020 (7 p.)

Minutes respectfully submitted by Office On Call/Marni Lipke.

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Marni Lipke – Recorder

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Date

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Amy Houghton – TSC Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Minutes approved 6/2/20