

MARTHA'S VINEYARD REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Monday, June 1, 2020, 5:00PM
Zoom Meeting

Present: Chair – Kimberly Kirk, Roxanne Ackerman, Megan Anderson, Robert Lionette*,
Skipper Manter, Kris O’Brien, Janet Packer, Kathryn Shertzer,
Others: 150 to 200 attendees (see Participant list) including:
Supt.'s Of: Superintendent - Matt D’Andrea, Asst. Supt. – Richie Smith,
Interim Finance Manager – Mark Friedman,
MVRHS/MVPS Staff: Principal – Sarah Dingley,
Assistant Principals: Jeremy Light, Dhakir Warren – Director of Student Affairs,
Barbara-Jean Chauvin - CTE Director,
Interim MVRHS Finance Manager – Jacob Rosengarten,
Special Ed Co-Director – Hope MacLeod, ASP – Noelle Warburton,
Guidance – Amy Lilavois, John Fiorito,
WTS - Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, OBSC - Lisa Reagan,
Staff/MVTEA: Nedine Cunningham, Spencer D’Agostino, Anne Davey,
Towns/County: Dukes County – Beka El-Deiry, VT: Clark Rattet,
Oak Bluffs – Ewell Hopkins, Maura McGroarty,
Press: MV Times – Lucas Thors, Vineyard Gazette – Will Sennott,
Secretary: Marni Lipke **Late arrivals or early departures of MVRHSC members (see * in text)*

Call to Order

The meeting of the Martha’s Vineyard Regional High School Committee (MVRHSC) was called to order at 5:03PM. Chair Kimberly Kirk welcomed everyone. In order to facilitate such a large meeting, the chat feature was turned off, and all none AISC members or presenters were asked to turn off their videos—nonetheless remaining and participating in the meeting.
- (*Recorder’s Note: Discussions are summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.*)

Minutes

(Agenda Item #I)

A. School Committee Minutes: 5/4/20 & 5/18/20

• *MS. KRIS O’BRIEN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MAY 4, 2020 AND MAY 18, 2020 MINUTES; MS. MEGAN ANDERSON SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 8 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MS. KIRK—AYE, MR. ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, MS. JANET PACKER—AYE, MR. SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, MS. ANDERSON—AYE, MS. ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, MS. KATHRYN SHERTZER—AYE, MS. O’BRIEN—AYE.*

Student Report - None

(Agenda Item #II)

Student/Department Spotlight - None

(Agenda Item #III)

Principal's Report

(Agenda Item #IV)

A. Student Support

Administration had been communicating regularly with students and families, especially seniors. The high participation rate was a pleasant surprise and the efforts of students, families and teachers was greatly appreciated. Guidance continued to reach out with ongoing support,

MARTHA'S VINEYARD REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL COMMITTEE
June 1, 2020

2

adjustment and counseling to those students not engaging in school. Seniors would finish on Friday, June 5, 2020, but remote learning classes for all other students would continue until June 22nd, the last day of school. Remote administration glitches in the of the Advanced Placement (AP) exam(s) was beyond MVRHS control.

- The leadership team would post an event for students to process the killing of George Floyd.

B. Senior Planning Update (See below: Meeting/Events.)

Seniors were coming in to pick up caps and gowns, with fun ceremonies for their final walk-out from the building. They would be spectators from their cars for a Graduation Parade on State Beach Road this Sunday. A face-to-face ceremony was being planned for July 26th at the Agricultural Hall in West Tisbury pending State restrictions changes.

C. Remote Learning Plan (RLP) Update (See above: #IV A)

D. Technology Restructuring (See 5/4/20 Minutes p.3 #B.)

Restructuring finances and positions continued to be refined, but projections were still in draft form. Three positions would be reduced to one position and a contracted vendor, also reducing benefit packages. There would be some overlap this summer and in the initial year—line item transfers would be requested. The contract could be terminated if the Technology Director returned from leave early. Advantages/components of the new configuration included:

- a contracted vendor team of engineers including experts in school software and State reporting;
- increased staff training in scheduling software,
- after the initial year, ~ \$30-40,000 in annual savings.

Superintendent's Report

(Agenda Item #V)

Superintendent Matt D'Andrea thanked the entire staff for their good work during the Covid-19 closure and especially the technology workers who had been tremendously helpful to staff and families by meeting extraordinary challenges—e.g. iPhone mitigation for internet hotspots.

A. All Island School Committee (AISC) Lunch Program Update

The Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) continued to serve upwards of 10,000 meals per week across the Island. Food service was working tirelessly and meeting once a week on concerns and updates. Community members Sophie Abrahms and Noli Taylor were generously donating as well as addressing food equity issues and how to continue service through the summer. MVPS was coordinating with other Island food pantries.

