

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD  
5:00PM, Monday, July 20, 2020  
By Zoom Cloud Conference due to COVID-19**

**Page 1 of 5**

Present: Chair – Kate DeVane, Roxanne Ackerman, Robert Lionette, Skipper Manter, Alex Salop,

Others: Supt's Shared Services Office: Matt D'Andrea, Richie Smith, Mark Friedman, Nancy Dugan,  
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Mary Boyd, Susan Stevens,  
Staff: Mary Ambulos, Abigail Chandler, Carrie Fyler, Alicia Knight, Katy Kurth, Catherine Mafcher, Lisa Nichols, Diane Smadbeck, Gretchen Snyder,  
CLA – Chris Rogers,  
Press – Will Sennott – Vineyard Gazette, 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.

**Financial Report** (Agenda Item #III)

**A. Auditor's Report** (See documents on file.)

Chris Rogers of CliftonAllenLarson thanked the UIRSC for the opportunity to address the Committee and outlined the presentation:

- financial statements in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP)—unmodified opinion—best available;
- report on internal control and compliance with laws—no findings or material weaknesses;
- management letter—four comments (two repeats and two new);
- supplements and schedules to the above.

**Financial Statements included:**

- Governmental activity (full accrual) about \$13,000,000 including Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB) and net Pension liabilities—consistent with other governments;
- General Fund (modified accrual) the usual monthly reports—about \$108,000 balance; and
- Budget to actual, in the supplements;
- Standing accounts for a Bond Anticipation Note (BAN) and the Chilmark Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning (HVAC) article.
- Skipper Manter again raised the subject of the OPEB liability. The liability had dropped from \$13,100,000 in 2019 (see 7/1/20 Minutes p.1 #III) to \$8,100,000 with \$2,100,000 in the Dukes County OPEB Trust or ~21% funded. The liability was highly volatile and could move up or down by over \$1,200,000 depending on various actuarial factors: discount rates, healthcare costs, mortality tables assets, etc. The UIRSC contributed \$558,000 to the Trust in Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) plus \$345,000 in pay-as-you-go OPEB expenses. Skipper Manter emphasized the goal to fully fund the liability, and noted the pay-off of the pension liability (which would free up further funding) as too far away. Chris Rogers pointed out that total pay-off was often on a 20-30 year basis and varied widely with municipalities.
- The Pension fund liability was \$1,600,000 and was similarly volatile pending: discount rates, mortality tables, etc.

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD**  
**July 20, 2020**

**Page 2 of 5**

- The Management Letter repeated the advice to update the capital assets Excel spreadsheet to a capital tracking software and included two informational comments (deadlines delayed by the Covid-19 process), one on fiduciary activities and the other on lease accounting.
- Chris Rogers emphasized the importance of the Information Technology (IT) comment, particularly noting the reliance on remote learning during the Covid-19 crisis, and warning of the high costs of security breaches (malware, viruses, ransomware, etc.). The UIRSC expressed concern at the lack of progress on this repeated comment and requested it be placed on every agenda until it was resolved. There was a discussion of listing an Executive Session to answer IT security questions.

**Minutes Read and Approved** (Agenda Item #II)

- \* Alex Salop temporarily left the meeting due to a technological problem.
- *KATE DEVANE MOVED TO APPROVE THE JUNE 22, 2020 MINUTES; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: KATE DEVANE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*

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

Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) Interim Business Manager Mark Friedman was still closing out FY20, and the first two weeks of FY21 had minimal activity. He would be happy to answer any questions.

- At the end of the Meeting West Tisbury School Principal Donna Lowell-Bettencourt reported the Revolving Lunch Fund would receive ~ \$70,000 in federal reimbursement (see 5/11/20 Minutes p.5) and there had been significant pay-down of family debt, which would reduce the voted transfer (see 6/22/20 Minutes p.3) to up to \$2,524.24.

