

Tisbury School Committee
6:00PM, Tuesday, September 14, 2021
Emergency Services Building 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 Administrator,
Student Support – Hope MacLeod,
Teachers – Nicole Shirley, Anne Williamson,
Siobhan Mullin – PTO,

Others: Marni Lipke

The Tisbury School Committee (TSC) meeting was called to order at 6:04PM. Chair Amy Houghton extended TSC thanks to all staff and parents and welcomed everyone to this in-person meeting. A special shout-out went to Principal John Custer regarding new parent feedback singling out the School as having the best communications. The TSC applauded Prin. Custer and noted the standing ovation given him at Town Meeting.

I. Approval of Past Tisbury School Committee (TSC) 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: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS:**

- JUNE 15, 2021
- JULY 20, 2021
- AUGUST 20, 2021
- AUGUST 24, 2021.

II. Superintendent’s Report

A. All Island School Committee (AISC)

- Martha’s Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) continued with fairly stable enrollment at 2,197 of which ~ 1,400 were elementary age (see also below #V A) and 714 at the Martha’s Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS).
- Superintendent Matt D’Andrea met with the Covid testing company yesterday when it was agreed that supplies be overnighted. There were two forms of testing: surveillance testing and rapid testing (see below: Actions). Ms. Molly Houghton was working on staff for a possible rollout next week. Supt. D’Andrea was hoping to minimize the burden on school nurses.
- Over 90% of staff and about 75% of Island residents were vaccinated—although it was harder to get an accurate survey of student vaccination rates which ranged from 60-85%. President Joe Biden’s vaccination mandate did not apply to schools at this time.
- MVPS school openings went very smoothly. Staff and students were terrific and happy to be back in the buildings.

B. Policy (See documents on file.)

1. Martha’s Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS)/Tisbury School Mask Policy
Amended - 3rd Reading

• **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MR. WATTS AND SECONDED BY MS. CUTRER THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE THIRD AND**

FINAL READING OF THE MARTHA'S VINEYARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS/TISBURY SCHOOL MASK POLICY AMENDMENT: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.

2. Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS)/Transportation Policy- 1st Reading

This MVRHS Transportation Policy encompassed a number of issues (see below: Actions).

• ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MR. WATTS AND SECONDED BY MS. CUTRER THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE FIRST READING OF THE MARTHA'S VINEYARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS/TISBURY SCHOOL STUDENT TRANSPORTATION POLICY: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.

• Transportation was functioning adequately although the lack of extra staff made driver absences challenging and sometimes occasioned double runs. MVPS was actively recruiting drivers—however it was noted that some Massachusetts municipalities were using the National Guard as school bus drivers.

III. Financial Report

A. School Choice Funding Request

This covered an Education Support Professional (ESP) Professional Development (PD) graduate course cost—a delay in credit paperwork pushed the reimbursement beyond the June 30th Fiscal Year closing.

• ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MR. WATTS AND SECONDED BY MS. CUTRER THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE WITHDRAWAL OF \$400 FROM THE SCHOOL CHOICE FUND FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REIMBURSEMENT: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.

B. Donation Receipt Request

• ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MR. WATTS THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY AND GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED \$952.14 FROM THE STOP AND SHOP A+ REWARDS PROGRAM: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS. A+ Rewards had now been discontinued (see below: Actions).

C. Grant Funding

Timing was currently between the Elementary and Secondary School Relief (ESSER) II and III grant windows. Other grants included Martha's Vineyard Bank mini-grants to a number of individual staff and Rural Education Assistance Program (REAP).

D. Fund Balances (See documents on file.)

- The School had healthy reserves due to balances in both the Manter Fund (\$158,442) and School Choice (\$278,171) accounts.

- School Lunch was slightly in the negative. Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) was another year of universal free school lunches so the usual start-of-year family income was missing. Last year ended in a small deficit (see 6/15/21 Minutes p.2 #III).

• ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MR. WATTS THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED A TRANSFER OF \$14.16 FROM CLASS FUNDRAISING TO EIGHTH GRADE ACTIVITIES: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.

IV. Community Preservation Committee/ Act (CPC/CPA)

A. Existing Funding

The CPC had granted the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) \$100,000 each year for three successive years for the school grounds, and further had implied continued support for the project both in future funding and in waiving the 3-year spending deadline so the total could

continue to rollover. Initial 2021/22 applications were due Mid-October. Spending was restricted to three categories: community housing, historic preservation, and open space/recreation.

B. 2021 Application

The TSC discussed limits for the current year's application, hoping to raise the annual contribution to \$300,000 over the project timeline. The facility grounds included numerous plantings and an internal paved walkway. Outside the school ground the Town hoped to utilize Streetscape and other State grants.

V. Principal's Report (See documents on file.)

A. Opening of School

Prin. Custer was enthusiastic about the September 8th opening and the first 5 days of School, all in-person, for normal hours—Kindergartners would start full school days next week. The School was returning to its standard programming and students were again eating in the cafeteria. The required fire drill went well, and was coupled with an outside assembly and a 8th grade ceremony on the 9/11 tragedy 20th anniversary.

- Enrollment was at 273 with 10 pending registrations. The largest class was 36 eighth grade students and the smallest was 20 seventh grade students—averaging 16 students per section.

