

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
5:30PM, Tuesday, January 23, 2023
West Tisbury School
and by Zoom Cloud Conference**

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Present: Chair – Alex Salop, Roxanne Ackerman, Robert Lionette, Skipper Manter,
Jim Newman,

Others: CHA Projects – Mike Owen, Christina Opper,
Recorder: Marni Lipke
Supt's Shared Services Office: Richie Smith, Mark Friedman, Ellie Parece,
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Mary Boyd,
West Tisbury – Energy - Kate Warner,
Press – Louisa Hufstader – Gazette, Eunki Seonwoo – MV Times,
Michelle Vivian – MVTV,

*Late arrivals or early departures of UIRSC members

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

**Warrant Article Regarding The Environmental School Building Project
– Discussion and Vote** (Agenda Item #II)

(See Minutes: 12/7/22 p.3 #VI, & 12/19/22 p.5 #VI B, & 1/17/23 p.4-5 #VI B.)

(Recorder's note: This discussions is summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.)

The UIRSC explored how to initiate a West Tisbury School (WTS) comprehensive renovation that involved two components.

- 1) The conversion to an environmentally friendly facility had already involved investment in a thorough research and engineering feasibility study with data on building envelope, walls, heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC), mechanical systems, etc.—including \$30,000,000 cost estimate of which \$9,000,000 was for a temporary school.
- 2) Educational needs had only been outlined (see 10/17/22 Minutes p.2-3 #III). Much of the discussion focused on how to proceed with this portion of the project.

A major factor was whether to pursue Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) funding or move forward independently.

- MSBA strength were not only substantial funding but more materially, expertise and long experience in school building needs and construction: feasibility studies, procurement, community outreach, engineering and full due diligence in partnership with a district.
- For example MSBA feasibility studies (e.g. Tisbury School project website <https://tisbury-school-project.com/tsbc-knowledge-base/category/2016-2018-project-information/2016-2018-msba-documents/>) included: engaging an Owners Project Manager (OPM) firm, a design team, an educational program consultant, mechanical and civil engineers, code specialists, etc. The lengthy process encompassed: existing conditions, what to replace or re-use, how the school operated, visioning for the next 50 years, enrollment projections, whether to renovate/add or build new, alternate sites, etc. Independent (non-MSBA) feasibility studies were not accepted.

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- MSBA was a competitive process choosing less than 15 out of 85-115 applicants each year, prioritizing dire need such as: large student enrollment increases with use of multiple modulars, failing buildings, building destruction by fire, etc. Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) Statement Of Interest (SOI) applications usually took 7 to 10 years before acceptance.
- The WTS was experiencing significant enrollment growth, 90 students (30%) in the last 10 years with additional growth projected (see 1/17/23 Minutes p.2 #B2).
- However, it was unlikely that the MSBA would award another MVPS project until the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) facility was completed—MVRHS acceptance probably based on 1950s building with systems demonstrably at or beyond useful life.
- In addition, in 2022 the MSBA announced that due to limited funds and large expensive projects, accelerated program awards (such as environmental upgrades) would be temporarily suspended. This would further limit the number of MSBA projects, especially as Brockton, the largest school district in the Commonwealth, was just accepted into the pipeline.

Given the above, other alternatives and factors were raised, especially hiring a position and/or firm to bring the project to a concrete proposal to put before voters.

- A project manager position to oversee the process should have a number of skills:
 - out-of-the-box grant writer/seeker for federal, State, I.R.A Max Grants, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) emergency shelter funds, etc.
 - procurement certification,
 - good community outreach support and local political acumen,
 - ability to partner with MVPS and WTS administrators on educational design/feasibility phase,
 - experience in MSBA SOIs and process.
- Any municipal project over \$1,500,000 was required to have an OPM. CHA Consulting representatives noted that not only was an OPM firm required in overseeing a designer selection process (by Request for Qualification—RFQ) but also had the staff to cover all or most of the above areas, taking a project from “back of a napkin” idea to cost estimates, conceptual, and 30% schematic design, representing the client’s fiduciary interests and project goals. The OPM brought a wholistic approach encompassing such things as: phasing issues, continuous school operations, student safety, cost impact, supply chain timing, etc.
- The industry standard OPM fee was 4-6% of the total project construction cost—with economies of scale resulting in lower percentages for larger projects. The fee to assist with a MSBA SOI was \$15-25,000.
- Hiring the OPM could initiate full procurement regulations, and the UIRSD would also need its own project manager position as a partner—it was agreed that MVPS Business Administrator Mark Friedman had not the capacity for an additional project. When pressed CHA estimated preliminary work at \$800-950,000. The UIRSC could vote to short-term borrow the funds, triggering the 60 day waiting period for Town approval which, if strategically voted could coincide with Annual Town Meeting (ATM) schedules. There was reluctance to proceed without voter participation/buy-in. The UIRSC considered presenting to the 3 Town Finance Committees (FinComs).

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Timing was an additional complication.

- The environmental work could not be moved forward simultaneously with an educational needs feasibility study because it was necessary to merge the requirements/construction of the two components. Any new addition to the WTS would require re-engineering the Environmentally Friendly Feasibility Study.
- Financial timelines included grant and government funding availability, inflation, taxpayer capacity, MSBA deadlines, ATM schedules, etc.