B. AISC Shared Services Budget Update

- At its last meeting the AISC had a wide ranging conversation on how to move forward given the many financial and educational unknowns, and then voted to reduce the Superintendent's Shared Services Office budget by a little more than 1%, impacting all other MVPS budgets. The AISC requested tiered planning of further reductions to be ready probable future shortfalls.
- Towns' requests averaged to 1% to 1.5% in Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) budget reductions.
- Martha's Vineyard Educators Association (MVEA) offered two FY21 furlough days amounting to ~ \$400,000 in MVPS savings. Everyone expressed gratitude for this extremely helpful action.
- Consequently, it was Supt. D'Andrea's recommendation that schools step back from the decimation and student impact of level funding and consider Town guidance in current reductions of about 1-1.5%

MARTHA'S VINEYARD REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL COMMITTEE
June 1, 2020

3

C. Reduction In Force (RIF) Update

Supt. D'Andrea's goal was to save as many as jobs as was possible and to minimize any impact on MVPS students. The MVEA agreed to extend the RIF notification deadline until June 15, 2020. Asst. Superintendent Richie Smith emphasized that the Administration acknowledged with great thanks from the bottom of their hearts all the instructional and support staff, food service workers, etc. for their kindness to and support of the Island's children.

Financial Report

(Agenda Item #VI)

D. Technology Costs (See above & 5/4/20 Minutes p.3 #B.)

A. Overview of Budget (See documents on file.)

C. Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) Budget Update (See documents on file.)

To avoid more severe RIFs than had already been made during the budget process, Principal Sarah Dingley had prepared a 1-1.5% reduction option, with straight cuts and contingencies for possible increased expenses such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or revenue shortfalls —e.g. in Chapter 71 Transportation or Circuit Breaker reimbursements.

- Proposed direct expense reductions for ~ \$278,240 (1.22%):
 - \$17,087 MVRHS proportion of the Supt.'s Shared Services Office reduction;
 - \$32,000 - administration and staff Professional Development (PD) and substitutes for same (many trainings were canceled and others available free on line);
 - \$42,000 - administrative and non-union salary increases;
 - \$30,000 – technology restructuring;
 - \$11,000 – undistributed supplies, leaving a remainder for possible Covid-19 costs;
 - \$49,000 - vehicle and building heat fuel costs due to current low rates;
 - \$25,000 – horticulture design/feasibility costs;
 - ~ \$59,000– hold on unfilled custodial position – not needed until start of school, and possible coverage with CARES Act and other contingencies;
 - \$16,869 - health insurance/benefits from Shared Services and custodial reductions.
- (The other unfilled position was a Math teacher that would impact a range of student opportunities for both enrichment and algebra remediation.)
- Contingencies were guesstimated to absorb increased costs as well as revenue shortfalls.
 - Residential care regulations and costs were changing daily. An expected \$467,000 Circuit Breaker shortfall was mitigated by a \$397,000 in Extraordinary Relief for a \$69,000 delta.
 - Contingency Covid-19 at \$100,000 would be created to cover possible transportation, cleaning and other unanticipated cost increases;
 - \$169,000 Other Post Employment Benefits reduction would balance the Residential and Contingency-Covid-19 increases.
 - Projected State reimbursement losses were: \$60,870 in Chapter 70 (funded to FY20 levels) and \$98,000 in Chapter 71 Transportation – at a lower percentage. Plus \$28,900 in interest loss.
 - The FY21 Excess and Deficiency (E & D) \$525,000 offset of which \$500,000 was a capital/residential Contingency line (see 11/14/19 Minutes p.3), would be increased by \$100,000 to be added to the Contingency-Covid-19 line.

MARTHA'S VINEYARD REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL COMMITTEE

June 1, 2020

4

- This left the overall budget down \$190,050—a 1% decrease.
- Interim MVRHS Finance Manager Jacob Rosengarten reviewed the challenge of ~ \$1,000,000 in FY21 budget uncertainties/high-variables addressing the unpredictable environment partly but not exclusively due to the pandemic (e.g. Residential/Circuit Breaker). There were three constituencies: students who were only here for four years, town taxpayers and employees. The goal was to address all constituencies without unnecessary or premature draconian cuts that would overly degrade student experience. Savings areas were:
 - partial E & D—use of a rainy day fund in a rainy year, but saving for possible rain in FY22;
 - expense savings as noted above, and
 - OPEB.
- The MVRHSC compared this draft with Scenario B:
 - OPEB cuts dropped from \$286,000 to \$169,000;
 - Residential tuition increase dropped from \$466,000 to \$69,000;
 - Supt. Shared Services reduction \$\$17,087;
 - RIF/staff adjustments from \$210,000 to \$58,000 (plus \$13,000 benefit reduction);
 - E & D offset from a \$250,000 increase to a \$100,000 increase;
 - unchanged items included: bus fuel, PD, supplies, horticulture capital, contingency, administrative/non-union salaries, administrative restructuring, and Ch. 70, Ch. 71 and interest revenue loss anticipation.

