

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD  
5:00PM, Monday, November 21, 2022  
Chilmark School  
and By Zoom Cloud Conference**

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

Others: Katherine Barnes-Horenstein, Catherine Cole, Nettie's iPhone, Colin Rule,  
Auditors: CLA - Chris Rogers, Recorder: Marni Lipke,  
Supt's Shared Services Office: Richie Smith, Mark Friedman, Hope MacLeod, Ellie Parece,  
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Mary Boyd, Susan Stevens,  
Staff: Mary Kuh Ambulos, Rebecca Barca-Tinus, Susan Conlan, Robin Dori, Mariah MacGregor, Catherine Mafcher, Joan Rice, Ellen Rossi, Melissa Schelhammer, Donna Swift, Bea Whiting,  
SAC: Chilmark – Co-Chair Jessica Mason, Susan Bernard, Mariah MacGregor, Rebekah Thomson,  
Towns: WT FinCom - Greg Orcutt, WT Accountant – Bruce Stone, Chilmark Select Board – Warren Doty, Chilmark Energy – Rob Hannemann, Chilmark PreSchool - Elizabeth Hirsch, Anja May, Kate Ruppel, Deb Zetterberg,  
Press: MVTV – Shavannae Anderson, Vineyard Gazette – Louisa Hufstader, MV Times – Eunki Seonwoo,

\*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: October 17, 2022**

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 17, 2022 MINUTES; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

**Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) Audit Report** (Agenda Item #III) (See documents on file.)

\* During this discussion Jim Newman entered the meeting at 5:09PM.

- The Auditors were engaged to express the opinion on whether UIRSD financial statements were in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principals (GAAP), to report on internal controls compliance with laws, regulations, contracts and grants, and to provide a management letter.
- The UIRSD received an unmodified opinion (the best possible), with no material weaknesses or non-compliance, although there was a finding regarding a recent 'geographic' change for Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) 84 which switched such things as Student Activity accounts from agency to government funds.
- On a full accrual basis the total FY21 net was -(\$9,400,000), with 3 components: Net investment in capital assets \$823,000, Restricted fund - \$505,000, and Unrestricted -(\$10,700,000) Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB), and Pension liabilities.

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- General Fund balance was ~ \$1,000,000: \$124,000 “restricted” was returned to the Town as over the 5% Excess and Deficiency (E & D) cap, \$99,000 was committed to the FY22 Budget, \$80,000 in assigned or encumbered funds and \$722,000 in unencumbered funds.
- As usual the largest liabilities were OPEB and Pension funds.
  - As of June 30, 2021 the total original OPEB liability of \$11,100,000 was 38% (\$4,200,000) funded for a remaining liability of \$6,900,000. Actuarial valuation was based on a large number of factors, of which the two most important were healthcare cost trends and the discount rate. The discount rate was determined by the percentage of the liability already paid—in this case into the Dukes County OPEB Trust. Small variations in these factors shifted the liability amount up or down so that the total was fairly fluid. In response to the UIRSC question CliftonLarsonAllen LLP (CLA) UIRSD Principal Chris Rogers affirmed the UIRSD was in a very good position. Most Massachusetts discount rates for municipal entities were only 2-3% compared with the UIRSD almost 10% discount.
  - As of June 30, 2021 the pension liability was \$814,000. The Dukes County Retirement Fund was almost 90% funded and the UIRSD represented 3.4% of the total. The same fluidity applied in relation to variations in discount rate (currently 7.5%).

**Management Letter Comments**

- Information Technology (IT) risk assessment – repeat.
  - Some District servers were still using a 2008 Windows which was no longer vendor supported. Other concerns included: laptops, internet vulnerability, etc. All Martha’s Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) including the UIRSD budgeted additional FY23 funds to improve internet security, fiber optic technology (see 10/25/21 Minutes p.2-3 #IV), climate controls for equipment, redundant IP addresses, vendor policy/access, etc. Staff had already addressed some issues and would continue progress.
  - As a school district there was a difficult balance between public transparency and security.
  - UIRSD IT was highly integrated with Superintendent’s Shared Services (Central) Office IT security.
  - The UIRSC expressed concern at this repeated comment of several years standing.
- CLA would assist the MVPS financial team on the assets and liabilities of new lease management accounting standards.
- CLA had not contacted Standards & Poor’s (S&P) recently but reminded the UIRSC that bond rating companies viewed lack and/or depletion of a reserve fund outside the General Fund (either E & D or stabilization) in a negative light (see 12/5/20 Minutes p.2).
- The FY22 audit would start after the winter holidays and should be finished by spring 2023.

