

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
6:30PM, Monday, December 13, 2021
By Zoom Cloud Conference**

Page 1 of 5

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

Others: Supt's Shared Services Office: Matt D'Andrea, Mark Friedman,
Ruda Stone, Richie Smith, Hope MacLeod,
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Mary Boyd, Susan Stevens,
Towns – West Tisbury – Kate Warner,
Press – Eunki Seonwoo – MV Times,
Recorder: Teresa Kruszewski (Marni Lipke)

Call to Order (Agenda Item #I)

The Up-Island Regional School Committee (UIRSC) meeting was called to order.

Public Comment – None (Agenda Item #II)

Up Island Regional School District (UIRSD) (Agenda Item #VI)

(Recorder's Note: This discussion has been grouped for clarity and brevity.)

• Public Hearing protocol was briefly debated as to whether it was required to begin at 6:30PM as posted in the press or later in the meeting in keeping with the posted agenda.

A. Public Hearing and Discussion of the Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) Budget for the Up-Island Regional School District (See documents on file & Minutes: 11/2/21, & 12/7/21 p.2-4 # III A.)

The Public Hearing was opened. The budget increases were reviewed:

- contractual raises and new hire savings,
- administrative salaries and negotiations placeholders,
- student activities stipend,
- substitutes and technologists pay raises,
- data management rates, network security, West Tisbury School (WTS) technology phase III and Chilmark School fiber optics upgrade;
- rate increases in telephones, alarms, landfill, as well as health/dental, unemployment, liability and student accident insurances;
- 2 WTS one-on-one Education Support Professionals (ESP) continued from but not budgeted in FY22;
- Chilmark School Kindergarten (K) ESP;
- Chilmark School nurse salary continued from but not budgeted in FY22;
- Chilmark School additional classroom regular teacher, ESP, special teacher and supplies continued from but not budgeted in FY22;
- Chilmark School power and light adjustment.
- The only changes from Version #4, were:
 - Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB) \$50,000 increase as offset by Excess and Deficiency (E & D);
 - Superintendent's Shared Services Office and Transportation placeholder increases;
 - reductions in worker's compensation and Medicare insurance, and debt.
- This Version comprised an operating budget of \$13,902,739.93 or 6.34% over FY22, driven by the Chilmark School 23.21% increase largely due to the additional classroom.

UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
December 13, 2021

Page 2 of 5

- Revenues were up slightly but mostly stable. The Operating Budget was offset by both School Choice previous year residuals (\$93,000) and E & D (\$337,000) for an overall total assessment of \$13,674,212.37, up \$646,000 or 4.96% over FY22.
- Assessment proportion by enrollment changes were as follows: Aquinnah down 1.2%, Chilmark up 2.89% and West Tisbury up 6.69%
- Some considered the proposed budget covered standard and necessary expenses without new programs, and all increases being either contractual or previously voted actions such as the additional Chilmark School classroom (see 6/22/21 Minutes p.4-5 #D) and the substitute pay raise (see 10/25/21 Minutes p.1-2 #III).
 - Contractual, Transportation and Information Technology (IT)/insurance rate increases (i.e. not within UIRSC control) comprised 71% of the increase.
 - Remaining increases could be tied to substantial population growth and inflation for which it was argued 6.34% was modest raise.
- There was a comment on whether debt should be included in the operating budget.
- There was passionate opposition to the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) Transportation Subcommittee move to lease/purchase petroleum powered buses.
 - Cobalt mining for electric vehicles (EV) was raised as another ethical issue.
 - This authority and any discussion was the purview of the MVRHSC. The UIRSD was required to pay the entire MVRHSD assessment so any move to withhold transportation funds would result in cuts to UIRSD schools.
- After the Public Hearing closed, the UIRSC made the following non-binding resolution:
 - *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED THAT THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THE MARTHA'S VINEYARD REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL NO LONGER PURCHASE, LEASE OR OTHERWISE PROCURE GASOLINE, DIESEL OR PETROLEUM POWERED VEHICLES; ROXANNE ACKERMAN SECONDED: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, KATE DEVANE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*
- It was suggested the discussion should examine every budget line, and that although there were no new programs, old programs should be reviewed for efficiency. A number of objections were raised.
 - It was too late in the process to start such a proceeding (see Minutes: 10/14/21, & 10/25/21 p.2-3 #IV, & 11/2/21, & 11/15/21 p.2-3 #VB, & 12/7/21 p.2-4 #IIIA). A subcommittee could be formed for such an exercise early in the FY24 budget process.
 - The UIRSC performed a line-by-line review 5 years ago and had been informed of all changes since.
 - Re-examination of current programs implied lack of trust in School Administration.
- Dukes County Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB) Trust contribution (\$658,286 per year / \$50,000 annual increase) was revisited:
 - pressure to include employee contribution as a part of collective bargaining;
 - importance of paying down the liability—including examples of municipal declarations of bankruptcy over pension obligations;
 - whether it was an appropriate use of E & D as a recurring, ongoing expense.

