

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD  
5:00PM, Monday, September 20, 2021  
By Zoom Cloud Conference**

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

Others: Amanda Sawyer – CHA, Lynn Welsh – Unibank, Recorder: Marni Lipke  
Supt's Shared Services Office: Matt D'Andrea, Richie Smith, Mark Friedman, Ruda Stone, Hope MacLeod,  
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Mary Boyd, Susan Stevens,  
Towns – Rob Hannemann – Chilmark

Press – Alison Frazier-Hayden – 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: August 26, 2021**

- *SKIP MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE*
- *JUNE 22, 2021 AND THE*
- *AUGUST 26, 2021 MINUTES;*

*ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 PARTIAL ABSTENTION due to absence: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, KATE DEVANE—AYE FOR JUNE 22,2021—ABSTAIN FOR AUGUST 26, 2021, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

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

**A. Susan Stevens – Chilmark School** (See documents on file.)

- Students enjoyed their week on the *Shenandoah*, despite a couple days of rain, and one minor injury. They were looking forward to responses to their 'messages in bottles'.
- The School had filled the nurse position but was still advertising for 2 Education Support Professionals (ESPs).
- The Chilmark Select Board would tour the School tomorrow to assess student population growth and the future of the pre-school (see 8/26/21 Minutes p.4 #IX). The UIRSC noted several factors.
  - The authority on use and/or declaration of surplus School space rested with the UIRSC.
  - The pre-school was a private entity, that served the community on a sliding tuition scale with some scholarships.
  - The Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) was under a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) mandate to cover preschool aged children of need, and universal pre-school was an imminent issue (see below # III B).
  - The pre-school was instituted as a solution to community need and to boost School enrollment (see 6/12/04 Minutes p.3 #B).
- Later in the meeting (see also 8/26/21 Minutes p.2 #B),

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• SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE CHILMARK SCHOOL FIFTH GRADE FIELD TRIP TO SUGARLOAF, MAINE, AROUND FEBRUARY 7-11, 2022 (FINAL DATES TO BE DETERMINED BY THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL) WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE SUPERINTENDENT HAD THE AUTHORITY TO CANCEL OR MODIFY THE TRIP AT ANY TIME AS HEALTH CIRCUMSTANCES DICTATE; KATE DEVANE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, KATE DEVANE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.

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

- It was great to have everyone back in the building. The School was full and many parents were still driving students to school causing serious drop-off/pickup problems which took a little time to resolve.
- The School Advisory Council (SAC) would attend the UIRSC October meeting, and were working on the 3 goals for the School Improvement Plan (SIP): social-emotional wellness, sustainability/greening school, and investigating universal preschool (see above #III A).
- A mandated stakeholder survey (UIRSC members were welcome to add opinions) on Elementary and Secondary School Relief (ESSER) III grant expenditure showed a community focus on:
  - sustainable outdoor areas such as pavilions (not just tents);
  - academic and social-emotional intervention;
  - after school and summer engagement;
  - school facility sustainability and climate change adaptation;
  - universal preschool; and
  - community building/whole school opportunities.
- Administration had authority over the \$372,000 in UIRSD ESSER spending, and would send DESE the application form delineating how funds would be spent.

### **1. Status of Capital Projects Including Roof, Elevator & Outdoor Refrigerator**

(See 12/8/20 Minutes p1-2 #IV.)

- The wheelchair lift to the stage procurement process awarded the contract to Garaventa Lift. Installation was scheduled to begin 8-10 weeks from now.
- The outdoor refrigerator/freezer contract was awarded to Polar King, who would crane the unit into place from the truck and remove the old unit at the same time. The walk-in was secured but as yet there was no delivery date.
- Roof – see below p.4-5, #IV D.

### **2. Out-of-State Travel Updates**

The United Kingdom trip was canceled and last year's 7<sup>th</sup> grade did not get to take their ski trip. The traditional University of Rhode Island Alton Jones venue had closed. The current choice, Camp Grotonwood, included outdoor learning components. The schedule was shifted to spring to take advantage of any Covid vaccination and testing advances and to make the fall semester run smoother.