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

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

**3. School Advisory Council (SAC) Update** (See below # 1 & 2.)

**1. New Special Education (SpEd) Position Proposal (40%) and Guidance  
Additional 20%**

(See documents on file & Minutes: 8/15/22 p.1-2 #III A 2, & 10/17/22 p.1-2 #III A 2.)

The Chilmark SAC reviewed the request for additional SpEd support to meet student need and allow for early detection and prevention (called Response To Intervention – RTI). Greater enrollment included SpEd population increases, up 25% this year and projected to be up 50% next year. Added to this was the pandemic impact on socio-emotional needs. The School and staff were struggling with lack of adequate support, creative schedule changes, groupings across grades and spaces, etc., especially difficult in multi-age classrooms servicing a wide learning range of challenged to advanced students.

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- The proposal was to hire a:
    - 0.4 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) SpEd teacher – salary ~ \$67,000 but partial FY23 estimate \$47,790, (Head of School Susan Stevens reported some candidate interest);
    - and increase Guidance by 20% to 0.6 FTE.
  - The Chilmark share of the Contingency Line was committed to the one-time payment agreed to in collective bargaining agreements. The only other projected residuals were Maintenance and Painting.
    - State Covid impact funding included ~ \$26,000 in sick leave reimbursements.
    - Skipper Manter repeated his usual objections to use of Contingency and/or E & D funds.
    - The UIRSC always supported SpEd funding/education.
    - E & D (projected to be ~ \$750,000) was usually certified in January/February, at which time the following motion might have to be revoked.
  - *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED:*
    - *TO ADDRESS ADDITIONAL CHILMARK SCHOOL STAFFING FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE PER REQUEST (0.4 FULL TIME EQUIVALENT SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER AND ADDITIONAL 0.2 FULL TIME EQUIVALENT GUIDANCE EXPANSION), AND*
    - *TO UTILIZE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE FUNDS IN ANTICIPATION OF USE OF EXCESS AND DEFICIENCY FUNDING;*
    - *WITH A FRIENDLY AMENDMENT TO ALSO UTILIZE \$25,920.82 IN 'PAID SICK LEAVE' WITH ANY REMAINDER FROM EXCESS AND DEFICIENCY;*
- JIM NEWMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

**2. Space Planning** (See documents on file & Minutes: 9/20/21 p.1-2 #III A & 10/25/21 p.3., 8/15/22 p.1-2 #III A2, & 10/17/22 p.1 #III A1.)

School growth was heavily driven by the preschool population as well as by SAC and Town recruitment, so that demand for both Chilmark School and Chilmark Preschool have been increasing as integral parts of the community. The SAC and Chilmark Preschool presented a unified memo of 5 short and long term strategies on the growing need for space. Collaborative consultations included staff, parents, community members, etc.

- It was clear the Chilmark School needed at least 1 additional classroom. The School was already experiencing a space crunch, for example, having to use hallways for breakout teaching.
- There was no single outstanding solution to the problem, so each was presented with its advantages and disadvantages. It was agreed that neither the Town nor the District had capacity for further capital projects at this time, and modulars also seemed an unlikely investment.
- Interest in use of the school “campus” design (use of the Library, Chilmark Community Center, etc.), was being explored between the Preschool and the Chilmark Select Board (CSB).
- There were costs associated with all scenarios both for the School (e.g. furniture, etc. to be discussed as part of the FY24 Budget) and the Preschool (e.g. refitting spaces, regulatory requirements, etc.).
- Although the goal of universal preschool was acknowledged, after further discussion the UIRSC concluded that to some extent and at this point, this was a matter between the Town and the Preschool.

**B. Donna Lowell-Bettencourt – West Tisbury School**

**1. Wellness Policy** (See documents on file.)

There would be a presentation at the December meeting.

