

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD**  
**7:30PM, Thursday, January 20, 2022**  
**By Zoom Cloud Conference**

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

Others: Supt's Shared Services Office: Matt D'Andrea, Mark Friedman,  
Hope Macleod, Ruda Stone, Richie Smith,  
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Susan Stevens,  
MVPS Staff: Kim Garrison,  
Towns: West Tisbury – Kate Warner, Greg Orcutt,  
Press: MV Times – Euniki Seonwoo, MVTV – Shavannae Anderson,  
Vineyard Gazette – Louisa Hufstader,  
Recorder: Marni Lipke, \*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.

**Public Comment** – None (Agenda Item #II)

**Approval of Minutes** (Agenda Item #III)

**A. Including But Not Limited To: November 15, 2021, December 7, 13, 17, 2021,  
January 13, 2022**

• *KATE DEVANE MOVED TO APPROVE THE:*

- *NOVEMBER 15, 2021 MINUTES;*
- *DECEMBER 7, 2021 MINUTES;*
- *DECEMBER 13, 2021 MINUTES;*
- *DECEMBER 17, 2021 MINUTES;*
- *JANUARY 13, 2022 MINUTES;*

*SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS,  
ABSTENTIONS AS ABSENT: KATE DEVANE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROXANNE  
ACKERMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

**Up Island Regional School District (UIRSD)** (Agenda Item #V)

**C. Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) Budget Certification** (See documents on file &  
Minutes: 11/2/21, & 12/7/21 p.2-4 # III A, & 12/13/21 p.1-3 #VI, 12/17/21, & 1/13/22.)

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

\* Robert Lionette entered the meeting at the start of this conversation.

Two agenda item were moved forward to accommodate attendees' schedules.

- After some clarification the three Towns' directions on the FY23 budget assessments were stated:
  - West Tisbury Finance Committee (FinCom) and Select Board were in favor of offsetting the FY23 UIRSD Budget with the entire Excess and Deficiency (E & D) total, i.e. approximately \$800,000.
  - The Aquinnah FinCom and Select Board were in favor of using \$337,121.56 of E & D as proposed in Version #5 to offset the Budget. They were made aware of the E & D 5% limit and invited to the UIRSC meeting with the auditors.

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- Chilmark FinCom and Select Board directed that no E & D be used to offset the Budget, particularly as it might impact Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB) commitment and that the UIRSD own up to the 6.34% FYY23 increase.
  - The UIRSC noted auditor's and bond counsel's advice regarding the need to retain a reserve outside of the operating budget in order to restore and maintain a good bond rating (see 5/4/21 p.3 #E), which was especially pertinent in view of the coming environmental work on the West Tisbury School (WTS) (see below #V B.). West Tisbury FinCom Chair Greg Orcutt reported they were not told of this factor.
  - UIRSC members expressed a number of opinions.
  - Alex Salop was more comfortable having heard that some Towns recommended the use of E & D.
  - Skipper Manter still had reservations about a 6.34% operating budget increase and would only vote for a budget that included the entire E & D total to offset the assessment.
  - Robert Lionette had concerns that such a large FY23 E & D offset (i.e. ~\$7-800,000) could likely spike the FY24 budget to 11%. Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) Business Administrator Mark Friedman calculated that such an action would result in a 5% increase even if the FY24 budget was completely level-funded (no contractual, staff, cost or other increases). Mr. Lionette considered that the UIRSD bond rating should be strengthened for upcoming capital projects.
  - Kate DeVane and Roxanne Ackerman maintained that the original and Aquinnah endorsed \$337,000 offset was reasonable, with the proviso that the 6.34% operating budget increase be explained at all Town Meetings.
  - The \$98,799 Contingency offset was included in the \$337,000 offset.
  - E & D certification request to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) was for \$846,179.77
  - Money committed to the OPEB Trust could not be used or borrowed from for any other purpose.
  - The UIRSC considered:
    - keeping an E & D 5% limit (\$695,000) and using the residual (~\$100,000) to offset the budget;
    - using E & D to make a one-time payment to OPEB in consideration of the Chilmark concerns;
    - keeping various amount in E & D (4%, 2.5%, etc.);
    - UIRSD FY23 Budget recertification required after DOR E & D certification;
    - a 5% UIRSD E & D balance was historically rare.
  - **ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO CERTIFY THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET FOR AN OPERATING BUDGET AT \$13,902,739.93 OR 6.34% INCREASE, WITH AN OFFSET FROM EXCESS AND DEFICIENCY THAT WOULD LEAVE EXCESS AND DEFICIENCY FUND AT ITS 5% CAP, I.E. MAINTAINING AN EXCESS AND DEFICIENCY BALANCE OF 5% AND USING ALL REMAINING EXCESS AND DEFICIENCY FUNDS TO OFFSET THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET ASSESSMENTS; ROXANNE ACKERMAN SECONDED; MOTION WITHDRAWN.**
  - ***ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO CERTIFY THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET FOR AN OPERATING BUDGET AT \$13,902,739.93 OR 6.34% INCREASE, WITH AN OFFSET FROM EXCESS AND DEFICIENCY THAT WOULD LEAVE \$500,000 IN THE EXCESS AND DEFICIENCY FUND, I.E. MAINTAINING AN EXCESS AND DEFICIENCY BALANCE OF \$500,000 AND USING ALL REMAINING EXCESS AND DEFICIENCY FUNDS TO OFFSET THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET ASSESSMENTS; KATE DEVANE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 1 NAY, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, KATE DEVANE—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—NAY.***
- \* Kate DeVane apologized and left the meeting for a conflicting appointment.

