

**Tisbury School Committee**  
**4:00PM, Tuesday, April 13, 2021**  
**Tisbury School Conference Room**

1

**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,  
Nancy Dugan – Co-Director Student Support

**Others:** Marni Lipke – Recorder

\* Late Arrivals or early departures of TSC members.

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

I. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes – Tabled

II. Superintendent Report

After the April vacation all Martha’s Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) kindergarten (K) through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students would be full in-person, with plans to remain so for remainder of the Academic Year (AY) and hopefully the start of next year. Those choosing Cohort D could continue remotely for AY2020-21.

- There was some public feedback about opening directly after a vacation, when Covid-19 spikes often resulted from travel and family gatherings; however, experience with Thanksgiving, winter holiday, and February break showed such increases to be minimal. Administration preferred to continue the momentum towards in-person learning. Everyone was very cooperative and diligent in following safety protocols.

B. COVID Testing Program

Part of the continuing success towards greater in-person MVPS learning was the 8-900, per week surveillance testing. Positive tests continued low, between 0 and 2 over several weeks.

- A large percentage of MVPS staff had been/were being vaccinated either with through Martha’s Vineyard Hospital (MVH) or on their own initiative. Vaccines would be available to everyone over 16 yrs. on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

- Administration was closely monitoring the uptick of the Island (and Massachusetts) infection rate and would make decisions on a day-to-day basis. Some MVPS have had to make adjustments however in general all was going well.

• MCAS would be administered this year (3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grades starting May 10<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades May 17<sup>th</sup> and older grades until June 11<sup>th</sup>). The State was making remote testing arrangements for students in Cohort D.

A. All Island School Committee (AISC) (See below: Actions.)

The TSC suggested the AISC publicly thank the MVH for their extraordinary support.

III. Financial Report

A. Fund Balances (See documents on file.)

- State reimbursements to the Revolving Lunch Fund were delayed by 1-2 months and consequently the Fund might require an end-of-year transfer.
- School Choice had a healthy balance of ~ \$226,000.

- The General Fund was in reasonably good shape and there were a number of resources to cover deficits—without touching any of the funds committed to a temporary school.

B. COVID Related Grants (See documents on file & below: Actions.)

Principal John Custer commended financial Administrative Assistant Rachel Hickey for her work, particularly on grants. This grant was a continuation/Tisbury share of the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) State Corona Virus Prevention Grant (half the amount had already been received). Spending parameters were fairly broad and flexible including but not limited to: personal protective equipment (PPE), hygienic supplies, costs associated with remote learning or hybrid, etc.—among the current expenses was overtime pay for contact tracing by the nursing staff. No vote was required but spending could be reported to the TSC.

- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. JEN CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MR. MICHAEL WATTS THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING UNANIMOUSLY ACCEPTED THE \$18,225 MASSACHUSETTS CORONA VIRUS PREVENTION GRANT: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MR. WATTS—AYE, MS. CUTRER—AYE, MS. HOUGHTON—AYE.**

IV. Principal's Report

A. Staffing Update

- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MR. WATTS THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY ACKNOWLEDGED THE RESIGNATIONS OF EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS MS. AMY JONES AS OF MARCH 19, 2021 AND MS. EVAN KAVANAUGH AS OF JUNE 30, 2021; 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MR. WATTS—AYE, MS. CUTRER—AYE, MS. HOUGHTON—AYE.** (The candidate pool for MVPS Education Support Professional (ESP) was very small.)

B. Reopening Update

Everyone was looking forward to the complete re-opening on April 26<sup>th</sup>. Full commendations and credit went to staff, students and parents. Rooms and furniture would be moved during the April Break. Families were informed that in order to accommodate all students social distancing had to be decreased for some classes.

- Prin. Custer commended Ms. Joanie Creato for her advocacy in getting many Cohort D students/families to return to in-person learning.
- At the same time Cohort C (special needs) 5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade students would be transitioning into their usual grade level classrooms. Both parents and students were happy about rejoining their peers. K through 4<sup>th</sup> grade Cohort C would remain in their current configuration for AY2020-21.
- Most Tisbury School staff were greatly relieved to be vaccinated.

V. Tisbury School Building Committee (TSBC) Report (See below: joint meeting.)

The TSBC was working hard on outreach and communications. Feedback and small “coffee” meetings were helpful in bringing up Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

- The building design was for 18 per classroom but at current New England School Development Council (NESDEC) projections (see 1/12/21 Minutes p.2 #C) for 24 students per section the classrooms were beginning to look fairly small.
- Mr. Watts was in conversations with the Select Board and Town Administrator on the temporary school. Building Inspector Ross Seavey was helpful with regulation parameters, for example: setbacks between units, renting the VFW building for food service etc. Careful planning hoped to avoid overflow onto the current school site. Prin. Custer again emphasized that a temporary school needed more than just classrooms.