**Superintendent's Report** (Agenda Item #IV)

- \* Alex Salop returned to the meeting.
- Superintendent Matt D'Andrea and an Islandwide MVPS Task Force continued to work on the three Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) required models (in case of changes in the Corona/Covid-19 status): in-person learning, hybrid learning, all remote learning. The Task Force was arranged in a number of working groups.
  - Teaching/Learning – chaired by Asst. Supt. Richie Smith was looking at clear expectations and time-on-learning, especially around consistency with hybrid or remote learning structures for rapid transitions between models.
  - Special Education/English Language Learners (ELL) chaired by Student Support Co-Directors Nancy Dugan and Hope McLeod and ELL Director Leah Palmer worked to insure delivery of services and staff support under all three models.
  - Social /Emotional chaired by Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) Vice Principal Dakhir Warren was designing and implementing social emotional learning and support on the pandemic impact support to students, families and staff.
  - Health/Wellness chaired by Tisbury School Nurse Catherine Coogan with MVPS Physician Dr. Zach was focusing on staff training in Covid symptoms, prevention and DESE protocols in case of illness, as well as purchasing personal protective equipment (PPE) and drafting information for families—including quarantining for those returning from vacation.
  - Technology chaired by Edgartown School Technician Darren Belisle was evaluating the spring 2020 remote learning, looking at software, student devices, sanitation of devices, charging, training and grant opportunities—for example the State Technology grant application.

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD**  
**July 20, 2020**

**Page 3 of 5**

- Food service chaired by MVRHS Cafeteria Director Mercedes Ferrara was planning for service under all three models.
- Transportation chaired by Supt. D'Andrea and MV Charter School Director Peter Steedman, was examining cleaning protocols, routes and other DESE guidance.
- HVAC in the MVPS buildings was fairly good—an engineer would look at the systems and advise on cleaning protocols, air exchange and filter cleanings. School Principals were considering arrival, dismissal, lunch and recess flow and pedestrian traffic. Supt. D'Andrea was working with attorneys on labor relations and the Office was looking at grants. Supt. D'Andrea was planning weekly forums for parent's questions and input. The ultimate focus was what was best for students and the education community.
- An announcement was expected the first week of August. An All Island School Committee (AISC) would be called to approve the "final" model. Supt. D'Andrea stressed the importance of consistent models across the MVPS. There was a brief discussion on the configuration of the AISC, which would have to vote in local school committees, some of which might request financial discussions. The DESE deadline for approval was August 10, 2020.

**D. Transportation Update if Available** (See above.)

Chapter 71 Transportation final FY20 reimbursement had not been received yet and FY21 revenues were not known.

**C. Classroom Reconfiguration due to Covid-19** (See documents on file.)

- MVPS Principals were considering outdoor learning, while the weather was good.
- Chilmark School had to store all tables and replace them with desks (estimated cost \$5,000, Chilmark Furniture line \$500). The UIRSC discussed the complex situation.
- Purchases/orders should be placed as soon as possible before items became unavailable due to other districts Covid-related needs.
- When the West Tisbury School (WTS) changed to flex furniture (see 7/16/18 Minutes p.2 Goal 2) the old desks were stored, so the School has sufficient desks for Covid changes. However there were no extras (except possibly chairs) to share with the Chilmark School.
- There was tension between the need to order, desks, tents, technology, etc. before supplies ran out versus how to manage orders and expenditures for an unknown school configuration.
- The UIRSC debated identifying fund resources now as opposed to later when other expenses/residuals were better known. FY21 Covid-planning reserves were cited (see 6/2/20 Minutes p.2-5 #III A). It was felt that internal transfers were the responsibility of the Principals until final transfer requests and there was hesitation about micromanaging or overstepping UIRSC purview—Skipper Manter objecting. It was also suggested this purchase was a perfect case for Excess and Deficiency (E & D).

