

**Tisbury School Committee**  
**8:30AM, Wednesday, September 10, 2020**  
**By Zoom Conferencing**

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**TSC Members Present:** Chair Amy Houghton\*, Jen Cutrer, Michael Watts,  
**Staff: MVPS/Tis.** John Custer – Principal, Melissa Ogden – Asst. Principal;  
Matt D’Andrea – Superintendent, Richie Smith – Asst. Supt.  
Mark Friedman – Interim Business Manager,  
Sue Adamo, Ruth Ambrozaitis, Whitney Burke, Deb Conroy,  
Catherine Coogan, Amy Custer, Sean DeBettencourt,  
Rachel Hickey, Natalie Krauthamer, Lunch Ladies, Maria Metters,  
Nicole Shirley, Ashley Tarter, Ann Williamson,  
**Town:** Selectmen – Jeff Kristal, FinCom – Jynell Kristal,  
**Others:** Angie Francis, Marni Lipke – Recorder

\* Late arrivals or early departures of TSC members

The Tisbury School Committee (TSC) meeting was called to order at 9:10AM.  
(Recorder’s note: some discussions are summarized and re-grouped for clarity and brevity.)

I. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes

• **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MR. MICHAEL WATTS AND SECONDED BY MS. JEN CUTRER THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVED THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS AS WRITTEN:**

- JULY 15, 2020;
- AUGUST 13, 2020;
- AUGUST 18, 2020;
- AUGUST 27, 2020;

**2 AYES, 0 NAYS, ABSTENTIONS AS ABSENT: MR. WATTS—AYE, MS. CUTRER—ABSTAIN.**

II. Superintendent’s Report

A. All Island School Committee (AISC)

The meeting was postponed pending further information.

B. Policy

1. Mask Policy

The draft was being updated to new Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines.

III. Re-Opening Plan

A. Reopening Plan

Principal John Custer was happy to welcome staff back into the building. Although the re-opening plan was challenging for all Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) it was particularly so for the aging Tisbury School facility with significantly tight spacing.

B. Staffing and Spaces

\* During this conversation Ms. Amy Houghton entered the meeting at 9:33AM.

- The School was lucky to be able to hire retired school nurse Ms. Mary Vivian who had helped out last fall when the middle school was at the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS). She would assist School Nurse Ms. Catherine Coogan, especially with the separate quarantine space.
- As recommended by MVPS Physician Dr. Jeffrey Zach the front foyer conference room (with adjacent bathroom) would be cordoned off as a second nurse's office/quarantine space—leaving the school nurse's office for regular injuries, medicine dispensary, etc. This location would have the following implications:
  - direct exit for Covid-infected student or staff—avoiding further school contamination;
  - covered storage for Covid-related supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE);
  - closing of the front entrance and redirection of deliveries and arrivals.
- The School tipping point was the guidance change from 3 ft. to 6 ft. distancing, forcing considerable space and staff adjustments:
  - additional sections per grade to fit classrooms only accommodating 13-15 students (the gym would become the first grade classroom);
  - rooms used by kindergarten through fourth grades (k-4) four days a week, having to be re-used by fifth through eighth grades (5-8);
  - and consequently additional staffing needs and reassignment of staff, mostly in support fields (remediation, special education, English Language Learners (ELL), etc.).
- Staff health and safety was of paramount importance, not only for their own sake but as the primary resource—reminding the TSC that the MVPS substitute pool had been for some years and continued to be very thin. Weekly staff meetings discussed adaptation for constant changes in enrollment, cohorts and guidance, requiring lesson plans be repeatedly reworked and reframed. Prin. Custer praised their amazing resourcefulness and patience.

Prin. Custer strongly recommended two adjustments to address family and staff feedback and significantly improve the Reopening Plan.

- A uniform k-4 school day (currently at k-3 abbreviated 9:15AM-1:40PM vs. Grade 4 traditional 8:15AM-2:40PM) would resolve issues for many families with children in multiple grades. In addition the School had space to accommodate teacher break and planning times in the abbreviated day, but not in the traditional day.
  - On the other hand, TSC noted the community demand for a traditional day in terms of parent work planning and daycare needs.
  - Assistant Superintendent Richie Smith explained that the split times were a part of the earlier July 30<sup>th</sup> plan transportation issues. The fourth grade would not be in-person until October 27<sup>th</sup>, by which time the Plan may have been adjusted. The goal was for a consistent traditional day length.
  - However it was also emphasized that this year was not a standard learning environment so a 6-hour traditional day was a long time for young students to be sitting in one classroom (not traveling) at one desk, with masks on.
- Teachers in general and middle school teachers in particular needed consistent, dedicated spaces to deliver quality remote learning, which the Tisbury School could not accommodate. It was unfair and unprofessional to ask staff to shift desktops, equipment, etc. from day-to-day, or give them a computer in the library where other teachers were also teaching remotely. Therefore Administration requested the flexibility to allow teachers to work remotely. This was a concern among all MVPS.

