

Tisbury School Committee
4:00PM, Tuesday, February 9, 2021
Tisbury School Conference Room

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TSC Members Present: Chair Amy Houghton*, Jen Cutrer, Michael Watts,
Staff: John Custer – Principal, Melissa Ogden – Asst. Principal;
Matt D’Andrea – Superintendent, Richie Smith – Asst. Superintendent,
Mark Friedman – Business Manager,
Sue Adamo, Mary Jean Connelly, Sean DeBettencourt, Kari Leal,
John Mode, Nicole Shirley, Jane Taylor, Anne Williamson,
PTO - Siobhan Mullin,
Others: MVDC - Lisa Pimentel, Bob Tankard, Jocelyn Coleman Walton,
Town Jynell Kristal – FinCom,
Marni Lipke – Recorder

* Late Arrivals or early departures of TSC members.

The Tisbury School Committee (TSC) meeting was called to order at 4:05PM.

I. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes

• **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. JEN CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MR. MICHAEL WATTS THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS WERE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED (2 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS):**
- JANUARY 12, 2021 AS WRITTEN AND
- JANUARY 13, 2021 AS AMENDED;
MS. CUTRER—AYE, MR. WATTS—AYE.

II. Superintendent’s Report

A. All Island School Committee (AISC) (See below: Meetings/Events.)

A meeting was planned for next week for some personnel matters and to amend the Superintendent’s Shared Services Office Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) Budget (see below: #III B).

B. COVID Testing Program

Participation rates were high with only 3 positives to date, out of over 3,500 tests. Thanks went to all the staff for their care in masking, distancing and safety measures, as well as to all who made the program possible.

C. Martha’s Vineyard Diversity Coalition (MVDC) (See 1/21/21 AISC Minutes #III A.)

* During this conversation Ms. Amy Houghton entered the meeting at 4:12PM.

Assistant Superintendent Richie Smith introduced the representatives from the MVDC which was open to anyone who wished to attend. The goal was to lay the groundwork to eradicate racism and eliminate inequality, find common ground in empowering culturally and racially diverse voices and prepare children to live in a diverse world. The best time was always now, particularly in this divided country.

- The MVDC had grown and now encompassed four active committees:
 - Criminal Justice - finding resources to train Police in conscious and unconscious bias;
 - Faith-Based - 10-week discussion programs partnering with the Episcopal Church;
 - Health and Equity - addressing health care disparities;
 - Education - creating action around positive ideas for schools through educators and artists.

In June 2020 Superintendent Matt D'Andrea posted a letter committing to stand together against racism and hatred. Staff was invited to participate in the MVDC Education Committee components and programs including:

- our own biases and growing by listening;
- library program for schools and public libraries to collect age appropriate diversity books.
- a constantly updated list of anti-racist resources – books, films, articles, You Tube, etc. with suggestion to use them with a critical eye, allowing students to challenge them.
 - MVDC representatives suggested a number of items, and encouraged everyone to participate in “A Long Talk About the Uncomfortable Truth”.
 - Future projects included: a film festival, t-shirts, social media, art programs, a book club, and expansion of the library project.
 - The TSC was thrilled to work with the MVDC to partner together academically and on a community level and thanked them for their work and their presentation.

III. Financial Report

A. Fund Balances (See documents on file.)

- School Choice was healthy at over \$200,000.
- The Revolving Lunch account showed a small deficit, pending state reimbursements. All school meals were still free for everyone.

B. Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) Budget (See documents on file & 1/12/21 Minutes p.2 #IIIB.)

The Cape Cod Municipal Health Group (CCMHG) announced health insurance reduction which would effect the Tisbury School budget by reducing the Supt's. Shared Services portion.

• ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MR. WATTS THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY REVISITED AND RESCINDED THE TISBURY SCHOOL DISTRICT FISCAL YEAR 2022 GENERAL FUND BUDGET VOTED ON JANUARY 12, 2020: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MR. WATTS—AYE, MS. CUTRER—AYE, MS. HOUGHTON—AYE.

• ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MR. WATTS AND SECONDED BY MS. CUTRER THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE TISBURY SCHOOL DISTRICT FISCAL YEAR 2022 GENERAL FUND BUDGET REDUCED \$15,903.80 FOR A TOTAL OF \$7,887,917.41 (OR 2.8% INCREASE) AS PRESENTED IN DRAFT #4.0 CONTINGENT UPON FINAL APPROVAL OF THE SUPERINTENDENT'S SHARED SERVICES OFFICE BUDGET: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MR. WATTS—AYE, MS. CUTRER—AYE, MS. HOUGHTON—AYE.

IV. Principal's Report

A. Reopening Update (See Minutes 11/10/20 p.2 #V A & 12/8/20 p.2 #V B.)

- At the start of the second semester kindergarten (K) through 4th grade started 5 days a week.
- The alternating week middle school grades were doing well. Teachers conceived and planned a better way to instruct Cohort D students by combining 5th, 6th and 8th grades into one in-person section (for example in the gym) leaving a teacher free to be dedicated to Cohort D instruction—7th grade was too large to combine into a single section. The TSC was privileged to tour the building and were able to see first hand staff and students coming together to make school work—with special thanks to the building crew who were holding everything together.

V. Modular Classrooms

In response to TSC request, Principal John Custer explored how to relieve Covid-19 social distancing space challenges by pricing five 750 sq. ft. modulares (4 classrooms and 1 bank of restrooms). These had to be ordered by mid-March to insure installation by September 2021—including 6 weeks procurement process, transportation to the Island, utility, water and septic connections.

- The TSC discussed the complex situation.
 - The Covid-19 situation in September was unknown and unpredictable.
 - If the School Building Project passed, an entire temporary school would be needed, as the extent of the demolition and construction did not allow for staged use of the current facility.
 - The most efficient and cost effective solution would be to order the entire modular school within the next month, however the funding would not be certain/available until the Project passed June 2021 Annual/Special Town Meeting (STM/ATM) and at the ballot.
 - (It was noted that early voting would allow people to cast ballots before hearing STM/ATM information and debate.)
 - A temporary school ordered after a June approval was not likely to be completed/installed before January 2022.
 - Starting procurement immediately on one or both options was possible but bids usually expired after 30 days.
- The TSC hoped to return to the previous practice of including staff representation in every meeting (see below: Actions). Middle school teacher Mr. Sean DeBettencourt surveyed staff on expanding in-person middle school attendance and reported:
 - a strong dedication to providing what's best for students;
 - steady optimism;
 - desire to have full in-person learning;
 - thanks to Prin. Custer and Assistant Principal Melissa Ogden for their unflagging support.
- Staff was seriously stressed by this second year of disrupted routine:
 - constant re-planning, re-configuration of lesson plans without roads or road maps;
 - repeated location displacement;
 - attempting to serve students during the greatest greatest public health crisis in 100 years;
 - current teaching resembled no previous staff experience—as collaborative, lively, groups were not possible;
- Consequently staff requested a pause to consolidate routine before another push for more in-person learning, which would result in further disruption noted above. Staff was entirely dedicated and preferred not to make excuses, so this plea was emphasized as both unusual and imperative.
- TSC Chair Ms. Houghton thanked them for their candor and assured them that any decision on in-person expansion would not be made in a vacuum.
- The TSC recessed at 5:16PM in order to reconvene at 5:44PM in joint meeting with the Tisbury Select Board (TSB).

continued >

Members of the public.

Additional MVPS: Student Support Co-Director - Nancy Dugan

Julie Brand, Nevette Previd,

Town

Select Board: Chair Jim Rogers, Larry Gomez, Jeff Kristal,
Town Administrator Jay Grande, Pam Bennet, Alex Ben David
Town Clerk – Hillary Conklin, Town Counsel – David Doneski,
Treasurer – Jonathan Snyder, Moderator - Deborah Medders,
TSBC – Chair Harold Chapdelaine, Rachel Orr,
Harbormaster – John Crocker, Building Inspector – Ross Seavey,
Planning Bd. - Cheryl Dobel, Ben Robinson,

Press

FinCom: Chair Nancy Gilfoy, Jynell Kristal, Mary Ellen Larsen,
Maia Coleman – Vineyard Gazette, Rich Saltzberg – MV Times, MVTV,

* Late Arrivals or early departures of TSC members.

