

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD  
6:15PM, Tuesday, December 15, 2020  
By Zoom Cloud Conference**

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Present: Chair – Alex Salop, Kate DeVane, Robert Lionette\*, Skipper Manter,  
Others: Supt's Shared Services Office: Matt D'Andrea, Richie Smith,  
Mark Friedman, Ruda Stone,  
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Mary Boyd, Susan Stevens,  
Towns – Bruce Stone, Greg Orcutt,  
Press – MVTV – Shavannae Anderson,  
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.)*

**Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) Budget Workshop (Agenda Item #II)**  
(See documents on file & 12/8/20 Minutes.)

- The Superintendent's Shared Services was set and the previous estimate recalculated assessing school choice and shared services students to home districts for a \$110,000 UIRSD increase.
- Circuit Breaker revenue was none or minimal.
- Aquinnah Finance Committee (FinCom) supported the \$50,000 Other Post Employee Benefit (OPEB) increase over the current Actuarially Determined Employer Contribution (ADEC).
- Version/Draft #4 total budget of \$13,193,698, increased by \$581,485 or 4.61% of which the optional increases were considered fairly minor:
  - \$50,000 OPEB;
  - West Tisbury School (WTS) technology;
  - Chilmark School Education Support Professional (ESP) and full time Nurse, and
  - with a 5% health insurance rate increase as calculated for current staff.
- The UIRSC revisited the usual debate around budget issues.
  - The entire budget should be considered from year to year;.
  - UIRSD had one of the highest per pupil costs in the State.
  - 92 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) constituted 3.56 student/staff ratio.
  - More time was needed and the process should not be rushed.
  - Administrators had minutely examined the Budget and made minimal requests. In recent years the UIRSC had closely reviewed the budget and worked hard to trim any excesses and so were not willing to institute a forensic analysis at this point. In addition, the spring 2020 Covid Budget exercise considered stringent reductions.
  - The quality of UIRSD education not only exceeded more expensive private schools, but was serving many Special Education students extremely well in its regular curriculum.
  - The 5% health insurance rate rise (0.9% of the increase) might not materialize.
  - Per-pupil costs factors included one of the highest teacher salary rates in the state due mostly to the expensive Island cost of living.
  - FTEs increased only 1.6 over FY21 (Chilmark School nurse and ESP) and ratio included: core and SpEd teachers and ESPs, specials (art, music, industrial arts, etc.) middle school subject-oriented teachers, as well as cafeteria, administrative and custodial staff, etc.
  - Chair Alex Salop repeatedly asked Mr. Manter for actionable items and specific line item reductions—not philosophical protest.

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• Due to the March 2020 Covid shutdown FY21 certified E & D was projected at \$120-140,000 of which \$98,000 (listed in Anticipated Revenues) was committed to the FY22 contingency lines according to budget Part, as delineated in the Regional Agreement discretionary funding principles. The UIRSC then expanded on their previous conversation(s) on Excess and Deficiency (E & D) (See 11/23/20 Minutes p.2 #III).

\* During this discussion Robert Lionette entered the meeting at 7:08PM.

- The bond rating companies marginally dropped the UIRSD bond rating for lack of E & D. Interim Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) Business Manager Mark Friedman had argued persuasively regarding UIRSD financial health including OPEB liability policy/status and the internal contingency fund, but the companies insisted on a 'rainy day reserve' outside the General Fund—possibly specified as E & D (or Free Cash for municipalities) capped at 5% of the budget. The bond companies commended UIRSD OPEB policy, but not at the expense of depleting E & D.

- Although acknowledging that finances were moving in a direction he liked, Mr. Manter stated his usual resistance to E & D several times: E & D as over-taxation, certification timing restrictions, unstable amounts, bond rating drop as trivial, proposal that all E & D be returned to the Towns and the contingency line be raised and appropriated.

- Mr Friedman explained a possible substitute would be a UIRSD reserve stabilization fund, requiring three Towns' Town Meeting votes to establish and fund—and consequently less convenient than E & D.

- Mr. Friedman would continue his conversation with the bond companies regarding whether E & D was a specified requirement.

- The UIRSC would vote the FY22 Budget Version #4 with the E & D offset.

• Version #4 \$13,133,738 total assessed budget projected revenues were unclear due mainly to lack of information from the State—which had yet to pass its FY21 budget.

- FY21 School Choice enrollment was used—although WTS accepted only one student for a possibly reduced count.

- Charter School tuition/reimbursement was also unavailable, but WTS Principal Donna Lowell-Bettencourt reported many returning Charter School students.

- FY21 Medicaid offset dropped precipitously due to lack of SpEd transportation during the Covid shutdown, but was projected here at pre-Covid levels.

- Chapter 70 State aid was updated daily—currently at \$870,000 (about a \$13,000 drop).

- Chapter 71 Transportation reimbursement was calculated on each previous year's expenditure and consequently could be reduced because of the 2020 Covid shutdown.

- No new borrowing projects were included in Part D.

- Interest income was projected at \$28,000.

• Mr. Friedman emphasized and the UIRSD acknowledged that the assessed budget was subject to change pending further revenue/reimbursement information.

• Previous objections to School Choice students as not being sufficiently funded at \$5,000 were raised. Administrators and UIRSC members noted that as the students filled vacant class slots their cost was incremental and the reimbursement was not only \$5,000 but added funding for any special education expenses.

- The UIRSC proposed a post-Covid discussion on Circuit Breaker/Special Education revenues.

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

Selectman Skipper Manter invited everyone to a small Zoom annual West Tisbury holiday party at 4:30PM, Friday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, as well as a personal drive-by eggnog service at his home 5:30-7:00PM, Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup>.

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**Meetings/Events: (By Zoom)**

**UIRSC Regular Meeting/Public Hearing - 5:00PM, Monday, December 21, 2020**

**MVRHSC Public Hearing - 7:00PM, Tuesday, December 22, 2020**

**MVRHSC Meeting – 5:00PM, Monday, January 4, 2021**

**Adjournment**

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 7:39PM; KATE DEVANE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: KATE DEVANE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

**Documents on File:**

- Agenda 12/15/20
- Friedman cover email re: UIRSD FY22 Budget Materials 12/10/20
- UIRSD FY22 Budget Draft #4 12/10/2020
- UIRSD FY2022 Assessment – Proposed V #4, /12/10/2020
- Up-Island Regional School District FY22 General Fund Budget – Version #4, 12-10-20  
(14 p.)

**Minutes approved 12/21/20**