- Reasonable cost, fundraising and scholarships insured that no child was denied participation. The Student Activity fund had residual funds from last year's canceled trips.
- Principal Donna Lowell-Bettencourt and the UIRSC attested to the importance and excitement of these off-Island field trips.
- SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING WEST TISBURY SCHOOL FIELD TRIPS WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE SUPERINTENDENT HAD THE AUTHORITY TO CANCEL OR MODIFY THE TRIP AT ANY TIME AS HEALTH CIRCUMSTANCES DICTATE:
  - EIGHTH GRADE SKI TRIP TO GUNSTOCK RESORT, GUILFORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
FEBRUARY 9-11, 2022

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- *SIXTH GRADE SCIENCE TRIP TO CAMP GROTONWOOD, GROTON, MASSACHUSETTS, MAY 2-5, 2022;*

*KATE DEVANE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, KATE DEVANE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

**Financial Report (Agenda Item #IV)**

Documents were sent to the MVYPS email addresses (see 11/9/20 Minutes p.3 #VI) but the UIRSC expressed frustration with the complications of dealing with an additional email account. It was explained that public records requests allowed access to any email in an account cited, and consequently MVYPS dedicated accounts not only facilitated public records searches but also protected school committee members' privacy.

**A. Expense & Revenue Report (See documents on file.)**

- There were no significant or urgent issues at this time and so far overages seemed manageable, particularly for the WTS.
- The UIRSD was still hiring so the Teachers Increment, salary and insurance lines were still in flux.
- The Chilmark site had a number of financials challenges related partially to the limits of a small budget, and partially to enrollment growth.
- The newly hired nurse was in a higher salary range than was budgeted.
- The additional 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom (see Minutes: 6/22/21 p.4-5 #D, & 8/26/21 p.3 #V B) projected a \$58,000 overage in Teachers salaries. Resources included possible ESSER II and III grants.
- In the regional part, some insurances invoices had been received.
- Revenues were in line.

**B. Grants/Donation – Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) Federal Rural Education Access Program (REAP) Grant**

Grants were separated from the General Fund. The REAP grant was dedicated to improving student academic achievement, supplies, equipment, etc. The UIRSC asked for an accounting at some point.

*• SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO ACCEPT THE \$37,077 RURAL EDUCATION ACCESS PROGRAM GRANT: ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, KATE DEVANE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

**C. Chilmark School Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning (HVAC) Project – Update and Possible Vote**

(See documents on file & Minutes: 3/2/21 p.2 #IV, & 5/4/21 Minutes p.1-2 #V B, & 8/26/21 p.3 #V A.)

- The total project cost (including building envelope issues) was estimated at \$1,264,253, some of which would be covered by the ~ \$192,000 residual in previous warrant articles, and \$126,430 from the Chilmark Green Communities grant, for a projected shortfall of \$945,889.
- MVPS Business Administrator Mark Friedman noted 4 options.
- No action – The UIRSC briefly explored and rejected this, citing school operation requirements and the 6-10 year project history.
- Warrant articles – were not recommended as the 80% capital formula placed an undue burden on Chilmark.
- UIRSD borrowing – was the most straightforward but more expensive option—timeline included the 60 day waiting period for Town approval/consensus.