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**B. Environmentally-Friendly Building Task Force Update**

West Tisbury Energy Committee Chair Kate Warner reported some good news.

- Rise Engineering changed the WTS gym lighting to everyone's satisfaction and would move forward with the Middle School wing lighting (they commended WTS Head Custodian Jamie Labbe).
- Chilmark School heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC) project Request For Proposal (RFP) was posted with closing date of February 23<sup>rd</sup> (see below: Principal's Report #IV A).
- The WTS Energy Analysis Request for Quotation (RFQ) had been posted and garnered more than 20 inquiries (see 12/7/21 Minutes p.1-2 #III A).
- This led to a discussion on whether to submit a placeholder warrant article to fund the WTS project next phase: engineering and design. Issues were:
  - Spring Annual Town Meeting (ATM) warrant deadlines: West Tisbury Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>, Chilmark Jan. 4<sup>th</sup>, Aquinnah TBD;
  - waiting for 2023 ATMS would produce a year's delay in a swiftly inflating construction market—case in point Aquinnah's delayed vote impact on the WTS flat roof (see 12/13/21Minutes p.4 #V B).
  - lack of firm numbers and consultation with the Owners Project Manager (OPM) on estimates.
- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO SUBMIT A PLACEHOLDER ARTICLE TO THREE UP ISLAND TOWN ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANTS TO FUND A FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR THE WEST TISBURY SCHOOL PROJECT; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*
- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO AMEND THE ABOVE MOTION "TO FUND AN ENGINEERING AND DESIGN PHASE"; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

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

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

- The School showed good attendance and reasonable results in avoiding Covid with measures like Tuesday and Thursday testing and separated classes, (including on buses for field trips).
- Today's South Road power outage left the School without electricity until ~ 10:00AM—including bathroom facilities due to the electric septic pump.
- Mark Friedman would check the HVAC RFP to see if it included a generator and if it was not would research cost.
- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO SUBMIT A PLACEHOLDER ARTICLE ON THREE UP ISLAND TOWN ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANTS TO FUND A GENERATOR FOR THE CHILMARK SCHOOL BASED ON THE CAPITAL FUNDING FORMULA; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

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

- 102 students were participating in winter clubs and after school activities, not counting the Homework Club and sports. Basketball season was in the playoffs and moving towards the finals.
- Principal Donna Lowell-Bettencourt and Kim Garrison won a joint WTS/Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) grant, "Supporting Students Social Emotional Behavior, Mental Health and Wellness Through Multi-Tiered Systems of Support" that would access contracted clinical

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therapeutic services (including tele-help for those in quarantine) and fund an instructional Education Support Professional (ESP).

