

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
5:00PM, Tuesday, May 26, 2020
By Zoom Cloud Conference due to COVID-19**

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Present: Chair – Kate DeVane, Robert Lionette, Skipper Manter, Alex Salop,
Others: Supt's Shared Services Office: Matt D'Andrea, Richie Smith,
Mark Friedman,
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Mary Boyd, Susan Stevens,
UIRSD/MVPS Staff: Pamela Alwardt, Mary Ambulos, Hannah Beford,
Larissa Bernat, Nancy Cole, Chris Connors, Robin Davies,
Sean DeBettencourt, Stephanie Dryer, Laura Edelman, Orlaith Estes,
Hope Fecitt, Peter Forrester, Jennifer Fournier, Debra Grant,
Kate Harding, Theresa Holmes, Natalie Krauthamer, Katilyn Kurth,
Katy Kurth, Gail Lachapelle, Kari Leal, Lucy Leopold,
Constance Leuenberger, Catherine Mafcher, Judy Maynard,
Meg McDonald, Sue Merrill, Sue Miller, Nicole Miranda, Kim Patterson,
Laurie Pereira, Victoria Philipps, Kathy Rogers, Denise Searle,
Alison Smith, Gretchen Snyder, Rebecca Solway, Donna Swift,
Elspeth Todd, Zoe Turcotte, MVEA: Nedine Cunningham, Anne Davey,
Spencer D'Agostino,
Towns – WT Treasurer – Bruce Stone
Community: Penny Hageanon,
Press – 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.)

Approval of Minutes – May 11, 2020 (Agenda Item #II)

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MAY 11, 2020 MINUTES; ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, KATE DEVANE—AYE.*

Financial Report (Agenda Item #III)

A. Expenditure and Revenue Report - Nothing new to report.

State payments were received quarterly, in this case probably towards the end of June— including Chapter 71 Transportation adjustments.

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B. Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) Budget (See 5/11/20 Minutes p.2-3 #B.)

The UIRSC debated what actions to take in the uncertain times, speculating on the seriousness of various projections and worsening finances over time.

- Towns were not able to give definitive guidance. West Tisbury asked Schools to look at budgets line-by-line to save as much as possible but gave no specific percentages or numbers. Real estate tax payments were slow, partly due to the delayed due date, so short-term Revenue Anticipation Notes (RANs) were floated to pay bills. West Tisbury Town employees were asked to forego all increases except steps and lane changes.
- Interim Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) Business Manager guesstimated State revenue shortfalls at about \$115-125,000, suggesting the UIRSC plan for a \$100,000 shortfall.
 - Excess and Deficiency (E & D) was certified at \$98,778 available until June 30th after which it would be unavailable until certification. The UIRSC was divided on whether to commit this to the current situation or reserve it for later in the crisis. Skipper Manter objected to E & D offsets as creating problems for following years, and advocated returning it to the Towns.
 - A portion of the \$144,798 Circuit Breaker balance (possibly ~ \$116,500 currently reported as "Miscellaneous Revenue") was slated for a Special Education Reserve (see 12/16/19 Minutes p.2 #V F & below: # C). The amount could be applied to the current budget Special Education lines.
 - The MVPS Grants Coordinator was researching resources. \$50,000 in CARES Act funds was expected.
- A responsible starting point was proposed at level funding to FY20 budgets, (~\$301,000 reduction) in addition to a \$100,000 revenue shortfall. Such a large cut would definitely entail Reductions In Force (RIFs) and elimination of programs—likely to be unpalatable to voters.
 - Chilmark School had very few non-staff lines that would make a significant difference, except for: Painting, Maintenance, and possibly Supplies.
- Administration reported teaching staff was performing magnificently under difficult conditions. The Martha's Vineyard Educators Association (MVEA) had rejected a request to eliminate FY21 Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs)—although a meeting was scheduled to clear up possible misunderstandings. Skipper Manter and Kate DeVane expressed disappointment:
 - Non-union Town employees had given up FY21 increases.
 - Teachers were among the highest paid in the State and had reasonable job security.
 - There would be unemployed and struggling people in Town Meeting audiences.
 - The refusal would trigger a RIF; probably involving the lowest paid and/or least senior staff; a tiered COLA reduction starting with the highest paid was suggested.
- MVEA Co-President Anne Davey expressed discomfort with the tenor of the conversation explaining the situation.
 - The union was asked one and a half weeks ago, without a formal proposal, to consider foregoing COLAs. The Co-Presidents conducted a survey in as much as was possible. The Administration decidedly would not promise no RIFs if COLAs were returned.
 - No other unions either in the State or Towns had returned COLAs. The units were in the first year of a hard fought three year contract. There had been no specific requests from the Towns.
 - Teachers were working harder than ever before and the next school year was unknown, with social distancing requirement possibilities such as: extended days, multiple shifts, etc.

