

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD  
6:15PM, Tuesday, February 16, 2021  
Zoom Meeting**

**Page 1 of 5**

Present: Chair – Alex Salop, Roxanne Ackerman, 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,  
MVDC – Bob Tankard, Jocelyn Walton,  
WT Green/Climate Change Com. - Kate Warner  
Caroline Chabouis, Todd Murtha,  
Press – MVTV, Maia Coleman, Noah Asimov – Vineyard Gazette,  
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**

(Agenda Item #II)

**A. Including But Not Limited To: January 19, 2021; January 25, 2021**

• ROXANNE ACKERMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 19, 2021 AND JANUARY 25, 2021 MINUTES; KATE DEVANE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION: KATE DEVANE–AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE–AYE, SKIPPER MANTER–AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN–AYE, ALEX SALOP–ABSTAIN.

**Up Island Regional School District (UIRSD)**

(Agenda Item #III)

**A. Martha's Vineyard Diversity Coalition (MVDC)**

(See documents on file & 1/21/21 AISC Minutes #III A.)

This was a follow up presentation after the All Island School Committee (AISC) in view of the unique communities on Martha's Vineyard. MVDC member Jocelyn Walton and her husband had lived full time on the Island since 2006 but she had been a summer visitor since her first birthday in 1940. The MVDC was founded by 6 people 12 years ago to effectively and ultimately eliminate injustice and inequity. MVDC now had over 230 people in their database with goals to live and prepare children to live in a culturally and racially diverse world. Members confronted personal bias by sharing experiences. Grants and donations were overseen by the Martha's Vineyard Community Foundation (formerly the Permanent Endowment). There were now four active committees:

- Criminal Justice - collaborating with Island Police to train in conscious and unconscious bias;
  - Faith-Based - working on 10-week discussion programs with 110 participants;
  - Health and Equity - partnering with Blue Cross Blue Shield and Island organizations to address care disparities;
  - Education - which now had 65 people in two subcommittees: Schools and Artists. Anyone was invited to attend weekly meetings to plan actions and share experience.
  - library program for schools (expanding to public libraries, charter and preschools) with age appropriate books on diversity;
  - a constantly updated list of anti-racist resources – books, films, podcasts, articles, etc.
  - curriculums including: Pollyanna Racial Literacy; Journeys in Film, Teaching Tolerance K thru 12; Borders to Bridges, with suggestion to use them with a sharp eye, encouraging discussion by students and teachers.
- People were invited to participate in “A Long Talk About the Uncomfortable Truth” a 3 night program by Kyle Williams to empower through active conversation. An initial viewing of “A History of Race in America” was required to establish a common base.

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD**  
**February 16, 2021**

**Page 2 of 5**

- Asst. Supt. Smith was working to put together a Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) cohort of administrators, teachers, school committee members, etc. all were welcome to participate. Another cohort of 15 Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) students was also expected to participate.

• Incorporation of diversity actions/instruction would depend on the individual school district.

**B. Green Communities Program Update – Kate Warner**

The UIRSC had voted not to join the West Tisbury Green initiative (see 3/18/13 Minutes p. 2 #VII A) and consequently the facility was excluded from various applications, although the West Tisbury School (WTS) was largest municipal energy consumer. Chair of the Green Community and the Climate Change Committees Kate Warner stressed the need to address long-term climate planning such as prolonged power outages and proposed the following:

- to amend the Green Community application to include the WTS—the first such proposal in the State;
- UIRSC permission to proceed on grant opportunities for the WTS emergency shelter space (gym, dining hall, entry, middle school wing) remediation and energy usage reduction;
- with the hope that such saving could later be expanded to the entire school.
- WTS Custodian Jamie Labbe was interested and already working on lowering WTS consumption. Green Community status required a 20% energy consumption reduction in 5 years; for example all School lights were on all day and all night.
- Becoming a Green Ribbon School was one of the School Advisory Council (SAC) three goals, for parents, staff and school community, to reduce environmental impact and cost, improve staff/student health, increase sustainability and add a teaching opportunity.
- The UIRSC supported the Chilmark Green Community application (see 8/26/19 Minutes p.3 #V A).
- The project would involve a Request for Qualification (RFQ) for a green architect/engineer to design upgrades to insulation, outdated heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC) systems, hurricane proof windows, shower installation, etc.).
- If the project were added to the Hazard Mitigation Plan it would be eligible for Federal Emergencies Management Agency (FEMA) funds.
- The project was likely to cost millions of dollars, requiring some UIRSD outlay.
- There was a discussion on forming a working group on the project in terms of who to include, what was the reporting/appointing authority, etc.
- *KATE DEVANE MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE SUBMISSION OF AN EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR WEST TISBURY SCHOOL EMERGENCY SHELTER REMEDIATION; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: KATE DEVANE—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, SKIPPER MANGER—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*
- *KATE DEVANE MOVED TO CREATE A SEVEN MEMBER WEST TISBURY SCHOOL GREEN RIBBON SCHOOL COMMITTEE AS FOLLOWS:*
  - *WEST TISBURY ENERGY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE,*
  - *WEST TISBURY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR,*
  - *TOWN ADMINISTRATOR,*
  - *SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR,*
  - *WTS MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT,*
  - *UIRSC REPRESENTATIVE,*
  - *SAC PARENT REPRESENTATIVE;*
- *SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: KATE DEVANE—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, SKIPPER MANGER—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