B. Staffing Update

- Tisbury was lucky to hire 6 new staff members, as all schools were hard pressed to fill their positions. Applicant pools had shrunk from 2-3 dozen to 6-7 applicants. Currently there was only one vacancy (see below: D. Resignation)—advertising had failed to produce any suitable candidates.

- At the end of the meeting, third grade teachers Ms. Anne Williamson and Ms. Nicole Shirley reported their happiness to be back in school, and that the School atmosphere was more positive than it had been in a long time. The TSC thanked them for all the staff had accomplished.

C. Medical Leave of Absence (LOA) Request

There was a question as to why the request required TSC action when it was mandated in the contract and confidentiality issues were involved.

- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MR. WATTS AND SECONDED BY MS. CUTRER THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY ACKNOWLEDGED AND APPROVED MEDICAL LEAVE FOR EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL MS. SHANNON DOWLING FROM OCTOBER 13, TO DECEMBER 13, 2021: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

D. Resignation

- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MR. WATTS AND SECONDED BY MS. CUTRER THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY ACKNOWLEDGED THE RESIGNATION OF EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL MS. MARIA METTERS WITH GRATITUDE FOR HER SERVICE: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

- Prin. Custer sent thank you letters to the Martha's Vineyard Agricultural Society and the Department of Public Works (DPW) for the loan of picnic tables for the outdoor classrooms (see documents on file).

VI. Tisbury School Building Project

After 2 years work on the schematic design and budget, the existing Tisbury School Building Committee (TSBC) completed its mission with the 2021 Town Meeting and ballot votes and held a final housekeeping meeting.

- There were about \$7,000 in outstanding invoices to local vendors for the informational campaign, of which \$1,900 might have to be paid from other sources because of a technicality violation (the mention of a date in one of the publications) questioned by the Office of Campaign Finance.

B. Appointment of School Building Committee Members

The vote was tabled pending two prospective members' responses/registration (see below: Meetings/Events.)

A. Temporary School (See documents on file.)

- Mr. Chris Blessen of Tappé Architects had proposed 2 or 3 options for the temporary school location. The 55 West Williams Street site would be delayed by procurement procedures and demolition of the existing structure, otherwise the existing school grounds were being considered but this would be detrimental to construction process in terms of heavy equipment traffic, storage and other problems. A parent suggested a location at the MVRHS or the YMCA which could provide auxiliary spaces (gym, cafeteria, etc.) and could also be used in case of a MVRHS renovation project. However this would involve significant Oak Bluffs permitting procedures as well as other obstacles such as sewer capacity. Information on all options remained incomplete.
- As the temporary school would be at least a 2 year occupancy, Prin. Custer continued to strongly advocating for as much space as possible for the sake of the students, staff and families; i.e. not only sufficient class section modulars but units for required programs: Special Education, English Language Learners (ELL), unified arts, etc.
- The January 1, 2022 timeline was very tight. The Town had finally signed Owners' Project Manager (OPM) and Architects contracts, and consequently the Construction Manager at Risk application was submitted to the Inspector General's (IG) Office September 10th—standard processing time ~ 45 days.
- PTO President Siobhan Mullin asked the TSC and School to keep parents informed of temporary school plans, and the TSC proposed inviting the education community to next week's meeting (see below: Meetings/Events & Actions) which would be conducted as hybrid, i.e. in-person and Zoom participation.

Adjournment

• ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MR. WATTS AND SECONDED BY MS. CUTRER THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING UNANIMOUSLY ADJOURNED AT 7:14PM: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.

Appendix A: Meetings/Events:

TSC – 5:00PM, Wednesday, September 22, 2021 – Hybrid - EMS Bldg/Zoom

TSC – 6:00PM, Tuesdays,

October 12, 2021

January 11, 2022

April 12, 2022

November 9, 2021

February 8, 2022

May 10, 2022

December 14, 2021

March 15, 2022

continued

Appendix B: Actions

- Prin. Custer - thanks to Stop & Shop corporate in mid-west/Netherlands or publicly re: parent use of A+ rewards.
- Prin. Custer – request parent/staff testing consent forms.
- Mr. Watts – research and test Zoom hybrid equipment for 9/22/21 Meeting, including possible microphone and camera
- Ms. Houghton – send temporary school options to Marni for the record.
- Ms. Houghton – contact Oak Bluffs Planning Board re: temporary school location.

Appendix C: Documents on File:

- Agenda 9/14/21
- September 14, 2021 Tisbury School Committee – Principal’s Report
- Custer thank you letter to MV Agricultural Society 9/14/21
- Custer thank you letter to Department of Public Works 9/14/21
- Tisbury School Fund Balances Fiscal Year 2021-2022 9/13/21
- Metters email re: 2021/22 School Year 7/10/21
- Martha's Vineyard Public Schools Face Covering/Mask Policy (2 p.) 8/24/21
- MVYPS Schools Student Transportation Policy (4 p.)
- MVYPS Guidelines for Provision of Transportation (7 p.)
- Grande/Blessen emails re; Interim School Facility (4 p.) 9/13/21
- Tisbury Elementary School Temporary School Layout Options (4 p.) 8/16/21

Minutes respectfully submitted by Office On Call/Marni Lipke.

Marni Lipke – Recorder

Date

Amy Houghton – TSC Chair

Date

Minutes approved 10/12/21