

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
5:00PM, Wednesday, August 19, 2020
By Zoom Cloud Conference**

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

Others: About 150-200 others (see participants list) including parents, staff and:
Supt's Shared Services Office: Matt D'Andrea, Richie Smith, Mark Friedman, Hope MacLeod, Leah Palmer, Ruda Stone, Dr. Jeffrey Zack,
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Mary Boyd, Susan Stevens,
MVPS/MVEA: Nedine Cunningham, Spencer D'Agostino,
Towns – W. Tis. – Omar Johnson, Greg Orcutt,
Chil. – Warren Doty, Marina Lent, James Malkin,
Community: Matt Poole – Edg. BOH, Catherine Coogan – Tis. Sch. Nurse
Press – Lucas Thors – MV Times, Kelley 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.

Approval of Minutes – July 20, 2020 (Agenda Item #II)

• *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO APPROVE THE JULY 20, 2020 MINUTES; KATE DEVANE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, KATE DEVANE—AYE.*

Superintendent's Report (Agenda Item #IV)

A. Discussion of Fall Reopening Plans (See documents on file.)

The UIRSC debated what was the best possible opening for the health and mental health of all Island children, but also what was best for the health of the UIRSD children. They requested input from Superintendent Matt D'Andrea and the health providers.

- The only the change to the Plan since the All Island School Committee (AISC) meeting (see AISC/UIRSC 8/13/20 Minutes #II & IX) was the addition of the 15 p. socio-emotional learning (SEL) component.
- Principal Donna Lowell-Bettencourt thanked the teachers, educators, staff, administrative support professionals (ASPs), parents and community for all their hard work and input. The West Tisbury School (WTS) did its best to keep communications open and timely. Messaging strongly urged students, families and staff to stay home if they were ill.
- Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt outlined the many factors that were examined: ventilation, transportation, bus monitors, class enrollment, room size, facility cleaning/disinfecting, playgrounds, recess, lunch safety, bathrooms, lockers, student supply storage, shifting staff within certifications, nurses stations, water, hallways, etc.
 - School choice had been tightly restricted (see 5/26/20 Minutes p.3-4 #V B) and enrollment was consequently slightly down.
 - Consultants had given the WTS ventilation system a B+ recommending an upgrade in filter quality. They had not graded the Chilmark School but had considered no changes to be needed.
 - Lunch would continue to be served on a grab-and-go basis as it had in the spring, whether students were in school or at home.

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- Surveys and research questioned the safety of the hybrid model, particularly in respect to working parents of children in the younger grades with daycare issues.
- The WTS and Chilmark School could accommodate their entire student population with 6 ft. social distancing and open windows. Most classrooms had outside doors and adjacent or close bathrooms, eliminating much of the hallway traffic. Outside spaces, (tents, etc.) were ordered but were not essential.
- The UIRSC was committed to the academic advancement as well as the safety of its students, and the UIRSD Administration proposed a very aggressive plan. Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) physician Dr. Jeffrey Zack purview, consequently was to advise on the health/safety not only of all MVPS students but also on the Martha's Vineyard community as a whole. He expected to introduce a stringent testing regime at the next AISC meeting.
 - The best system was to insure long term success without the start/stop changes currently plaguing colleges, opening and then having to go remote within a matter of days/weeks.
 - There should be no compromising on 6 ft. distancing, universal masking, etc. It was important to phase in students in small groups to make sure staff and nurses could perform their new duties competently. In addition schools would have to deal with the normal childhood illnesses (strep throat, RSV, flu, etc.).
 - What was “best” was a loaded term, compromise was important in this complex situation, and no one could get everything they wanted. Consistency throughout the Island as one community was paramount, and he cited the failure of the nation to adequately address the pandemic, resulting in double the number of deaths.
- West Tisbury Board of Health (BOH) Agent Omar Johnson emphasized how important it was the follow Dr. Zack’s lead and advised consistency, care, caution and a unified Island plan. He cited the increased pressure on other Island districts from a separate Up Island move.
- Chilmark BOH Agent Marina Lent and Chilmark BOH member Matt Poole argued against opening too fast and having to toggle between opening and closing. Emphasizing that Martha's Vineyard was one island dealing with an infectious disease. This was a similar scenario to the Island’s earlier struggle for a consistent construction moratorium, which took hard work but was successful.
 - Neither West Tisbury nor the Chilmark BOHs had been presented with UIRSD plans.
- Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt stressed that the UIRSD plan only challenged the hybrid system for elementary grades—noting the hard choice that middle school students were likely to do better with remote learning; but the Schools expected to adhere to the Island-wide schedule: starting remote on September 17th except for preschool and high needs students, kindergarten through second/third grade on September 29th, third through fifth grades October 13th and sixth through eighth grades on October 27th.
- Supt. D’Andrea stressed the strong conversations with BOH agents and health providers. Administration was leaning heavily to return at least kindergartners to in-person learning this term and the goal was for full in-person education for all—but in the interest of erring on the side of safety to prevent a major outbreak full return would not happen quickly. In addition he echoed Omar Johnson regarding the stress a different Up Island configuration would put on other districts that had different resources, pushing them to risk less safe re-openings.

The UIRSC debated the issue.