- The recent Covid spike was hopefully beginning to abate, although at its height there were 22 staff and 85 students absent—not all from Covid. Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt praised the Superintendent's Office, the Health and Safety Committee, and particularly the staff for their dedication in supporting families and students, providing families of absent students with school work, on-line work and consultations, as well as catching up students after absences.

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

(Agenda Item #V)

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

(See documents on file.)

There was a question about the guideline on the 3 minutes wait time before a bus leaves without a student. Student Support Director Hope MacLeod stated this could be modified as needed.

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

**Financial Report**

(Agenda Item #VI)

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

Revenues were on target and there were no new expenditure concerns. At this point calculations showed the Chilmark School extra classroom and staff would be covered by some small savings and Elementary and Secondary School Relief (ESSER) III grant funds.

**B. Special Education Stabilization Fund Warrant Article** (See 12/15/19 Minutes p.2 #V F.)

West Tisbury had passed this article but Covid measures had dropped it from the Chilmark and Aquinnah warrants. It was designed to fund unexpected Special Education (SpEd) expenses such as mid-year changes requiring: residential placement, one-on-one staff, transportation, equipment, etc. The change was driven by Circuit Breaker reimbursement regulations that lagged by a year and required the return of unspent funds, and the fact that requiring ATM or Special Town Meeting (STM) permission was uncomfortable for both the Towns and the families involved. The Article would read:

“The purpose of this article to permit the regional school district to establish a special education reserve fund pursuant to MGL Chapter 40 Section 13E. Upon acceptance of the statute by majority votes of the regional school committee and member town meetings the school district will have the ability to establish a special education reserve fund and appropriate and/or transfer money to the fund. The money in the fund will be utilized in upcoming fiscal years to pay, without further appropriation, for unanticipated or unbudgeted special education costs, out-of-district special education tuition, and transportation. Distributions from the fund to pay for unanticipated or unbudgeted special education expenses will require majority vote of the regional school committee and majority vote of the boards of selectmen approving distribution. The balance of the special education reserve fund cannot exceed 2% of the annual net school spending of the regional school district. The district treasurer may invest the monies in the manner authorized in Section 45 of Chapter 44 and...”

UIRSC objections included:

- another layer of bureaucracy, when there was already a Contingency line and E & D;

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- whether it was only for residential placements or for other SpEd expenditures;
- advocacy that the problem be addressed on an Islandwide basis.
- *ROXANNE ACKERMAN MOVED TO RESUBMIT THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STABILIZATION FUND WARRANT ARTICLE AS PASSED BY WEST TISBURY, TO CHILMARK AND AQUINNAH; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 3 AYES, 1 NAY, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—NAY, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

**Superintendent's Report** (Agenda Item #VII)

**A. Covid Surveillance Testing Consent**

Superintendent Matt D'Andrea echoed UIRSD Administrators' praise for everyone's tremendous efforts over the last couple weeks as Covid numbers increased that allowed schools to stay open: MVPS nurses, teachers, families and general staff.

- To ease the pressure on school nurses, the MVPS was making adjustments to its testing programs:
  - offering State-provided take-home rapid tests on a weekly basis for families that opt for them;
  - maintaining surveillance and symptomatic testing;
  - pausing test-and-stay and in-school contact tracing.

The at-home testing would require timing, distribution and other logistical planning. It was partially in response to family request and partially Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) guidance. It operated on an "opt-in" basis and honor system reporting of results. Although it placed a burden on families it was hoped it would catch some positive results quicker than the 2-3 day delay of the surveillance testing—which required parental consent.

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

Meetings/Events

- MVRHSC – 5:00PM, Monday, February 7, 2022
- UIRSC – TBD – by Zoom

**Adjournment**

- *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 9:35PM; ROXANNE ACKERMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

**Documents on File:**

- Agenda 1/20/22
- MVYPS Schools Student Transportation Policy (4 p.) 10/18/21
- MVYPS Guidelines for Provision of Transportation (7 p.)
- All Expenditure Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2021-2022, (15 p.) 1/17/22
- Revenue Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2021- 2022 1/17/22
- Chilmark School Weekly Peek (4 p.) 1/14/22
- Chilmark School Weekly Peek (4 p.) 1/21/22

**Minutes approved 3/21/22 amended 4/27/22**