

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD  
6:30PM, Monday, October 17, 2022  
West Tisbury School  
and by Zoom Cloud Conference**

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Present: Chair – Alex Salop, Kate DeVane by Zoom\*, Roxanne Ackerman, Skipper Manter,  
Others: Robin F., Recorder: Marni Lipke  
Supt's Shared Services Office: Richie Smith, Mark Friedman,  
Hope MacLeod, Ruda Stone,  
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Susan Stevens, Mary Boyd,  
Parents: Cori Lazar, Jessica Mason, Jessica Seeman, Samantha Look Strom,  
Ellen Rossi (teacher/parent),  
WT Energy Com: – Kate Warner, Doug Ruskin,  
Field Fund: Doherty Slavin, Rebekah Thomson,  
Press – MVTV – Shavannáe Anderson, Louisa Hufstader – Vineyard Gazette,  
MV Times – Lucas Thors, \*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. During the time when a UIRSC member joined the meeting by Zoom, roll-call votes were required.

**Approval of Minutes** (Agenda item #II)

**A. Including But Not Limited to: September 19, 2022**

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 19, 2022 MINUTES; ROXANNE ACKERMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: KATE DEVANE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

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

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

**1. Space Issues** (See documents on file.)

- Already this year staff was having to teach in corners and hallways. Five classrooms were needed next year (2 kindergarten(K)/first grade, 2 second/third grade, and 1 fourth/fifth grade) including a high percentage of special needs students necessitating auxiliary spaces.
- The School Advisory Council (SAC) was thrilled with the enrollment (mostly Chilmark residents) considered to be the effect of the preschool. They were working on space solutions and a delegation would meet with 2-3 preschool representatives on strategies and a preferred option to share with stakeholders and the UIRSC. The UIRSC asked to be informed of the SAC/Preschool meeting times.
- The UIRSC considered:
  - population projections—even if this was a blip, the cohort would last 5 years;
  - whether original architectural plans included any expansions.
  - capital solutions as a multi-year process.

**2. Special Education Needs** (See 8/15/22 Minutes p.1-2 #III A 2.)

Response To Intervention (RTI) certified Special Education specialists evaluated and tested struggling students for instructional remediation options before determining the need for an Individual Education Plan (IEP) Special Education (SpEd) designation. However, the RTI specialists were now teaching SpEd students and consequently no longer available for evaluations.

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- The Superintendent's Shared Services Office provided evaluations after a School team referred a student for shared services but up until then such finances/resources were the School's responsibility.
  - Ms Stevens proposed a 1.0 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) but would settle for part-time (0.5 FTE) if necessary. She did not have a candidate and, apart from the SpEd certification requirement, had not determined the position level:
  - a 0.5 FTE SpEd teacher would cost ~ \$50,000 plus benefits,
  - a 1.0 FTE Education Support Professional (ESP) would cost \$15-20,000 plus benefits.
  - The UIRSC requested she work with the Central Office to determine funding and configuration.
- Skipper Manter objected to any Chilmark School use of the Contingency Line.

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

#### **1. Field Fund Presentation re: Field Irrigation** (See documents on file.)

The Field Fund had been working with the West Tisbury Community Preservation Committee (CPC) on field maintenance and now requested use of the WTS well for irrigation—saving them the expense of a new well. Town fields were adjacent to the WTS and often used by students. The well in question was non-potable. The West Tisbury Park and Recreation Dept. supported the proposal.

- After this summer's drought the UIRSC noted the water as a precious resource.
- Electricity for the additional pumping should be monitored possibly with a separate meter—the Field Fund was highly mindful of minimizing energy costs.
- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE ACCESS TO AND USE OF THE WEST TISBURY SCHOOL NON-POTABLE WELL FOR THE TOWN FIELDS IF THE PROJECT WAS PASSED BY THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE AND IMPLEMENTED; KATE DEVANE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: KATE DEVANE-AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP-AYE.*

### **VI. A. Environmentally-Friendly Building Task Force Update** (See documents on file.)

The West Tisbury Select Board (WTSB) approved and supported the WTS as a designated shelter at some future date.