The debate returned constantly to the use of E & D to offset the budget.

- Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) Business Administrator Mark Friedman would submit E & D for certification as soon as his work on finishing school budgets would allow. He estimated that

UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
December 13, 2021

Page 3 of 5

FY21 E & D would exceed the ~ \$700,000 / 5% cap so that some funds would be returned to the Towns by statute. All FY23 Budget offsets as proposed would still leave a ~ \$400,000 E & D residual.

- There were strong objections to using E & D to cover personnel salaries, particularly if they were likely to be ongoing positions, including reference to difficult previous experiences.
- There was some consensus that the E & D be used solely to cover the OPEB and Contingency lines.
- Some advocated for returning all E & D to the Towns:
 - to maintain budget and accounting transparency, and
 - avoid resulting double increases the following budget year.
- Countering this were the following perspectives:
 - returning funds to Town simply shifted the spending decisions from the UIRSC to the Select Boards;
 - the money was already voted for education and should be used for such at UIRSC discretion;
 - returning funds to Towns and then assessing a large education tax increase was unnecessarily complicated, burdensome and artificially drove up the budget;
 - relieving the education taxpayer impact in this difficult year was a responsible action; and Towns would appreciate the move to avoid overrides.
- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO REDUCE THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 EXCESS & DEFICIENCY OFFSET TO ONLY COVER THE CONTINGENCY LINE ITEM; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED;*
- *A FRIENDLY AMENDMENT PROPOSED BY ROBERT LIONETTE TO INCLUDE THE ONE-TIME-ONLY TECHNOLOGY UPGRADE COSTS WAS REJECTED BY SKIPPER MANTER; MOTION FAILED: 2 AYES, 3 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: KATE DEVANE—NAY, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—NAY, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ALEX SALOP—NAY.*
- The Public Hearing closed at 7:59PM.
- *KATE DEVANE MOVED TO CERTIFY THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET DRAFT #5 FOR AN OPERATING BUDGET AT \$13,902,739.93 OR 6.34% INCREASE, ASSESSED AT \$13,674,212.37 OR 4.96% INCREASE; ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION FAILED: 3 AYES, 2 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: KATE DEVANE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—NAY, SKIPPER MANTER—NAY, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*
- The UIRSD Regional Agreement specified a December 31st certification deadline and 2/3 vote (4 out of 5) of all UIRSC members.
- The UIRSC considered establishing a protocol for use of E & D as well as another meeting to focus entirely on E & D budgetary issues.
- Both Administrators and UIRSC assenting members repeatedly asked those who voted nay for guidance on how to reduce and or modify the Budget proposal.
- Some members requested 2 additional Budget Versions of E & D coverage: 1 with just Contingency, 1 with only one time expenses. Others protested this was an undue burden on the already over-busy Mark Friedman which members could easily calculate themselves.

Approval of Minutes – Not Available (Agenda Item #III)

Principals' Report (Agenda Item #IV)

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

- Praise went to the art teacher when Chilmark students won 5 of the 12 months in the Steamship Authority Statewide calendar art contest.
- All were invited to the Peace Tree ceremony 1:00PM, Friday, December 17th.

UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
December 13, 2021

Page 4 of 5

1. Donations

- *ROXANN ACKERMAN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE FOLLOWING LOVELY DONATIONS:*
- *\$3,500 FROM THE SOUND FOUNDATION FOR YOGA CLASSES, AND*
- *\$1,900 WORTH OF SENSORY, MUSICAL AND STANDING TABLES FROM MONARCH STUDIOS,*

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

B. Donna Lowell-Bettencourt – West Tisbury School (WTS) (See documents on file.)

1. Out-of-State Travel

In a change from tradition, the 8th Grade end-of-year trip would be to Buffalo, NY which connected well with the curriculum including: Niagara Falls, Botanical Gardens, Aquarium, etc.

- *KATE DEVANE MOVED TO AUTHORIZE OUT OF STATE TRAVEL FOR EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS AND STAFF TO BUFFALO, NEW YORK JUNE 7-10, 2022; ROXANNE ACKERMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, KATE DEVANE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

2. Capital Projects Update

The UIRSC admired the new one-unit, sealed, white outdoor refrigerator/freezer, which was now in service having been delivered by crane and installed with thanks to the Towns for their support and all who coordinated the project including Head Cook Jenny Devivo and Head Custodian Jamie Labbe. The food program was thriving this year with free breakfast and lunch for all.

Finance (Agenda Item #V)

A. Expense and Revenue Report (See documents on file.)

There were no additional West Tisbury site expenditure issues. A couple lines in the Chilmark site were trending over budget but there were also some savings, which, with Elementary and Secondary School Relief (ESSER) III grant funds, should bring in the FY22 budget at or slightly under budget.

- Revenues were on target.
- There was a request for an itemized list of ESSER grant spending.

B. West Tisbury School (WTS) Project Update (See 12/7/21 Minutes p.1-2 #III.)

Mr. Friedman, praised West Tisbury Energy Committee Chair Kate Warner for her tireless work and devotion. The WTS Energy Study Request for Qualifications (RFQ) was ready to post. However, although the funding articles were approved by Chilmark and West Tisbury, Covid impacts on Aquinnah Town Meetings had resulted in the article being still un-voted. At this point the Aquinnah Select Board, although very supportive, could not commit to a Special Town Meeting, which could mean approval would be delayed till the Spring 2022 Annual Town Meeting (ATM)—a serious problem likely to increase costs in a fast inflating construction market. The RFQ could not proceed unless all funds were appropriated.

Personnel (Agenda Item #VII)

A. Leaves of Absence (See documents on file.)

- *KATE DEVANE MOVED TO APPROVE LEAVES OF ABSENCE AS FOLLOWS:*
- *SIX WEEKS MEDICAL LEAVE STARTING JANUARY 3, 2022 FOR CHILMARK SCHOOL SECOND/THIRD GRADE TEACHER ROBYN DORIE;*

UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
December 13, 2021

Page 5 of 5

- *MEDICAL LEAVE STARTING DECEMBER 9, 2021 FOR CHILMARK SCHOOL KINDERGARTEN/ FIRST GRADE TEACHER ELLEN ROSSI (FOLLOWED BY MATERNITY LEAVE);*
 - *MATERNITY LEAVE STARTING AROUND JANUARY 8, 2022 FOR WEST TISBURY SCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER AMY WESTBURG;*
- ROXANNE ACKERMAN AND SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, KATE DEVANE—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair (Agenda Item #VIII)

The UIRSC discussed times for another meeting. It was emphasized that school budgets were a large part of Town operating budgets and therefore needed to be set in a timely manner.

Meetings/Events

- **UIRSC – 6:30PM, Friday, December 17, 2021 – by Zoom**

Adjournment

- *ON A MOTION DULY MADE AND SECONDED THE MEETING UNANIMOUSLY ADJOURNED AT 8:38PM: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, KATE DEVANE—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

Documents on File:

- Agenda 12/13/21
- UIRSD FY2022 Assessment – Recertified V#7 2/16/21
- UIRSD FY2023 Assessment – V#5 12/13/21
- Up-Island Regional School District FY23 General Fund Budget – Version #5, 12-13-2021 (12 p.)
- UIRSD FY23 Budget Version #5 12/13/2021 (2 p.)
- Chilmark School Weekly Peek (4 p.) 12/10/21
- Up-Island Regional School District All Expenditure Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2021-2022, (15 p.) 12/12/21
- Revenue Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2021- 2022 12/12/21

Minutes approved 1/20/22