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- Inclusion in a current Chilmark borrowing - which lowered cost but required UIRSC to vote and 3 Towns to sign an inter-municipal agreement.
- The Chilmark borrowing was estimated to cost the UIRSD ~ \$974,400 by taking advantage of:
  - Chilmark payment and handling of all issuance paperwork and costs including counsel;
  - a premium cash issuance, and
  - Chilmark AAA bond rating (versus the UIRSD A+ rating).
- A UIRSD borrowing on a \$945,000 bond (relatively small by market standards) would cost about \$35-45,000 in issuance costs, however there was also the possibility of serial loan notes by local banks, at higher interest than conventional bonds but only ~ \$3,600 in issuance costs—this possibility was estimated to cost ~ \$1,068,000 on 7 year notes.
- Given the current material and labor shortages in the construction market and recent inflationary surprises, the UIRSC asked for some assurance against further shortfalls. Owners Project Manager (OPM) Amanda Sawyer of CHA considered the recent estimate and bids to be realistic, with the caveat of construction market fluctuations on a project that would start 12 month from now.
- MVPS Financial Advisor Lynn Foster Welsh of Unibank considered the draft inter-municipal agreement needed some technical details resolved, which was best done on a simultaneous conference call with the Towns. The simplest solution was for Chilmark to pay their 80% share and then bill the UIRSD for the remaining 20% capital and interest payments, which the UIRSD would then assess proportionally to West Tisbury and Aquinnah. There were already a number of other Tri-Town inter-municipal agreements in place.
- Timelines for a 2022 summer project in terms of Town Meetings, inter-municipal agreements, 60 day waiting period, etc. required UIRSC action by mid-November.
- Although dismayed at the price, the Town of Chilmark supported the School and the HVAC upgrade.
- The UIRSC saluted and commended the Chilmark School HVAC Working Group, thanked them for their hard work and were inclined to follow their expert lead. Working Group Chair Rob Hanneman noting taxpayer savings of ~ \$100,000 considered the Chilmark borrowing option to be the best choice.
- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO DIRECT THE ADMINISTRATION TO PROCEED WITH THE INTER-MUNICIPAL AGREEMENT FOR THE CHILMARK SCHOOL HEATING/VENTILATION/AIR CONDITIONING PROJECT TO BE INCLUDED IN THE TOWN OF CHILMARK BOND; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, KATE DEVANE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*
- Rob Hanneman thanked the indefatigable Mark Friedman.

**D. West Tisbury School Roof Project – Update & Possible Vote** (See documents on file.)

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

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

**1. Status of Capital Projects Including Roof, Elevator & Outdoor Refrigerator**

\* During this discussion Kate DeVane left the meeting.

- The WTS roof project developments were as follows:
  - warrant article voted funds \$322,000;
  - total project preliminary design and cost estimates - \$495,000;
  - for an estimated \$275,000 shortfall;
  - optional \$35-40,000 insulation upgrade from R-30 value to R-48—savings of \$300 per year, not recommended by the West Tisbury Energy Committee at this time.
  - Thorough inspection with core samples found some structural and building code problems. The current rubber roof was installed over the previous rubber roof.

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- Discussion reexamined the procedure (see 6/22/21 Minutes p.4), finances and timing.
- Timing was predicated on warranty expiration (see 9/16/19 Minutes p.4) but pandemic delays resulted in missing the 2021 summer construction window (see 9/21/20 Minutes p.2 #VI). (The WTS was restricted to using manufacturer certified crews only during the warranty—but after expiration all costs would revert to the UIRSD.) Facilities staff was chasing and repairing leaks with sealant, but the situation was otherwise stable and administration was pro-active in building maintenance. If UIRSC wished to alter capital improvement timings, please inform administration so the draft 5-year capital plan could be adjusted accordingly.
- As climate change increased the need to cool rooms in the spring and fall, IT WAS THE CONSENSUS OF THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO INCLUDE THE INSULATION UPGRADE.
- Consequently the total cost of the project, with the addition of sufficient contingency, was \$643,000 with a shortfall of \$321,000—essentially double the original warrant article.
- Neither the Town of West Tisbury (which would pay 80% of the cost), nor the UIRSD was planning to bond in the near future. Low cost serial loan borrowing was an option (see above #IV C).
- A possible three-town warrant article would allow public input, and could be absorbed by the Towns, however there was some hesitation in presenting an additional warrant article when there was likely to be a substantial budget increase—due partially to Chilmark School HVAC borrowing costs.
- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO DIRECT THE ADMINISTRATION TO MOVE FORWARD WITH WEST TISBURY SCHOOL ROOF WARRANT ARTICLES FOR THE THREE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT TOWNS; ROXANNE ACKERMAN AND ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*
- The UIRSC requested that the three Towns be notified of the pending warrant article.

