

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD  
6:30PM, Thursday, August 26, 2021  
By Zoom Cloud Conference**

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Present: Chair – Alex Salop, Roxanne Ackerman, Robert Lionette, Skipper Manter,  
Others: Kate, Recorder - Marni Lipke,  
Supt's Shared Services Office: Matt D'Andrea, Richie Smith,  
Mark Friedman, Hope MacLeod, Ruda Stone,  
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Mary Boyd, Susan Stevens,  
West Tisbury – FinCom - Greg Orcutt, Energy – Kate Warner,  
Press – Michelle Vivian – MVTV, Lucas Thors– MV Times,  
\*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** (Agenda Item #II)

**A. Including But Not Limited To: June 22, 2021**

These minutes required careful reading due to technical difficulties.

SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE JUNE 22, 2021 MINUTES AS AMENDED;  
ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY TABLED.

**Principals' Reports** (Agenda Item #III)

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

**i. Off-Island and Out-of-State Travel**

After the Covid-based suspension of off-Island field trips, Principal Donna Lowell-Bettencourt brought forward the annual 7<sup>th</sup> grade ski trip for discussion and vote. Pending UIRSC approval the WTS would start necessary planning and preparations with the understanding that the trip could be modified at the actual time of the event. (She was also reviewing the annual 8<sup>th</sup> grade England exchange.) Superintendent Matt D'Andrea reported that Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) guidance allowed field trips and that a similar specific trip request was discussed at the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School Committee (MVRHSC).

- The UIRSC discussed overnight and out-of-state field trips in relation to a vaccination policy. Governor Baker and DESE were silent on Covid vaccination requirements, and the local Boards of Health (BOHs) were curious as to why this was. The Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recent Pfizer vaccine approval strengthened the case for enforcement. West Tisbury and Aquinnah now required all municipal workers be vaccinated.

- Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) staff had a very high vaccination rate and complete survey results would be reported shortly. (The MVPS standard (i.e. non-Covid) vaccination policy required all students and staff be vaccinated with the exception of medical or religious exemptions.)

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE WEST TISBURY SCHOOL 7TH GRADE SKI FIELD TRIP TO GUNSTOCK RESORT GUILFORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE FEBRUARY 16-18, 2022 WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT IT CAN BE CANCELED, RECONSIDERED OR MODIFIED AT ANY TIME AS HEALTH CIRCUMSTANCES DICTATE; ROXANNE ACKERMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

**ii. Discussion – West Tisbury School (WTS) 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Class Size**

• A healthy 357 student WTS enrollment (372 including Project Headway) continued to grow, resulting in the 3rd grade sections exceeding the contractual 20 students (see 6/22/21 Minutes p.4 #D). Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt spoke to staff and proposed a plan that the section teachers were comfortable with, and the teachers consequently waived their right to be present at the UIRSC meeting. There were currently 2 sections in each kindergarten (K) through 5<sup>th</sup> grades, and 3 sections in 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades.

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- This notification would not preclude returning to the UIRSC if enrollment/class size significantly shifted or enlarged.
- Multi-age classrooms were not considered a viable solution as they required programmatic and structural commitment and specialized training, previous attempts with had been challenging (see Minutes: 5/21/12 p.3-4 #8 A, & 11/19/12 p.3 #VI C, 7 1/28/13 p.5 #E).
- Possible Covid-year learning gaps were being addressed with a robust summer school as well as staff training and teaching reading and math outside regular school hours.

### **B. Susan Stevens – Chilmark School**

- In a stressful start of the school year, Head of School Susan Stevens was still hiring with 2 more resignations last week, including the nurse who was unable to find housing (see below p.4 # VII B).
- The UIRSC revisited the field trip discussion (see above: p.1 #III A I) for the Shenandoah curriculum trip which was the first week of school for Chilmark 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades. This year all costs were raised by parents and the Foundation for Underway Experiential Learning (FUEL) so no UIRSD funds would be used. Students and FUEL staff were required to show a negative test and vaccination, with rapid testing and an isolation room on board.
- The matter would be discussed at tomorrow's Health and Safety Committee meeting.
- (A similar non-UIRSD sponsored/affiliated trip was privately offered to rising WTS 7<sup>th</sup> graders.) The Tisbury BOH agent endorsed another non-sponsored/non-affiliated sail for the Tisbury School.
- This trip and the Chilmark ski trip continued on their traditional schedule.
- ROXANNE ACKERMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE CHILMARK SCHOOL SHENANDOAH AND SKI FIELD TRIPS; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION WITHDRAWN.
- ROXANNE ACKERMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE CHILMARK SCHOOL SHENANDOAH TRIP; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED CONTINGENT ON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE; MOTION WITHDRAWN.
- *ROXANNE ACKERMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CHILMARK SCHOOL TRIPS:*
  - *SHENANDOAH SAIL FIELD TRIP FROM SEPTEMBER 13-17, 2021*
  - *FEBRUARY 2022 SKI TRIP;**WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE TRIPS CAN BE CANCELED, RECONSIDERED OR MODIFIED AT ANY TIME AS HEALTH CIRCUMSTANCES DICTATE; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