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- The UIRSC acknowledged that staff was the most important component for students.
- Town Accountant Bruce Stone suggested the UIRSC consider a multi-phase budget process, freezing spending early and re-budgeting as information became available throughout the year. A Budget meeting date was set (see below: Meetings/Events). The UIRSC requested a copy of the FY21 Certified Budget and that Administrators prepare a phased approach to budgeting for a \$400,000 shortfall, as an exercise to show Towns, whether the UIRSC chose to adopt it or not

C. Town Warrant Articles

Warrants were being shortened by postponing non-essential articles to a fall 2020 Special Town Meeting (STM).

- The West Tisbury School (WTS) rubber roof engineering could be postponed till fall without endangering the guarantee timeline.
- Covid-19 delays in the window order had forestalled phase two of the Chilmark School window replacement.
- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO REQUEST ALL THREE TOWNS DELAY THE ARTICLE ON PHASE TWO OF THE CHILMARK SCHOOL WINDOWS; KATE DEVANE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROBERT LIONETTE –AYE, ALEX SALOP –AYE, SKIPPER MANTER –AYE, KATE DEVANE –AYE.*
- Skipper Manter reported the West Tisbury Selectmen voted to remove the Special Education Reserve from the warrant. However, the UIRSC argued that the Article was essential in order to retain Circuit Breaker funding (see 12/16/19 Minutes p.2 #V F & above: #B). The UIRSC asked Principal Donna Lowell Bettencourt and Mark Friedman to investigate and resolve the matter.

D. Chilmark School Heat & Bathrooms Update (See 5/11/20 Minutes p.4 #VI.)

- Chilmark Town Administrator would take the lead on hiring an Owners Project Manager (OPM) for the School heat project.
- The bathroom contractor had started today so there was nothing new to report yet.

Superintendent's Report (Agenda Item #IV)

A. All-Island School Committee (AISC) Meeting (See below: Meetings/Events.)

Old / New / Business (Agenda Item #V)

A. Graduation Update

Prin. Lowell Bettencourt was consulting with the Board of Health—and had sent out a June 11th save-the-date. Students were looking forward to the United Kingdom virtual trip.

B. School Choice

The UIRSC considered separate intra- and inter-district school choice policy votes, due to reservations on next year's school choice slots because of social distancing and Covid-19 concerns. Elimination of inter-district choice would prohibit any new child whose family lived outside West Tisbury, Chilmark or Aquinnah from attending any UIRSD school. Financial revenues were reviewed—\$5,000 per student plus Special Education expenses. Prin. Lowell Bettencourt echoed that Administrators would exercise great caution to protect UIRSD students, but would also like the discretion for such things as allowing a student to finish out the year, if the family had moved to another Town.

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- Skipper Manter declared that: \$5,000 was inadequate compensation, more students chose the WTS than left the UIRSD schools, and school choice enrollment forced the WTS to add sections.
- Prin. Lowell Bettencourt responded that extra upper-grade sections had few school choice students, and no sections were added due to School Choice.
- Alex Salop emphasized the need for community unity in the face of the crises and that refusal of inter-district School Choice would signal divisiveness and bickering.
- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO CONTINUE TO PARTICIPATE IN INTRA-DISTRICT SCHOOL CHOICE FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROBERT LIONETTE – AYE, SKIPPER MANTER – AYE, ALEX SALOP – AYE, KATE DEVANE – AYE.*
- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN INTER-DISTRICT SCHOOL CHOICE FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR; KATE DEVANE SECONDED; MOTION FAILED: 1 AYE, 3 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROBERT LIONETTE--NAY, SKIPPER MANTER – AYE, ALEX SALOP – NAY, KATE DEVANE – NAY.*
- *KATE DEVANE MOVED TO CONTINUE TO PARTICIPATE IN INTER-DISTRICT SCHOOL CHOICE FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR AT THE PRINCIPALS' DISCRETION WITH AWARENESS OF COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 3 AYES, 1 NAY, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROBERT LIONETTE – AYE, SKIPPER MANTER – NAY, ALEX SALOP – AYE, KATE DEVANE – AYE.*

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

Skipper Manter and Kate Devane stated it was not their intent to offend the unions, emphasizing instead the UIRSC need to work on passing budgets that planned for heavy revenue shortfalls. It was hoped that after tomorrow's Administration/Union meeting the situation would be clarified.

Adjournment

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 6:56PM; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROBERT LIONETTE – AYE., ALEX SALOP – AYE, SKIPPER MANTER – AYE, KATE DEVANE – AYE.*

Meetings/Events

- AISC Meeting – 5:00PM, Thursday, June 4, 2020 – Zoom Conference
- MVRHSC - 5:00PM, Monday, June 1, 2020 – Zoom Conference
- UIRSC Meeting – 5:30PM, Tuesday, June 2, 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 – 7:00PM, Tuesday, June 23, 2020 Tabernacle
 - Aquinnah – 1:00PM, Tuesday, June 23, 2020 Fire Dept. Grounds

Documents on File:

- Agenda 5/26/20

Minutes approved 6/2/20