V. Modular Classrooms (continued)

- STM/ATM meeting dates were tentatively set as
 - 12:00PM, Saturday, June 12th STM on the School Building Project;
 - 12:00PM, Sunday, June 13th ATM with
 - Monday, June 14th in case business ran over. Prin. Custer noted that this was a school day and STM/ATM time would have to be adjusted accordingly to accommodate parking, traffic, etc. After some discussion, the Monday meeting time was tentatively set for 4:00PM.
- Mr. Chris Blessen of Tappé Architects had been drafting possible temporary school designs for the 55 West Williams St. property, which was a tight fit and might require some use of the school grounds—posing active construction site difficulties.
 - There was not enough personnel to staff a split school.
- The TSB had been discussing whether to separate or bundle the temporary school and larger project funding into one or two warrant articles and/or bonds.
 - Town Treasurer Jonathan Snyder reported leasing (rather than purchase) to be the most cost effective and well under the \$2,500,000 included in the warrant, however this did not include substantial ancillary costs of necessary site preparation – utilities, water, septic, etc.
 - Funds were available from the 2019 lead remediation vote (see 9/18/19 Minutes) that could be used for the 5 modulars to accommodate Covid-19 social distancing. Town Counsel David Doneski agreed the original language was broad enough to address the current situation but it might be clearer and cleaner to re-allocate/re-vote the use.
- Some were interested in funding/ordering the entire temporary school immediately and/or not requesting 2 modular votes, one for Covid-19 space and another for the School Project. Others expressed some doubt about ordering a temporary school before the final vote.
 - It was important to put a firm plan to Tisbury School families as well as to the taxpayers.
 - Timelines were reviewed—mid-March signed contract for September installation; and the possibility of earlier site preparation work.
 - A double Request For Proposal (RFP) was explored, for the initial 5 modulars with the prospect of the entire school.
- Tisbury School Building Committee (TSBC) Chair Harold Chapdelaine requested a placeholder article for the Project solar component.
 - In response to a question from the press, the TSB stated there was no finalized plan for the 55 West Williams demolition.
 - The TSC and TSB agreed the goal was a firm and cost effective plan and that lacking clear estimates and information they would meet in two weeks (see below: Meetings/Events).

Adjournment

• ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MR. WATTS AND SECONDED BY MS. CUTRER THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING UNANIMOUSLY ADJOURNED AT 6:25PM: MR. WATTS—AYE, MS. CUTRER—AYE, MS. HOUGHTON—AYE.

Appendix A: Meetings/Events:

- TSBC/Energy – 3:00PM, Thursday, February 18, 2021 – Zoom
- AISC – 6:00PM, Thursday, February 18, 2021 – Zoom
- TSC/Select Board – TBD, Tuesday, February 23, 2021 – Zoom
- MVRHSC – 5:00PM, Monday, March 1, 2021 – Zoom
- TSC – 4:30PM, Tuesday, March 9, 2021 – Zoom
- STM/ATM – TBD 12:00N June 12, 13, 2021, 4:00PM June 14, 2021

Appendix B: Actions

Mr. Grande/Mr. Metell – consult on W. Williams St. site preparation.

Mr. Grande/Select Board – prepare scope, timeline and funding for entire school modulars.

Mr. Grande/Select Board – placeholder article on Tisbury School Project solar component.

Prin. Custer/Ms. Houghton – add Staff Comments as standing agenda item.

Appendix C: Documents on File:

- Agendas (2 p.) 2/9/21
- Tiger Tales January/February (7 p.)
- Tisbury School FY'22 Budget Analysis #4.0 Draft Shared Services Benefits Reduction, February 9, 2021
- Tisbury School Budget for 2019/2020, Draft #4 – February 9, 2021 (Shared Services Revised on XX-XX-XXX) (6 p.)
- Tisbury School Fund Balances Fiscal Year 2020-2021 2/9/21
- FY2022 Budget / 2021 ATM & STM Calendar Draft 5 (2 p.)

Minutes respectfully submitted by Office On Call/Marni Lipke.

Marni Lipke – Recorder

Date

Amy Houghton – TSC Chair

Date

Minutes approved 3/9/21