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

(Agenda Item #IV)

#### **A. Environmentally Friendly Building Task Force**

- The Superintendent's Office reached out twice to UIRSD Towns. After some discussion on how to proceed the UIRSC determined as follows:
  - to schedule a September 22<sup>nd</sup> Task Force meeting (see below: Meetings/Events);
  - that West Tisbury Energy Committee Chair Kate Warner would be responsible for Town representatives — with Finance Committee member Doug Ruskin as the West Tisbury representative;
  - that Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt and Head Susan Stevens would appoint school representatives.
  - *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPOINT ROXANNE ACKERMAN AS THE UP ISLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*
- Cape Light Compact audited the West Tisbury municipal buildings and would pay 100% of the cost of replacing all WTS lights before December 31, 2021 (estimated to save ~ 20% on electric bills).
- The annual Green Communities grant included a custom grant provision (deadline October 8<sup>th</sup>) for up to \$25,000 in engineering design services which the WT Energy Committee unanimously advocated for the WTS — with the final decision resting with the WT Select Board. However total engineering/design to 'green' the school (e.g. convert to 100% electric power) was likely to cost ~ \$40,000, the difference to be drawn from UIRSD resources.
- All applications were written by the Cape Light Compact grant writer.

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- The Energy Committee was hoping for installation/construction in 2022 to take advantage of the \$200,000 Green Communities grant for insulation.
- The UIRSC also discussed the current backlogged construction/design market and inflation, as evidenced by the Chilmark School heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC) problems (see below #V A, & 5/4/21 Minutes p.1-2 #V B); as well as some concern on the source of the remaining ~ \$15,000 design cost.
- IT WAS THE CONSENSUS OF THE UP ISLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO FAVOR THE GREEN COMMUNITY CUSTOM GRANT DESIGN APPLICATION.
- The UIRSC thanked Kate Warner for all her work and attendance.

**B. Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS)/UIRSD Mask Policy - 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading**

This policy was in line with State guidelines, which would be revisited on October 1, 2021—it was estimated that ~ 80% of students and staff had to be vaccinated before any policy change was likely.

• *ROXANNE ACKERMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE SECOND READING OF THE MARTHA'S VINEYARD PUBLIC SCHOOL FACE COVERINGS/MASKS POLICY; SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

**Finance** (Agenda Item #V)

**A. Chilmark School Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning (HVAC) Project - Update**

- The status of the project was reviewed (see Minutes: 3/2/21 p.2 #IV, & 5/4/21 Minutes p.1-2 #V B) along with the Project Working Group:
  - Town: Robert Hanneman, Tim Carroll, Select Board James Malkin,
  - Owners Project Manager (OPM) from CHA,
  - Schools: Mark Friedman, Susan Stevens, Robert Lionette.
- The Group urged summer 2022 construction in order to minimize further construction inflation but did not yet have clear cost estimates. Currently there were two funding options.
  - The UIRSD could vote a separate borrowing including the 60 day waiting period for three Towns' approval either by Town Meeting or default.
  - The Town of Chilmark was going out to borrow for other projects and could include this project in the bond, saving the UIRSD bond counsel fees and other administrative costs, etc. as well as taking advantage of the Chilmark triple A bond rating (higher than the UIRSD—see 5/4/21 Minutes p.3 #E). Although financially advantageous, the process was likely to be legally complex involving an inter-municipal agreement that the UIRSD pay principal and interest on its portion. Bond and Chilmark counsel's were considering how to proceed and initiating preliminary conversations with West Tisbury and Aquinnah.

**B. Vote – Staffing Additional Classroom in Chilmark School**

(See 6/22/21 Minutes p.4-5 #D.)