### **Superintendent's Report**

(Agenda Item #V)

Superintendent Matt D'Andrea reported a smooth start to school year thanks to students, staff, families, and the community.

#### **A. Covid Testing Update**

Molly Houghton, hired and trained 7 staff, was interviewing more, and was working to coordinate with school nurses. The State delivered some “test & stay” materials but surveillance test materials were delayed. It was hoped all testing would start within the next couple weeks. The group was working on the appropriate number of tests per week.

- 848 students (less than 50%) and 333 staff signed consent forms so outreach to increase participation continued.

- For the record, Chair Alec Salop noted that in terms of surveillance testing, the more Covid cases there were, the fewer people an epidemiologist would test, so the goal should be suitable to comfort and best outcome for the schools.

• Last year the Superintendent's Office spent time educating and listening to those who refused to participate in testing, with significant success in assent to participate or to provide alternate test data. At that time lack of participation relegated a student to remote learning but as that option was no longer available DESE did not allow a testing refusal to prohibit academic activity. However, consent could be a prerequisite to extracurricular or after school activities such as athletics, which were a considered a privilege. Both Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt and Head Susan Stevens testified to full participation last year.

#### **B. Enrollment Numbers**

Current count (which changed daily) showed 2,197 MVPS students, of which

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- 714 were in the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS);
- 57 in Chilmark,
- 357 in WTS (not including Project Headway pre-school students).
- 262 in Tisbury,
- 392 in Edgartown, and
- 415 in Oak Bluffs.

Although MVPS total remained fairly stable, both UIRSD schools' enrollment increased. The UIRSC asked for home schooling and Charter School counts.

**C. Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) Mask Policy Amendment - 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading**

There was some hesitation on the timeline for masks—projected to last the duration of the school year depending on vaccination and Covid variant status.

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

**D. Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) Transportation Policy - 1<sup>st</sup> Reading**

(See documents on file.)

UIRSC members were requested to review the policy for any questions or comments. The UIRSC asked for a brief summary at the next meeting.

*• ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO APPROVE THE FIRST READING OF THE MARTHA'S VINEYARD PUBLIC SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION 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.*

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

**Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair** - None (Agenda Item #VII)

Meetings/Events

- Environmentally Friendly Building Task Force – 5:30PM, Wednesday, September 22, 2021 - Zoom
- Environmentally Friendly Building Task Force – 5:30PM, Wednesday September 29, 2021 - Zoom
- MVRHSC – 5:00PM, Monday, October 4, 2021 – TBD
- UIRSC Budget Workshop – 6:30PM Thursday, October 14, 2021 - TBD
- UIRSC – 6:30PM Monday, October 18, 2021 - TBD

**Adjournment**

*• SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 9:04PM; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

**Documents on File:**

- Agenda 9/20/21
- Chilmark School Weekly Peek (4 p.) 9/10/21

**continued**

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**Documents on File (cont.):**

- Martha's Vineyard Public Schools Face Covering/Mask Policy (2 p.) 8/26/21
- MVYPS Schools Student Transportation Policy (4 p.)
- MVYPS Guidelines for Provision of Transportation (7 p.)
- Friedman cover email re: UIRSD S.C. Meeting – Chilmark HVAC & West Tisbury Roof Projects 9/17/21,
  - Up-Island Regional School District, Financing Options-Chilmark School (3 p.) 9/20/21
  - West Tisbury School Roof Replacement as of 9/17/2021
  - Towns of Aquinnah, Chilmark, and West Tisbury Up-Island Regional School District, Intermunicipal Agreement (7 p.) 9/17/21 draft
- Friedman cover email re: UIRSD S.C. Meeting – Chilmark HVAC & West Tisbury Roof Projects 9/20/21,
  - Up-Island Regional School District, MA, Chilmark School 7 yr Financing
  - Up-Island Regional School District, MA, Chilmark Issuance 7 yrs
- All Expenditure Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2021-2022, (15 p.) 9/20/21
- Revenue Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2021- 2022 9/20/21

**Minutes approved 10/18/21**