- Enrollment was down from 295 on June 30<sup>th</sup> to 281-288 by the last registration, with 22 choosing Cohort D—full remote learning. Prin. Custer encouraged Cohort D middle school families to join the in-person one-day-a-week cohort, in order to remain a part of their school, class, program and peers.
- Prin. Custer acknowledged the frustrations for School families and expressed his gratitude for their continuing trust during this difficult year from the August 2019 split through the current unknowns. Parents would be informed about teacher assignments by the end of the week, and a parent forum was scheduled (see below: Meetings/Events).

#### C. Tents (See below: Actions.)

The three tents were very helpful for staff and students and the School hoped to secure more if needed.

- In response to staff feedback on in-person safety, the TSC proposed meeting in-person. Ms. Coogan explained the recommendation to restrict school use to staff and students. Public meeting and technology issues had to be resolved in order to meet elsewhere.

#### D. Parent Forum – See below: Meetings/Events.

### IV. Financial Report (See documents on file.)

#### A. Fund Balances

There were no tangible concerns at only two months into Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21). The School was mindful of spending and thankful for grants. In this unusual year spending sometimes preceded funding in anticipation of grants (see 8/19/20 Minutes p.3).

- As expected small and/or projected variances included: technology, health/nursing, tents, contractual cleaning, etc.
- Ms. Vivian would be funded through the long-term substitute line in anticipation of reimbursement from the School Reopening grant (FC102).
- FY20 balances were rolled over into FY21 for total Revolving Lunch (\$18,822) and School Choice (\$178,906) fund balances as an additional financial resource.

#### B. Grant Funding

The \$128,155 Tisbury share of three CARES Act grants (Elementary and Secondary School Relief—ESSER, Technology and School Reopening) were another reserve. Other grants were not yet known. The TSC thanked Tisbury School Administrative Support Professional (ASP) Rachel Hickey and MVPS Interim Business Manager Mark Friedman.

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

This appointment was in partnership with the Select Board.

- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MR. WATTS THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO REAPPOINT THE CURRENT TISBURY SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE MEMBERS WITH A TERMINATION DATE OF JUNE 30, 2021; 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MR. WATTS—AYE, MS. CUTRER—AYE, MS. HOUGHTON—AYE.**

VI. Facility Maintenance

Prin. Custer thanked the School custodial staff who had worked tirelessly all summer and had moved furniture and equipment again and again, in addition to working with outside contractors on flooring, dry wall, electrical, heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC) improvements, etc.

- The School’s outdated HVAC system was being maintained as well as possible (see below: Actions). All filters were replaced this summer and would be replaced quarterly.
- The maintenance punch list was mostly complete the remainder pending contractor availability. Prin. Custer was in touch with the Town Fire Chief and Building Inspector.

Adjournment

Ms. Houghton apologized for her tardiness due to a conflicting appointment.

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

**Appendix A: Meetings/Events:**

- Parent Forum – 5:00PM, Friday, September 11, 2020 by Zoom
- MVRHSC – TBD - 5:00PM, Monday, October 5, 2020 – Zoom
- **TSC – 4:30PM, Tuesday, October 13, 2020 – TBD**
- **TSBC – TBD**

**Appendix B: Actions**

Prin. Custer/Ms. Houghton – research in-person TSC meetings location & technology.  
Prin. Custer – research HVAC filter MERV ratings.

**Appendix C: Documents on File:**

- Agenda 9/10/20
- Tisbury School Fund Balances Fiscal Year 2020-2021 9/10/20
- Tisbury School – Expenditure Report Fiscal Year 2020-2021 (11 p.) 9/10/20

Minutes respectfully submitted by Office On Call/Marni Lipke.

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Marni Lipke – Recorder

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Amy Houghton – TSC Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Minutes approved 10/13/20