Christina Opper of CHA suggested the UIRSC consider a preliminary space needs or planning design study for the educational component. Both the Tisbury School and MVRHS conducted such studies to collect useful data and concepts to give perspective on the issues. The caveat was that the procedure should not advance beyond the point where an OPM was required. The study could require a certified architect/design firm.

- Data from the Environmental Feasibility Study, a space needs study, etc. would be useful to future procedures, whether MSBA, independent or feasibility work.
- With the understanding that a thorough Environmental Feasibility Study existed and should be incorporated and not duplicated:
- *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED THAT THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE PLACE AN ARTICLE ON THE THREE TOWNS' ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANTS FOR UP TO \$120,000 FOR AN EDUCATIONAL SPACE NEEDS OR PLANNING DESIGN STUDY OF THE WEST TISBURY SCHOOL AND ANY COSTS RELATED THERETO: JIM NEWMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

Energy Committee Chair Kate Warner reminded everyone that although WTS was at the top of the Town list, Island municipalities had till 2050 to comply with electrification/greening.

- The UIRSC noted that Aquinnah was unlikely to be able to afford another large project.
- The WTS was not yet on the West Tisbury Capital Improvement Committee plan for optimal timing and financial provision. Other large MVPS construction projects relied on extensive Town involvement/support: Select Boards, Town Administrators, Building Inspectors, FinComs, etc.
- Superintendent Richie Smith spoke of the upheaval and staff/administrative capacity for multiple large building projects and the need for a more normalized educational environment. Outside factors included a number of unknowns:
 - MVRHS project scope, timeline, and cost, i.e. might it include a junior high or additional grade to relieve MVPS elementary schools' space crunch;
 - shifting post-pandemic populations and enrollment;
 - additional funding for the Chilmark School HVAC/generator project,
 - West Tisbury Council On Aging Howes House renovation/addition.
- The UIRSC requested a joint meeting with the West Tisbury Capital Improvement Committee.

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Warrant Article Regarding Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning (HVAC) at West Tisbury School – Discussion and Vote (See documents on file. (Agenda Item #III)

- WTS electric supply was insufficient for school needs and new equipment. Advice was to run additional, upgraded and separate service to the kitchen (for emergency shelter needs) including the run from the Eversource line on Old County Road, electrical panel upgrades, engineering plans, etc. \$75,000.
- The boilers were in good shape but two of the four 25-yr.-old circulation pumps needed to be replaced (~\$15,000 each) and the equipment room surface ground and reinforced with a concrete skim coat. \$65,000.
- The requisite design and OPM fees, and a 20% contingency (up from 10% given the current construction trades market) brought the total ask to \$194,600.
- Cape Light Compact might cover a portion of the circulation pumps, in which case the amount could be lowered on Town Meeting floor.
- The electric supply run from the Road would probably require some parking lot repaving.
- In light of experience, the UIRSC included OPM costs in many projects below the \$1,500,000 legal requirement.
- The emergency generator would remain connected to all components.
- The MVPS attorney affirmed that “capital” (as opposed to operating) expenses were defined not only by financial scale but also large projects (whether repair or not) with multi-year lifespan that could be depreciated over time. The Attorney was comfortable that continued UIRSD warrant article practice would not violate Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) regulations.
- *JIM NEWMAN MOVED THAT THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE PLACE AN ARTICLE ON THE THREE TOWNS’ ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANTS FOR UP TO \$194,600 FOR WEST TISBURY SCHOOL ELECTRICAL SERVICE AND HEATING/ VENTILATION/AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEM CIRCULATION PUMPS AND ANY COSTS RELATED THERETO: JIM NEWMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

Nomination and Vote to Choose Chair and Vice-Chair for UIRSC (Agenda Item #IV)

Roxanne Ackerman respectfully declined the Chairship for family reasons (See 11/21/22 Minutes p.7 #VIII A).

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO NOMINATE JIM NEWMAN AS CHAIR AND ALEX SALOP AS VICE CHAIR OF THE UP ISLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE; JIM NEWMAN AND ALEX SALOP ACCEPTED THE NOMINATION; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*
- Members were strongly reminded to sign the warrants so invoices could be paid.

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Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair

The Vineyard Conservation Society offered to purchase and install (including permitting) an outside water bottle refill and bubbler station by the WTS soccer field for school and community use, including MV United. Prin. Donna Lowell-Bettencourt attested it would be a great addition.

- The UIRSC raised liability issues. It would work off WTS water which was tested regularly, and would be covered by the School liability insurance. It would be turned off in the winter.

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO ACCEPT THE VINEYARD CONSERVATION SOCIETY GIFT OF AN OUTSIDE WATER BOTTLE REFILL AND BUBBLER STATION NEAR THE WEST TISBURY SCHOOL SOCCER FIELD; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

Meetings/Events

• UIRSC – TBD February 2023

• AISC – TBD, Wednesday, February 15, 2023

Adjournment

• *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:44PM; JIM NEWMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

Documents on File:

• Agenda 1/23/23

• WTS Capital Projects FY24 – Electrical and HVAC (2 p.)

Minutes approved 2/21/23