**Personnel** (Agenda Item #V)

**A. Resignations**

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE/ACKNOWLEDGE/ACCEPT THE:*
- *RESIGNATION OF WEST TISBURY SCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER MEGHAN BROWN AS OF THE END OF THE 2019-20 SCHOOL YEAR;*
- *RESIGNATION OF WEST TISBURY SCHOOL EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL VANESSA LOPES AS OF THE END OF THE 2019-20 SCHOOL YEAR;*
- *EXTENSION OF THE LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR WEST TISBURY SCHOOL EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL MILENA LOWE FOR HT 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR (see 1/27/20 Minutes p.6 #VII B);*
- *RETIREMENT OF CHILMARK SCHOOL SECOND/THIRD GRADE TEACHER GRETCHEN SNYDER AS OF THE END OF THE 2019-20 SCHOOL YEAR;*

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD**  
**July 20, 2020**

**Page 4 of 5**

*KATE DEVANE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: KATE DEVANE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.* Kate Devane commended two of the WTS personnel for their remarkable dedication and teaching.

- Working with the MVPS labor attorney Supt. D'Andrea drafted a flow chart of different avenues for employee leaves: including the: Covid amendment to the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the American Disabilities Act (ADA), unpaid leave of absence appeal to the Superintendent, and as a last resort collective bargaining contracts. Some projections of next year's personnel numbers was beginning to take shape.

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

Chilmark Head of School Susan Stevens asked for an extension of paid days to her 10 month contract, in order to cover the extra work needed to prepare the Chilmark School.

- *ROXANNE ACKERMAN MOVED TO EXTEND THE CHILMARK HEAD OF SCHOOL CONTRACT 20 DAYS SO THE CHILMARK SCHOOL CAN MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS TO REOPEN IN SEPTEMBER;* after some discussion (below); *KATE DEVANE SECONDED FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION PURPOSES.*

- Skipper Manter raised a point of order that Principal contracts were legally the responsibility of the Superintendent.

- Supt. D'Andrea understood Ms. Stevens' request but noted that both staff and administrators had been working overtime since the start of the pandemic, nights, weekends, as well as serving on committees, etc. He would love to compensate them all but was unable to, particularly because FY21 finances were such unknowns—without even a State budget yet. If funds became available later during the year he would compensate everyone. Ms. Stevens had come to him first and he had declined her request. She had informed him she would bring it up at this meeting.

- Issues under debate were:

- objections to Ms. Stevens not telling the UIRSC this was an appeal;
- difference between working on committees and an Administrator overseeing a school opening;
- Ms. Stevens time and 10 month contract;
- possibility of a non-base salary stipend;
- reluctance to open a "Pandora's Box" of issues;
- debate on UIRSC and Superintendent jurisdiction;
- Supt. D'Andrea repetition of his declination;
- compassion and appreciation for the amount of time, creativity and productivity of principals, faculty and staff during the covid crisis without additional compensation;
- votes made according to the legal jurisdiction but with some members strongly recommending Supt. D'Andrea reconsider and negotiate the matter;

- Roxanne Ackerman was comfortable with the motion and refused to withdraw it.

- *MOTION FAILED: 1 AYE, 4 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: KATE DEVANE—NAY, SKIPPER MANTER—NAY, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—NAY, ALEX SALOP—NAY.*

- The August meeting should include a reorganization agenda item.

**Adjournment**

- *KATE DEVANE MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 6:42PM; ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: KATE DEVANE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*

**continued**

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD**  
**July 20, 2020**

**Page 5 of 5**

**Appendix A - Meetings/Events**

- **MVRHSC – 5:00PM, Monday, August 3, 2020 – Zoom Conference**
- **UIRSC Meeting – TBD – Zoom Conference**

**Documents on File:**

- Agenda 7/20 /20
- Stevens email re: Scan of Photo 7/20/20
- Snyder letter of retirement 7/14/20
- Lowe leave of absence request
- Lopes email re: Resignation Letter 6/24/20
- Brown email re: My Resignation 7/9/20
- Up-Island Regional School District 2019 School Committee Exit Conference, July 20, 2020 (12 p.)
- Up-Island Regional School District Financial Statements and Required Supplementary Information, Year Ended June 30, 2019, (54 p., including covers & blanks) 4/16/20
- Up-Island Regional School District Management Letter June 30, 2018, (11 p., including covers & blanks) 4/16/20

**Minutes approved 8/19/20 & 9/1/20**