The MVRHSC and the public discussed the situation for over two hours.

- Several members were concerned about reducing custodial staff from seven to six given the probable increase in cleaning requirements. Administrators emphasized the flexibility provided by CARES Act funds and creative personnel moves.
- Mr. Manter protested that the options were only ghost savings, revenue shifts and cooking the books. Prin. Dingley emphasized substantial cuts in all areas of the budget including: PD, salary increases, positions, and OPEB.
- Ms. Packer argued that reductions in OPEB would become a tax burden to today's children when they reached adulthood.
- The operating bus lease had been executed for six replacements as recommended for safety issues by the State Inspector and Transportation Director Mark Rivers. The Vineyard Transit Authority (VTA) requested gasoline buses as more durable and easier to maintain than diesel. Social distancing regulations could increase the need for buses.
- \$54,000 in CARES Act funding and \$114,000 in possible furlough savings were not included in any option and could be considered as additional contingency resources—including for custodial services. Furloughs were not yet officially negotiated and/or scheduled. Eliminations of Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) was not currently being negotiated with the MVEA.
- The Massachusetts Taxpayer Foundation was projecting 15-20% State revenue shortfalls, however the difficulty was in predicting how such a shortfall would be imposed, whether across the board or by prioritizing areas of support. Several members suggested that 1-1.5% reduction was insufficient to address the coming financial impact of the closures.

MARTHA'S VINEYARD REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL COMMITTEE

June 1, 2020

5

- Administrators argued that the 1-1.5% reduction was a reasonable response to the situation as it currently presented itself, giving flexibility and options for moving into the next school year. More draconian cuts that could not be rectified would be a major mistake at this time when so much about financial impact, school configuration and student need was unknown. Prin. Dingley's job was student achievement and her recommendations followed that direction.
- Several MVRHSC members referred to the original ask for a \$1,100,000 cut to level fund the FY21 budget and requested this option be presented. It was empathized that the MVRHSC was not necessarily in favor of such a reduction but would use it for information, planning and comparison purposes. Administrators expressed some confusion since they had already submitted two level funded Options (A and B) to the Budget Subcommittee.
- The Administration repeatedly asked for clear direction on what any additional option should encompass, having to return to the question again at the end of the meeting. Previous discussions implied that it contain no cuts in facility maintenance, OPEB, Contingency Reserve or Transportation, as well as no increased E & D offsets, leaving only basic personnel reductions.
 - Options A and B included \$210,00 in unspecified personnel reductions. Elimination or reduction of the Contingency Reserve would involve up to \$710,000 in staff cuts.
 - The MVEA contract required 48 hr. notification to staff whose positions could be considered for RIF by a School Committee. The MVRHSC acknowledged the difficult, delicate hardship.
- The MVRHSC was divided and could not reach agreement:
 - Mr. Manter expected cuts in recurring expenses.
 - Some just wanted time to compare the current options.
 - The \$500,000 contingency requested by the All Island Boards of Selectmen to avoid unnecessary Special Town Meetings (STMs), might now be a luxury which might be reduced.
 - Some wanted specifics on the \$210,000 in Option A and B personnel cuts.
 - Others noted that the purview of the MVRHSC was to request a bottom line and how that was achieved was the jurisdiction of the Administration.
 - Some felt furlough savings could be included, others that they should be held in abeyance, and only used if need arose.
 - The members grudgingly agreed that OPEB could be slightly reduced temporarily.
- The MVRHSC should be unified in presenting its budget to all six Town Meetings.
- The arduous five month FY21 Budget process was noted in comparison with the short timeframe imposed by the rapidly evolving situation. Staff and MVRHSC members were stressed by the pressure to draft, explore and decide on multiple options in time to calculate assessments for the first Town Meeting, (Chilmark on Monday, June 8th). However, IT WAS THE GENERAL CONSENSUS OF THE MARTHA'S VINEYARD REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL COMMITTEE THAT THEY WERE NOT PREPARED TO VOTE A BUDGET AT THIS MEETING. A June 4th meeting was scheduled (see below: Tasks & Meetings/Events).