**Principals' Reports**

(Agenda #IV)

**A. Donna Lowell-Bettencourt – West Tisbury School (WTS)**

- A Martha's Vineyard Airport green initiative would provide a tree for every student to plant.

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD**  
**February 16, 2021**

**Page 3 of 5**

- All was going very well. As the Covid-19 vaccine roll out continued, more students wanted or were able to return to in-person learning—which the School was able to accommodate. Administration tried to implement all such requests within a few days. The community was very supportive testing program which had 100% UIRSD participation and helped parents decide about in-person learning.
- Staff was definitely seeing remote learning fatigue, with dips in performance, attendance and engagement; and were looking for new and creative ways to engage students.
- Cohort D numbers were dropping from about 20% to about 10-11%.
- The UIRSC was fortunate to have such a competent administration.

**B. Susan Stevens – Chilmark School**

- Students were excited to come to School so attendance was 100% more days then ever before,.
- The fourth/fifth grade was running a daily School news program with songs, events, etc. instead of morning circle. All special classes (art, music, dance etc.) were held at the Community Center.
- An email glitch in testing program notifications had been fixed.

**Finance**

(Agenda #V)

**A. Expenditure and Revenue Report** (See documents on file.)

- The Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) budget was fairly tight. Most variances could be reconciled within departments and no significant new expenditures were projected, although the year continued unpredictable. All resources were being used—the majority of contingency moneys were still available.
- Health insurance was more than budgeted but would be monitored.
- State transportation reimbursement was not yet set.
- The Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) applied for another federal Elementary and Secondary School Relief (ESSER) grant—which could result in \$184,000 for the UIRSD to cover: nursing, technology, disinfecting/cleaning supplies, and other deficits—any residual could be rolled into FY22.

**B. Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) Warrant Articles** (See documents on file.)

- The Cape Cod Municipal Health Group (CCMHG) set a 2-3% rate health/dental insurance increase but also granted a 1 month premium holiday, for ~ 6% overall reduction instead of the 5% projected increase. Consequently the Superintendent's Shared Services Office portion would decrease \$18,803 and the UIRSD direct staff benefits would decrease \$99,000.
- Two other modifications were proposed for an aggregate decrease of \$118,314.22:
  - updated State School Choice reporting showed a revenue decrease from \$330,228 to \$299,476;
  - a Medicaid formula error was corrected for under reported assessments by \$10,000.
- The UIRSC revisited the configuration of the contingency reserve lines (see Minutes: 11/9/20 p.2 #IV A, & 11/16/20 p.2, & 11/23/20 p.2, & 12/21/20 p.2 #VI A).
  - The legality of shifting funds from the regional part of the budget to site budgets was questioned in terms of assessment formulas.
  - The same problem would arise if any given site exceeded its assigned contingency.
  - Any irregularities could be assigned to the correct site in the next fiscal year.
  - Attorney advice was proposed and rejected.
  - Voters had formed the Up Island Regional School District and Massachusetts General Law (MGL) stated that once money is appropriated to the regional school district, the UIRSC had full authority to spend it as the UIRSC saw fit, to run that regional school district from site to site.
  - There was some frustration at revisiting this matter at length and **THE VOTE WAS CALLED.**
- *KATE DEVANE MOVED TO REVISIT AND RESCIND THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT FISCAL YEAR 2022 BUDGET CERTIFIED ON DECEMBER 21, 2020; ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: KATE DEVANE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD**  
**February 16, 2021**