#### **III. 5. Building** (See documents on file & 9/19/22 Minutes p.4-5 #D.)

- \* During this discussion/presentation Kate DeVane left the meeting at 8:05PM.
- In response to the possibility of renovations as part of the WTS net-zero energy project, Principal Donna Lowell-Bettencourt prepared and presented a detailed overview of the School facility's strengths and weaknesses, including but not limited to:
- space needs for possible 6 ft. distancing,
- some classrooms with natural light and some with none,
- flooring switch from carpeting to tile;
- never used foldable walls that did not allow attached materials, and outdated furniture;
- rooms with good storage too high for easy access or lacking of enough storage,
- small spaces (classrooms, kindergartens, art room, library...) requiring student apparel hooks in halls;
- lack of an extra room for flexibility and population spikes;
- awkward room use shifts e.g. industrial to health/wellness, library to speech/language and tech space;
- occasional rooms needing heat, or air conditioning—such as the tech room,
- insufficient SpEd, occupational and physical therapy spaces;
- inadequate kitchen and cafeteria;
- insufficient spectator space in the gym and rudimentary stage design and equipment;
- failing playground equipment and surface (only 6 years old);
- no preschool space.

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- All mechanical problems would be solved by the environmental energy work.
- The UIRSC appreciated the comprehensive letter on the playground and asked Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt to submit a list of names for a small playground committee (SAC, UIRSC, parent, etc.).
- The UIRSC discussed next steps and implications of the Report.
  - The cost was likely to mirror the \$27-35,000,000 energy saving retrofit.
  - Next steps were unclear: whether to fund an architect-lead feasibility study (which had an expiration period) or a space needs study or a design process, how to coordinate an architect with the engineering feasibility study, timeframe in regards to town meetings, etc.
  - Funding questions included taxpayer burdens on top of current West Tisbury projects (e.g. Howes House), as well as whether the project was eligible for Federal, State or Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) grants.
- Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) Business Administrator Mark Friedman and Superintendent Richie Smith re-iterated the serious logistic problems of launching a fifth major and simultaneous MVPS building project:
  - insufficient housing for construction workers on so many large projects;
  - already double/triple booked meeting obligations—select boards, regional agreements, building committees, finance, etc.
  - administrative shortage for oversight, procurement, coordination, etc.
- The UIRSC discussed expanding Central Office staffing and/or hiring its own facility/project administrator.

### 2. West Tisbury (WT) School Advisory Council (SAC)

No action was taken on the 2021-22 School Improvement Plan (SIP). The final 2022-2023 SIP was reviewed (see documents on file & 8/15/22 Minutes p.3-4 #B4).

- Goal #1 - Curriculum and practice to achieve green ribbon school status might have some future costs but were currently within the budget.
- Goal #2 - Universal preschool work was proceeding as a hybrid in partnership with community preschools. It was likely to need UIRSC policy changes. Creation and funding of a pilot program was proposed as a separate article for voter transparency which could then be rolled into the UIRSD budget.
  - A legal opinion on Massachusetts General Law (MGL) Chapter 71 regional requiring a single article on all public school operating costs would be explored (see documents on file). This would preclude a UIRSC Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) budget at 2.5% or less.
- Goal #3 - Socio-emotional enrichment to remediate Covid impact was already in progress and paid through budgeting and grants so no additional funding was required.
- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE WEST TISBURY SCHOOL 2022-2023 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN AS AMENDED ON GOAL 2 "...TO INCLUDE THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF IMPLEMENTING UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL..."; ROXANNE ACKERMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

### 3. West Tisbury (WT) Roofing Project Update

The rubber roof process was going well with completion still expected by the end of October. Administrators were meeting weekly with the architect, Owners Project Manager (OPM), and construction manager.

### 4. West Tisbury (WT) Generator Update

(See 9/19/22 Minutes p.2-3 #IV C.)

Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt further explained the situation.

- Equipment and labor were available for an immediate repair of the current generator. Technicians maintained it would be serviceable and operable after repairs. Parts were priced at \$ 13,368.80.

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- The only backup generator to be found on or off-Island was only intermittently available (also used for weddings, events, etc.) and was rented on condition that the current generator be repaired.
- A new generator lead time was still 40-50 weeks and could not be ordered until the correct size/capacity was determined after the completion of the energy retrofit.
- Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt recommended overspending the Maintenance line and using the Contingency line only if necessary. Skipper Manter objected to the undetermined funding source.
- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE SPENDING UP TO \$30,000 ON THE WEST TISBURY SCHOOL GENERATOR REPAIR; ROXANNE ACKERMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED; 2 AYES, 1 NAY—SKIPPER MANTER, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

### **6. Donation to Up Island Regional School District (UIRSD) Lunch Program**

Parent lunch deposits from before the pandemic free-lunch program were held in student accounts. Contacting and paperwork were almost completed, refunding those that requested it. The remainder chose to donate their deposits in honor of the lunch program quality.