B. Grants and Donations (See documents on file.)

- *MR. MANTER MOVED TO ACCEPT WITH MUCH THANKS \$7,475 IN DONATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2020 TO SUPPORT THE ADDITIONAL COSTS OF GRADUATION; MS. PACKER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0*

MARTHA'S VINEYARD REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL COMMITTEE
June 1, 2020

6

ABSTENTIONS: MS. KIRK—AYE, MS. PACKER—AYE, MR. MANTER—AYE, MS. ANDERSON—AYE, MS. ACKERMAN—AYE, MS. SHERTZER—AYE, MS. O'BRIEN—AYE.

Personnel

(Agenda Item #VII)

A. Retirement (See documents on file.)

• *MR. MANTER MOVED TO ACKNOWLEDGE WITH MUCH GRATITUDE FOR OVER THREE DECADES OF SERVICE THE RETIREMENT OF GUIDANCE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT JUDY PIZZELLA AS OF SEPTEMBER 4, 2020; MS. O'BRIEN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MS. KIRK—AYE, MS. PACKER—AYE, MR. MANTER—AYE, MS. ANDERSON—AYE, MS. ACKERMAN—AYE, MS. SHERTZER—AYE, MS. O'BRIEN—AYE.*

Committee Updates

(Agenda Item #VIII)

A. 2020-2021 Meeting Calendar – Tabled (See documents on file.)

B. Committee Leadership Reorganization - Tabled

Public Comment – See above #VI C.

(Agenda Item #IX)

Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair

(Agenda Item #X)

Executive Session – Not needed.

(Agenda Item #XI)

Adjournment

(Agenda Item #XII)

• *MS. O'BRIEN MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:14PM; MS. SHERTZER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTION: MS. KIRK—AYE, MR. MANTER—AYE, MS. ANDERSON—AYE, MS. ACKERMAN—AYE, MS. SHERTZER—AYE, MS. HOUGHTON—AYE, MS. O'BRIEN—AYE.*

Appendix A - Meetings/Events

• AISC – 4:00PM, Thursday, June 4, 2020 - Zoom

• MVRHSC – after AISC meeting - Thursday, June 4, 2020 – Zoom

• MVRHS Graduation Parade – 1:00PM, Sunday, June 7, 2020 – State Beach Road

• AISC – 8:30AM, Thursday, June 11, 2020 - Zoom

• MVRHSC – 5:00PM, Monday, June 29, 2020 – Zoom

• MVRHS Graduation – Sunday, July 26, 2020 – Ag Hall, West Tisbury

• Special & Annual Town Meetings

Aquinnah – 7:00PM, Tuesday, June 23, 2020

Chilmark – 5:30PM, Monday, June 8, 2020, Community Center Grounds

Edgartown – 1:30PM, Saturday, June 13, 2020 (Rain Date 6/14/20) Edg. School Grounds

Oak Bluffs – TBD, Tuesday, June 16, 2020 Tabernacle

Tisbury – 1:00PM, Saturday, June 13, 2020, Tisbury School Grounds

West Tisbury – 4:00PM, Tuesday, June 23, 2020 Tabernacle

continued

MARTHA'S VINEYARD REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL COMMITTEE
June 1, 2020

7

Appendix B - Agreed Upon Tasks

- Mr. Friedman/Mr. Rosengarten – email FY21 Certified budget and options—in same format.
- All – contact Mr. Friedman with any questions.

Appendix C - Documents on File:

- Agenda 6/1/20
- Participants_87662586340 (5 p.)
- MVRHS General Fund Expenditures Fiscal Year 2019-2020 (14 p.) 6/1/20
- MVRHS General Fund Revenues Fiscal Year 2019-2020 6/1/20
- Martha's Vineyard Regional High School District Budget for Fiscal Year'2021 Recertified: 3/09/20 (10 p.)
- Martha's Vineyard Regional High School District Budget for Fiscal Year'2021 Recertified: 6/01/20 (11 p.)
- Uncertain Line Items – FY 21 Vs. FY 20
- MVRHS FY21 Budget May 5/26/2020 Scenario A (Potential Changes to the FY21 Certified Budget—Expenses Only)
- MVRHS FY21 Budget May 5/26/2020 Scenario B (Potential Changes to the FY21 Certified Budget—Expenses & Revenues)
- June 1, 2020, Listed below are the recent donation...
- Pizzella Retirement letter
- Meeting Calendar Draft 2020-2021, Updated 6/1/20, MVRHS Committee Meetings

Respectfully submitted,

Marni Lipke – Recorder

Date

Kimberly Kirk – MVRHSC Chair

Date

Matt D'Andrea– MVRHSD Superintendent

Date

Minutes approved as amended 6/29/20