**Page 4 of 5**

• *KATE DEVANE MOVED TO CERTIFY THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT FISCAL YEAR 2022 BUDGET FOR AN OPERATING BUDGET AT \$3,074,430.66 OR 3.68 % INCREASE ASSESSED AT \$ 13,027,902.56 OR 3.66% INCREASE; ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 1 NAY, 0 ABSTENTIONS: KATE DEVANE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—NAY, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

**C. Warrant Article Language: Legal Obligations and Commitments Discussions - Tabled**

**Superintendent's Report**

(Agenda Item #VI)

**B. Remote Learning Policy** (See documents on file.)

MVPS policy was: any student not sleeping in their resident town for 10 consecutive nights was disenrolled. Due to family pressures generated by the pandemic and financial impact the Murtha students were in Cohort D in good standing, while their family was living in Florida. The parents requested to be able to remain in Cohort D. The discussion covered a number of issues:

- The UIRSC expressed sympathy and support and proposed changing policy for this specific year of the pandemic to relieve parent pressure in all such situations.
- WTS Principal Donna Lowell-Bettencourt predicted serious negative feedback and disruption.
- Enforcement of MVPS policy effecting family decisions for greater than half the school year made such a change unfair to many families.
- The UIRSD was already inundated with and turning away School Choice requests from Island residents because of the UIRSD full in-person learning opportunity.
- A reversal of Cohort D reductions (see above #IV A) would put pressure on staffing restrictions.
- Examples of UIRSD tutoring during student hospital stays or residential placement were not valid because school district responsibility was State mandated.
- The UIRSC was proud to be so positioned as to attract students.
- A entire policy could be immediately terminated however the UIRSC was only interested in a change specific to the pandemic year.
- There was a debate on the timeframe of the policy comprising on the 2020-21 Academic Year.
- The UIRSC agreed to expedite the readings (see below: Meetings/Events).
- *KATE DEVANE MOVED THE FIRST READING OF THE COVID-19 REMOTE LEARNING ATTENDANCE POLICY: ANY STUDENT WHO STARTED THE 2020-2021 ACADEMIC YEAR ATTENDING AN UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOL IN PERSON, BE ALLOWED TO REMAIN IN THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT COHORT D—REMOTE LEARNING UNTIL THE END OF THE 2020-2021 ACADEMIC YEAR: ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: KATE DEVANE—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

**A. Covid Testing Update** - Testing was going very well.

**C. All Island School Committee (AISC) Meeting** – See below: Meetings/Events

**Public Comment** – None

(Agenda Item #VII)

**Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair**

(Agenda Item #VIII)

- The outdoor fridge was freezing and breaking down so Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt was looking at rentals—which would be necessary even if the new fridge purchase (see 1/25/21 Minutes p.1 #III A) was immediately initiated. Estimates were for \$4,000 delivery/installation and \$800/month rent—which could be taken from the Contingency line.
- Earlier in the meeting Kate DeVane volunteered to help represent the MVPS at the Cape Cod Collaborative.

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

- AISC – 5:00PM, Thursday, February 18, 2021 – Zoom
- UIRSC – After AISC – Thursday, February 18, 2021 – Zoom
- MVRHSC – 5:00PM, Monday, March 1, 2021 – Zoom

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD**  
**February 16, 2021**

**Page 5 of 5**

**Adjournment**

- *KATE DEVANE MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:46PM; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: KATE DEVANE—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

**Documents on File:**

- Agenda/Revised Agenda 2/16/21 (2 p.)
- Friedman cover email re: UIRSD Revised FY22 Budget 2/12/21
- UIRSD FY2022 Assessment – Proposed V#7 2/16/21
- Up-Island Regional School District FY22 General Fund Budget – Proposed Version #7, 2-16-2021 (14 p.)
- UIRSD FY21 Voucher Signature List, August, 2020
- Chilmark School Weekly Peek 1/15/21
- Screen Free Activities (12 p.)
- Up-Island Regional School District All Expenditure Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2020-2021, (14 p.) 2/16/21
- Martha's Vineyard Diversity Coalition (MVDC), Laying the Groundwork to Eradicate Racism, [mvdiversitycoalition.org](http://mvdiversitycoalition.org) (17 p.)
- Lowell-Bettencourt/Murtha emails re: Sienna and Lucien Murtha Remote Learning Appeal (2 p.) 2/16/21

**Minutes approved 3/2/21**