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO GRATEFULLY ACCEPT \$5,618.99 IN DONATIONS TO THE LUNCH PROGRAM REVOLVING ACCOUNT; ROXANNE ACKERMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*
- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE A FIELD TRIP FOR WEST TISBURY SCHOOL AND VISITING UNITED KINGDOM STUDENTS TO NEWPORT AND PORT ADAMS RHODE ISLAND, ON OCTOBER 27, 2022; ROXANNE ACKERMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.* They had also visit Plymouth and the Boston Freedom Trail.

### **Finance** (Agenda item #IV)

#### **A. Expense and Revenue Report**

During this report there was a brief recess from 8:49 to 8:52PM.

- Financial activity was remarkably calm with no significant variances. The WTS Technology budget lines were being restructured to comply with Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) requirements however the Department bottom line was unchanged.
- The WTS share of the ~ \$98,000 Districtwide Contingency line was sufficient for generator expenses.

#### **B. Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Budget Process Timeline** (See below: Meetings/Events.)

The process had been on hold pending union negotiation resolution. Mark Friedman would present a level service draft at the next meeting. Other factors would include enrollment and program changes.

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

#### **A. General Update**

Supt. Smith applauded staff and Administrators for both UIRSD schools' MCAS results. Statewide composite scores lost ~ 28 points post pandemic, but the WTS dropped only 7-10 points in English/Language Arts (E/LA) and only 2-5 points in Math. Chilmark was too small for composite scores but achieved student growth scores in the 70s and the WTS in the 50s (average was 40-50).

#### **B. Student Support Update** (See documents on file.)

An October 7<sup>th</sup> Professional Development (PD) workshop was on students with both English Language Learners (ELL) and Special Education designations. There would be a joint meeting of the Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Island Parent Advisory Councils (IPACs) and Student Support Director Hope MacLeod was considering a book club flyer.

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- The data requested by Robert Lionette showed a post-pandemic spike in SpEd referral numbers that was expected to return to normal in the next year or two. The UIRSC requested the information be emailed to all members.

**C. 10/1/22 Student Census** – Not yet available.

**Old/New Business** (Agenda Item #VI)

**B. Bus Update** – Nothing new to report.

**Personnel** (Agenda Item #VII)

**A. Leave of Absence (LOA)** (See documents on file.)

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE A LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR WEST TISBURY SCHOOL KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL CANA COURTNEY FOR THE 2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR; ROXANNE ACKERMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

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

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

Lunch program changes would result in a new wellness policy to be presented at the next meeting.

Meetings/Events

• AISC – 6:00PM, Thursday, October 20, 2022 by Zoom

• UIRSC Budget Workshop - 5:00PM, Monday, November 14, 2022 – WTS

• UIRSC - 5:00PM, Monday, November 21, 2022 - WTS

**Adjournment**

• This was Kate DeVane's last meeting and the UIRSC saluted her hard work and championing of special needs. Ms. DeVane was moving forward as Director of the Island Autism Project.  
• Chair Alex Salop thanked everyone, including the press, for their endurance during this long meeting.  
• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 9:10PM; ROXANNE ACKERMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

**Documents on File:**

- Agenda/Revised Agenda (2 p.) 10/17/22
- Chilmark School Weekly Peek (4 p.) 9/30/22
- Stevens/Mason email re: For the School Committee (2 p.) 10/12&25/22
- To Donna and the UIRSD Committee re: Field Fund request (7 p.) 10/12/22
- West Tisbury School Facility Strengths and Weaknesses (32 p.)
- West Tisbury School 2022-2023 School Improvement Plan, (2 p.)
- All Expenditure Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2021-2022 (15 p.) 10/15/22
- Revenue Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2021- 2022 10/15/22
- UIRSD Number 2021-2022 School Year (SY)
- UIRSD Student Support Services Update October 2022 (2 p.)
- Friedman cover email re: MVRHS Legal Opinion re: Warrant Articles 10/18/22
- Murphy, Lamere, & Murphy letter re: Memorandum of Agreement (“MOA”) Proposed by Member Towns (3 p.) 8/31/21
- Cana Courtney letter re: leave of absence 9/29/22

**Minutes approved 11/21/22**