- The TSC stressed that borrowing rates were as good as they were going to get (because Covid-19 stimulus money would create inflation) and construction for projects like this were lower priced than they had been for some time.
- The project had the full support of the Finance Committee, the Select Board, the School Committee and the TSBC, however residents opposed to the previous project were saying the same things.

VI. Staff Report – Nothing to report. The TSC sent their greetings and commendations.

- Chair Amy Houghton expressed her willingness to step down in favor of a diversity candidate and encouraged everyone to solicit people interested in joining both the TSC and the School Advisory Council (SAC).
- The TSC recessed at 4:58PM in order to reconvene at 5:04PM in joint meeting with the Tisbury Select Board (TSB).

Members of the public and Town officials including but not limited to:  
**Additional MVPS:** Amy D'Andrea,  
**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, Energy Comm. – Bill Straw,  
**Press** Rich Saltzberg – MV Times, MVTV,

I. Continued Discussion - Tisbury School Building Project – Special Town Meeting Warrant Article

Town Counsel handed down a written opinion that allowed the use of residual funds from previous articles for the temporary school.

- Mr. Rogers reported that it might be possible to fit the temporary school onto the 55 West Williams site—with an alternate spill over to the east playground across the street. Each modular would contain its own bathroom. Plans were expected shortly.

• *Mr. Jeff Kristal moved and Mr. Larry Gomez seconded a motion to re-assign funds from October 2019 Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles #1 and #2, which passed unanimously: Mr. Gomez—aye (technology glitch), Mr. Kristal—aye, Mr. Jim Rogers—aye.*

• **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MR. WATTS AND SECONDED BY MS. CUTRER THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY AUTHORIZED THE RE-ASSIGNMENT OF FUNDS FROM ARTICLES #1 AND #2 FROM THE OCTOBER 15, 2019 SPECIAL TOWN MEETING: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS 0 ABSTENTIONS: MS. CUTRER—AYE, MR. WATTS—AYE, MS. HOUGHTON—AYE.**

• **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MR. WATTS THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY AND WHOLE HEARTEDLY COSPONSORED A SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE FOR UP TO \$55,000,000 FOR THE TISBURY SCHOOL BUILDING RENOVATION ADDITION PROJECT: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS 0 ABSTENTIONS: MS. CUTRER—AYE, MR. WATTS—AYE, MS. HOUGHTON—AYE.**

• *Mr. Jeff Kristal moved and Mr. Larry Gomez seconded a motion to co-sponsor a warrant article for up to \$55,000,000 for the Tisbury School building renovation addition project, which passed whole heartedly and unanimously: Mr. Kristal—aye, Mr. Gomez—aye, Mr. Jim Rogers—aye.*

## Adjournment

• **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MR. WATTS THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING UNANIMOUSLY ADJOURNED AT 5:15PM: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MS. HOUGHTON—AYE, MS. CUTRER—AYE, MR. WATTS—AYE.**

In response to questions, Treasurer Jonathan Snyder stated that the Town was at \$27,000,000 of a \$78,000,000 levy ceiling which was sufficient for the project. In addition this was a very advantageous time to borrow not only in terms of interest rates but also in terms of premiums (see 1/13/21 Minutes p.3) and consequently the sooner borrowing was instigated (if approved probably in about a year) the better. If the project failed the next iteration would be more expensive.

- The borrowing would require a debt exclusion vote, making it imperative that those not attending the Town meetings visit the Building Project website for further information.

- Mr. Rogers noted that taxes were increasing for other reasons than the school.

• *Mr. Gomez moved and Mr. Kristal seconded a motion to authorize early voting 8:30AM to 4:30PM, Thursday, June 17, 2021, which passed unanimously: Mr. Gomez—aye, Mr. Kristal—aye, Mr. Jim Rogers—aye.*

### **Appendix A: Meetings/Events:**

- TSBC – 5:00PM, Monday, April 26, 2021 – Zoom
- MVRHSC – 5:00PM, Monday, May 3, 2021 – Zoom
- TSC – 4:30PM, Tuesday, May 11, 2021 – Zoom
- STM/ATM – TBD 12:00N June 12, 13, 2021, 4:00PM June 14, 2021

### **Appendix B: Actions**

Mr. Watts/Supt. D'Andrea – draft an open letter to the editor thanking MVH.

Mr. Snyder – put out early report (as soon as warrant closes) with clear financial explanation.

### **Appendix C: Documents on File:**

- Agendas (4 p.) 4/13/21
- Tisbury School Fund Balances Fiscal Year 2020-2021 4/12/21
- Tiger Tales March/April 2021 (6 p.)

Minutes respectfully submitted by Office On Call/Marni Lipke.

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Marni Lipke – Recorder

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Date

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Amy Houghton – TSC Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Minutes approved 5/25/21**