

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD  
4:00PM, Monday, May 11, 2020  
By Zoom Cloud Conference due to COVID-19**

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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, Mark Friedman, Nancy Dugan,  
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Mary Boyd, Susan Stevens,  
Staff: Mary Ambulos, Catherine Mafcher  
Towns – WT – Greg Orcutt, Bruce Stone, Chilmark – Rob Hannemann  
Press – Arron Wilson – Vineyard Gazette, Kelly Marolf – MVTV,  
Recorder: Marni Lipke

\*Late arrivals or early departures of UIRSC members

**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.)

**Minutes Read and Approved** (Agenda Item #II)

*ALEX SALOP MOVED TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 27, 2020 AND THE APRIL 6, 2020 MINUTES; SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION: KATE DEVANE—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—ABSTAIN due to absence, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE.*

**Financial Report** (Agenda Item #III)

**A. Expenditure and Revenue Report if Available**

Very little had changed since the April meeting. Each site had Salary Increments residuals that would cover any small variances.

- Projections were for: ~ \$75,000 surplus (from supplies, small residuals, etc.) plus ~ \$89,000 in savings from the MVRHS transportation shutdown refund (see 5/4/20 MVRHSC Minutes p.4-5 #VI E). This residual was less than 1% of the UIRSD \$12,500,000 Budget.
- The education community was facing an unprecedented 2020-21 school year so there was some reluctance to return all funds and Excess and Deficiency (E & D) to the Towns, as they might be needed in Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21).
- Typically the UIRSD filled fuel tanks and bought discounted supplies and textbooks at the end of the year. The UIRSD directed that:
  - fuel be purchased at its current low rate—possibly with guidance for the contractor; however,
  - other purchases should be frozen, due to the unknown configuration of the next school year.
- A little later in the meeting, Head of Chilmark School Susan Stevens reported a plumbing/septic issue in the adult and kindergarten bathrooms. Repair costs would not be known until the problem was identified during work/digging. The General Maintenance line was

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~ \$9,400 in deficit but the overall Department was \$8,300 in the black. There was also a \$17,000 Painting line residual due to uncertainty on window replacement. The UIRSC briefly discussed and rejected using E & D, but were not comfortable authorizing line transfers at this time.

• *KATE DEVANE MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE CHILMARK PRINCIPAL TO CONTRACT FOR EMERGENCY PLUMBING WORK: ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: KATE DEVANE—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANter—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE.*

• Also later in the meeting, it was reported that West Tisbury School (WTS) Principal Donna Lowell-Bettencourt and Ms. Stevens worked with town administrators, police and fire chiefs on a \$40,000 Safer Schools grant for UIRSD security cameras, alarm systems, outside doors, etc. (see 5/4/20 MVRHSC Minutes p.4 #VI C).

**B. FY21 Budget Discussion: Possible Budget Trims due to Towns' Possible Post-COVID Deficits**

- Superintendent Matt D'Andrea reported about ongoing Statewide conference calls.
- If Annual Town Meetings (ATM) were delayed beyond July 1<sup>st</sup>, monthly budgets would go forward at 1/12th of FY20 levels. Principals would still have discretionary authority over these 1/12th budgets. Once ATMs were held, FY21 budgets would be retroactive to July 1, 2020.
- The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) urged districts to use FY20 E & D to reduce assessments as relief to local municipalities, because after June 30<sup>th</sup> it would not be available until certification. (UIRSD FY19 E & D was certified at ~ \$98-99,000.)
- Supt. D'Andrea posted an All Island School Committee (AISC) Negotiations Subcommittee with all Town representatives, hoping to gage and coordinate Islandwide plans. Collective bargaining issues and possible re-negotiations were being considered. Supt. D'Andrea and Assistant Superintendent Richie Smith were setting the pace by not taking their FY21 increases.
- The UIRSD Regional Agreement required only two of three towns to certify its budgets. Robert Hannemann reported that Chilmark was moving ahead with FY21 budgets as submitted in February. West Tisbury Town Accountant Bruce Stone reported that West Tisbury was asking all Departments to reduce their FY21 budgets by 5%.
- Interim Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) Finance Manager Mark Friedman advised as follows.
  - Precedent from the 2008-09 recession was for the State to pay full Chapter 70 reimbursements due to equal access legal issues, but to reduce Chapter 71 Transportation reimbursements from 70% to 40%, as well as reducing Circuit Breaker. (State Owned lands compensation was reduced ~ 25-28% resulting in a \$150-200,000 loss for West Tisbury).
  - The MVRHSC vote to return local transportation funds to the local districts could easily lower Ch. 71 formula calculations which were based on previous year spending (in addition to the probable reimbursement rate decrease).
  - Mr. Friedman proposed moving all or most of E & D into a Budget contingency line to give the UIRSD flexibility for the coming year. It could be used to bolster FY21 State revenue decreases avoiding immediate staff cuts, and a portion could also be returned to the Towns in FY20.

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The UIRSC was divided and explored many issues.