- There was some support for a unified Island plan, also noting the complications of union negotiations caused by a separate UIRSD configuration.
- MVPS Reopening Plan was criticized for:

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- ‘throwing the baby out with the bathwater’ by being overly cautious when other resort communities were opening schools;
 - lack of protocol for those re-entering school after travel in off-school time;
 - failing to address Cohort C (Special Education, English Language Learners and those struggling with remote learning).
 - There was an adamant challenge to the two week phase-in dates, as advocated by the Health/Wellness group to monitor infection rate intervals.
 - Others did not consider this to be a separate plan since it adhered to all the restrictions laid out by State and local health professionals.
 - It was pointed out that the UIRSD plan should have been presented to the Superintendent and UIRSD Boards of Health. A timely decision was important.
 - The lack of a Chilmark School full time nurse (estimated at just under \$40,000) continued to be a grave concern for Ms. Stevens and staff.
 - The UIRSC suggested directing Supt. D’Andrea to come up with a different plan, but did not consider it their purview to tell him how.
- * Roxanne Ackerman entered the meeting at 6:23PM.
- Public comment included:
 - advocacy for an Islandwide plan, which the separate UIRSD configuration would breach; and the unfairness of such a direction to the Superintendent;
 - suggestion to use non-MVPS facilities such as the YMCA;
 - requested explanation of School Choice restrictions—which were instituted towards the start of the pandemic when there were many unknowns.
 - Discussion would continue at the next AISC meeting (see below: Meetings/Events).

Financial Report (Agenda Item #IV)

A. Expenditure and Revenue Report – If available (See documents on file.)

- There was nothing to report this early in the fiscal year.
- Enough reopening supplies were purchased with Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) residuals to cover the start of the year. Further purchases would be made as the Plan became more set.
- As a unique year in public sector financing, the UIRSC should be prepared for financial flexibility and multiple transfers. For example timely purchasing to address demand backlogs might not be consistent with scheduled or delayed grant funding (some entitlement, some competitive), resulting in possible line item overspending.
- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO AUTHORIZE PRE-EXPENDITURE OF BUDGET LINE ITEMS IN ANTICIPATION OF GRANT REVENUES; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER –AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE–AYE, ALEX SALOP–AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN–AYE, KATE DEVANE–AYE.*

B. Grant Acceptance

- The UIRSD would receive about \$30,000 of a competitive grant to cover technology needs. There was also an \$80,100 share from the MVPS entitlement CARES Act grant for school re-opening supplies.
- In addition, Assistant Principal Mary Boyd reported on a \$32,400 grant to cover 6-10 hrs/wk. for contractual services for counseling for socio-emotional support and mental health needs in this trying time.
- The UIRSC thanked the WTS Administrators and Interim MVPS Business Manager Mark Friedman.

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Personnel (Agenda Item #V)

A. Resignations (See documents on file.)

- *SKIP MANTER MOVED TO ACKNOWLEDGE WITH REGRET THE RESIGNATIONS OF:*
- *WEST TISBURY SCHOOL FOURTH GRADE TEACHER ROBYN DORI; AND,*
- *CAFETERIA WORKERS JELENA POLETAN AND RAY LINCOLN;*
- ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0*
- ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE,*
- ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, KATE DEVANE—AYE.*

Up Island Regional School District (UIRSD)

(Agenda Item #VI)

A. Reorganization

- *SKIPPER MANTER NOMINATED ALEX SALOP AS CHAIR AND ROXANNE ACKERMAN AS*
- VICE CHAIR; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; ALEX SALOP AND ROXANNE ACKERMAN*
- ACCEPTED THE NOMINATIONS; NOMINATIONS WERE CLOSED; NOMINATION PASSED*
- UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT*
- LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, KATE DEVANE—*
- AYE.*

The UIRSC thanked Kate DeVane for her excellent work as Chair.

Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair

(Agenda Item #VII)

The UIRSC discussed the tight timeline, meeting postings and presentation of the UIRSD proposal to the Towns' BOHs—Skipper Manter and Roxanne Ackerman would contact the West Tisbury and Aquinnah Boards of Health.

Adjournment

- *ALEX SALOP MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 6:53PM; KATE DEVANE SECONDED; MOTION*
- PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROXANNE*
- ACKERMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, KATE DEVANE—AYE.*

Meetings/Events

- **AISC – 5:00PM, Thursday, August 20, 27, 2020, September 3, 2020 – Zoom or TBD**
- **AISC – 5:00PM, Tuesday, August 25, 2020 – Zoom or TBD**
- **UIRSC Meeting – 5:00PM, Thursday, August 27, 2020 – Zoom or TBD**
- **UIRSC Meeting – 5:00PM, Tuesday, September 1, 2020 – Zoom or TBD**
- **MVRHSC – 5:00PM, Monday, September 14, 2020 – Zoom or TBD**
- **UIRSC Meeting – 5:00PM, Monday, September 21, 2020 – Zoom or TBD**

Documents on File:

- Agenda 8/19 /20
- UIRSD Participants 8.19.20 (4 p.)
- Lowell-Bettencourt email re: Preliminary Enrollment Visual 8/19/20
- Snyder letter of retirement 7/14/20
- Dori email re: Resignation 7/31/20
- Lincoln email re: My Resignation 7/23/20
- Poletan resignation email 8/18/20

Minutes approved 9/1/20