The Chilmark site budget had successfully absorbed the additional Education Support Professional (ESP). MVPS Business Administrator Mark Friedman proposed funding the classroom teacher from the small (~ \$15,000) Salary Increment/new hire savings, the remainder to be drawn from the federal Elementary and Secondary School Relief (ESSER) III grant. Timing might involve the Line being overdrawn before the Grant reimbursement made it whole—as authorized in FY21 (see 8/19/20 p.3 #IV A). As an entitlement grant, funds were assured and the use fit eligibility parameters.

- There was an objection to spending un-budgeted funds.
- In comparison with additional WTS enrollment, Chilmark School's multi-age configuration required smaller class sections.

**C. Budget for Replacing Broken Computer Equipment at West Tisbury School (WTS)**

No budgeting was required (see 6/22/21 Minutes p.3-4 #V C) . The policy was still being drafted.

**D. Vote – Special Education (SpEd) Staffing at the West Tisbury School (WTS)**

Two unanticipated students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) required one-on-one ESPs, which were unbudgeted for Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22). Two current staff were moved to the new positions. Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt advertised to fill the vacant positions but was having trouble finding

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candidates in time for first day of school. At this point cost was unclear at ~\$35,000 + ~\$15,000 in benefits (depending on such things as individual vs. family health coverage and one-year-only vs. permanent positions—which initiated Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB)). FY22 funding sources could include: Teacher Salary Increment savings, the Contingency line and possibly the ESSER III grant (which was not UIRSC purview). Mark Friedman estimated the bulk of both positions could be covered from budget savings.

- Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt would request the same two one-on-one positions for the FY23 budget.  
- In answer to Skipper Manter's questions, the students' grades were given, they were not new to the WTS and were not from School Choice.

• *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO APPROVE TWO WEST TISBURY SCHOOL SITE EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS; ROXANNE ACKERMAN SECONDED: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

**Superintendent's Report**

(Agenda Item #VI)

**A. Covid Testing Update**

MVPS was accepted into the DESE no-cost weekly surveillance testing program, a saliva test similar to last year's protocols. The testing company was struggling with the usual Island travel/housing issues.

**B. School Re-Opening Update**

- August 30<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> – New teacher induction program by Assistant Superintendent Richie Smith,
- September 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> – Professional Development (PD) and classroom set up,
- September 4<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> – four day Labor Day / Rosh Hashana weekend,
- September 8<sup>th</sup> – School opens.

(In consultation with the Rabbi, Jewish holidays were honored on days too important to miss e.g first day of school, otherwise it was the choice of the family and students.)

- Schools and bus routes would revert to normal pre-Covid hours. Masks/face coverings and social distancing would be enforced.
- Vaccination enforcement was still unknown (see above: p.1 #III A i)— the UIRSC expressing some concern about timeframe.

**Personnel**

(Agenda Item #VII)

**A. Resignations** (See documents on file.)

**B. Leaves of Absence (LOA)** (See documents on file.)

• *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO ACKNOWLEDGE OR APPROVE:*

- *THE RESIGNATION OF WEST TISBURY SCHOOL EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL ERIN BROWN,*

- *A ONE YEAR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR WEST TISBURY SCHOOL EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL LAIS SCHOENHERR,*

- *THE RESIGNATION OF CHILMARK SCHOOL NURSE PAMELA RENDEK,*

- *THE RESIGNATION OF CHILMARK SCHOOL KINDERGARTEN/FIRST GRADE EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL FALLON PULFORD;*

*SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

**Public Comment** - None (Agenda Item #VIII)

**Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair**

(Agenda Item #IX)

- Chilmark School Head Susan Stevens reported that about 17 daycare/pre-school students from Chilmark and Aquinnah would be 5 years old and likely enter the School next year, expanding the need for classrooms and thus eliminating the daycare space.
- The UIRSC agreed to return to standard schedule, meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month. Budget season was starting.

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Meetings/Events

- School Opens – Wednesday, September 8, 2021
- MVRHSC – 5:00PM, Monday, September 13, 2021 – Zoom
- **UIRSC – 6:30PM Monday, September 20, 2021 - Zoom**
- Environmentally Friendly Building Task Force – 5:30PM, Friday, September 22, 2021

**Adjournment**

- *ROXANNE ACKERMAN MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:44PM; SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

**Documents on File:**

- Agenda/Revised Agendas (4 p.) 8/26/21
- Pulford email re: 2021 School Year 8/16/21
- Rendek email re: My position as nurse for Chilmark 8/15/21
- Schoenherr email re: Personal leave request 8/6/21
- Brown email re: Career Opportunity 7/29/21
- Martha's Vineyard Public Schools Face Covering/Mask Policy (2 p.) 8/12/21

**Minutes approved 9/20/21**