- The FY21 Budget had been carefully crafted to by Principals, Central Administration and the UIRSC to serve the students, so there was some reluctance to cut at this point and particularly at random, or without clear guidance from all three towns.
- There would be political ramifications at some ATMs about explaining such a holding action if other Town Departments cut their budgets.
- Many people were frightened or out of work. Future property tax revenues were in jeopardy. West Tisbury reported having to short-term borrow to cover FY20 regional school district bills.
- The MVPS was one of the largest employers on the Island so Reductions In Force (RIFs) were a double edged sword.
- Both Towns and schools faced totally unpredictable projections for fall 2020. Conservative budgeting was generally in order, however, many issues could be postponed until and/or adjusted at autumn Special Town Meetings (STMs), presenting the possibility of planning for a multi-step budget process. Schools could still be in Remote Learning mode or in regular session or a hybrid of the two (as Supt. D'Andrea expected). Ms. Stevens raised examples of the dichotomy.
- After due consideration, the FY21 Chilmark School nurse position (currently vacant) was increased from 0.2 to 0.4 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) (see Minutes: 10/3/19 p.2-3, 11/7/19 p.2 & 11/12/19 p.2). A candidate had accepted the 0.4 FTE position but could not accept a 0.2 FTE position that would result if budgets were cut or level funded. Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt offered the assistance of the WTS Nurse to check Kindergarten registration in August.
- If facilities opened in September the Chilmark School might require two custodians to institute more and deeper cleanings.
- Technology could be reduced after refreshing the school computers but continued remote learning would require further spending.
- The UIRSD \$550,000 Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB) line could be used as a reserve for the coming year without impacting students. These funds were to pay down the liability but were not legally required by the State. Mr. Stone objected that bond companies might alter discount ratings if the UIRSD did not adhere to its written OPEB policy.
- Special Education support was in process both within the MVPS and in outside activities.
- Skipper Manter repeated his advocacy to return all E & D to the Towns and then raise and appropriate for a possible contingency line.
- A useful exercise would be to present plans for two school opening eventualities and to set priorities for a multi-step budget process.
- The UIRSC would meet again in two weeks, after the AISC Subcommittee meeting and Massachusetts Governor Baker's announcement on opening the State. The UIRSC requested that Warrant Article Review be put on the agenda (see below: Meetings/Events).

**C. West Tisbury (WT) School Resource Officer (SRO) Warrant Article**

(See 12/16/19 Budget Minutes p.2)

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO WITHDRAW THE SCHOOL RESOURCE ARTICLE FROM ALL UP ISLAND REGION TOWN MEETING WARRANTS: ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED;*

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*MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: KATE DEVANE—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANter—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE.*

**Superintendent's Report** (Agenda Item #IV)

**A. All-Island School Committee (AISC) Meeting** – See above.

**Personnel** (Agenda Item #V)

**A. Resignation** (See documents on file.)

• *KATE DEVANE MOVED TO ACKNOWLEDGE WITH GREAT REGRET AND THANKS FOR WONDERFUL SERVICE*

- *THE RESIGNATION OF 0.5 SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER KIM GARRISON AT THE END OF THE 2019-20 SCHOOL YEAR, AND*

- *THE RETIREMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHER TERESA MELLO AS OF NOVEMBER 30, 2020;*

*ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: KATE DEVANE—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANter—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE.*

**Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair** (Agenda Item #VI)

• In what was hopefully the end of the beginning to the Chilmark School heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC) project, TE2 delivered the engineering specs on deadline and next steps were: UIRSC and Town direction/approval, hiring an Owner's Project Manager (OPM) and putting out bids for Phase One of a summer project (see documents on file & Minutes: 10/21/19 Minutes p.2 #IV C & 1/27/20 p.1-2 #IX).

- The Covid-19 closure had lengthened the construction window.

- Funding was available through the previously voted UIRSD warrant articles and the Chilmark Green Community grant, and would not affect current budgets.

- Mr. Hannemann recommended Option 1 the 100% airsource heat-pump which included:

- a back up generator, air conditioning, attic insulation,
- moving ventilation units out of the classroom to minimize noise disruptions,
- a new control system allowing room controls to be separately set, and
- the current oil-fired system as backup during the first year.

As they were not experts, the UIRSC declined to discuss the technicalities of the Report.

• *KATE DEVANE MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE CHILMARK SCHOOL HVAC WORKING GROUP TO PROCEED WITH THE PLANS; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: KATE DEVANE—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANter—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE.*

• The UIRSC expressed their profound appreciation for the MVPS food programs, and the WTS program in particular, as doing an outstanding job of providing a vital community service during

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the pandemic crisis. They also thanked administration, administrative support professionals (ASPs) teachers, and the entire food service/school team for their outstanding work.

- The WTS was granted a waiver for all student meals to be reimbursed at Free and Reduced levels.

**Adjournment**

• *KATE DEVANE MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 6:06PM; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: KATE DEVANE—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE.*

**Meetings/Events**

- MVRHSC - 5:00PM, Monday, May 18, 2020 – Zoom Conference
- UIRSC Meeting – 5:00PM, Tuesday, May 26, 2020 – Zoom Conference
- AISC Meeting – 5:00PM, Thursday, May 28, 2020 – Zoom Conference
- MVRHSC - 5:00PM, Monday, June 1, 2020 – Zoom Conference
- UIRSC Meeting – 5:00PM, Monday, June 22, 2020 – Zoom Conference
- Special & Annual Town Meetings - *TBD*
  - Chilmark – 5:30PM, Monday, June 8, 2020, Community Center Grounds
  - West Tisbury – 4:00PM, Tuesday, June 23, 2020 Tabernacle
  - Aquinnah – 7:00PM, Tuesday, June 23, 2020

**Documents on File:**

- Agenda 5/11/20
- Mello email re: Retirement Date 5/7/20
- Garrison letter of resignation 4/7/20
- Lowell-Bettencourt email re: Update on WTS 8<sup>th</sup> Grade (2 p.) 5/10/20
- Chilmark School HVAC Project—Next Steps (4 p.)
- Trethewey/TE2 Engineering, LLC cover letter re: Chilmark Elementary School Mechanical Assessment and Recommendations—Final Report (33 p.) 4/11/20

**Minutes approved 5/26/20**