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED THE FIRST READING OF THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL DISTRICT WELLNESS POLICY; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION—JIM NEWMAN.*

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**2. Playground Committee—Vote for School Committee Representative to Committee**

This 'task force' with representation from parents, SAC, UIRSC and Administration was likely to meet for 3 months to discuss resurfacing the WTS playground—unfortunately nationwide problems with the surface were found not longer after installation.

- Skipper Manter would not serve unless it was an official UIRSC subcommittee with posted meetings and full transparency.

• *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO APPOINT ALEX SALOP TO THE WEST TISBURY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND TASK FORCE; JIM NEWMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 1 NAY—SKIPPER MANTER, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

**3. Donation**

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO ACCEPT WITH GREAT APPRECIATION THE DONATION OF BOOKS FOR EACH HOMEROOM IN HONOR OF NATIVE AMERICAN MONTH FROM JOCELYN COLEMAN WALTON AND LISA PIMENTEL OF THE MARTHA'S VINEYARD DIVERSITY COALITION EDUCATION COMMITTEE; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

**Finance** (Agenda Item #V)

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

There were no new issues. Variances in salaries were being reconciled with the recent union agreements. MVPS Business Administrator Mark Friedman welcomed any emailed questions.

Later in the meeting the following capital projects reports were noted.

- The WTS roof was almost complete within budget—only 7 change orders to repair a little rot.
- The last phase of the Chilmark School windows (34 of them) bid was extended until tomorrow, hopefully with work scheduled for late winter or spring 2023.

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

**B. Chilmark School Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning (HVAC) Project Budget/Financing**

• The Owners Project Manager (OPM) and Keenan & Kenny Architects continued to work on the Chilmark School Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning (HVAC) specifications, and had re-engaged TE2 Engineers (see 1/27/20 Minutes p.1-2 #IX) to flush out details and redesign elements for a more successful bid. The Task Force and professional team continued to consider how to present the bid.

- For planning purposes only, the OPM included work for the installation of the emergency generator (or possibly 2 small generators), which might not be covered by currently available funds.

- The Task Force asked the UIRSC to consider options in case the project came in slightly over-budget. All the possible resources for such a problem had process and/or timeframe complications: E & D, 3 Town Meeting votes, borrowing...

**B. Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Budget Workshop** (See documents on file.)

The two UIRSD school Administrators detailed their needs.

• Chilmark School

- Another 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade classroom and full time teacher (\$87,846 + benefits and OPEB) as well as classroom outfitting such as furniture (the UIRSD schools shared surplus items);

- An additional kindergarten (K) Education Support Professional (ESP) was already funded;

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- heating oil prices had almost doubled. The UIRSC explored fuel and power costs. The MVPS were part of the Dukes County pool that bulk purchased #2 heating oil at Boston Rack price. Other vendors were more expensive. Annual heating costs depended on weather, number of heating days, and price swings. Advice was to raise the UIRSD heating lines at least 10-20%.
- The UIRSC also asked about varying the multi-age class configuration. However enrollment proportions (e.g. 5 K students and 18 1<sup>st</sup> grade students) made this impractical and more expensive. In addition this was the purview of the SAC.
- West Tisbury School
  - WTS building enrollment (337 including Shared Services Programs paid through Central Office assessment) increased 92 students (36%) in the last 10 years, while inter-district School Choice decreased from 24 to 12. (There was a brief discussion on the definition of building enrollment. (By Skipper Manter's personal calculations, the UIRSD spent \$45,000 per student including the OPEB liability.)
  - The demographic change included higher percentages of English Language Learners (ELL), and low income/high needs families. Low income/high needs resulted in: less exposure to learning, higher anxiety, hunger, parents working 2 jobs with less time for childcare, etc.
  - The pandemic spiked chronic absenteeism to ~40% (not counting the new State definition as 20% of school days—up from 10%).
  - MCAS results showed WTS students consistently meeting and exceeding the State averages both in scores and in student growth, although teachers noted that the pandemic particularly hit reading scores. Another progress indicator was that both ELL and SpEd students were graduating out of their special services and Individual Education Plans (IEPs).
- This would be year 4 of the 5 year \$20,224 commitment to IT equipment upgrade (see Minutes: 11/15/18 p.1-2 # IV & 11/19/18 p.5 #VIII, & 11/2/21 p.1 #II). The commitment would be reviewed and updated next year.
- Only the Head Custodian was on the day shift, with 3 other custodians cleaning 3 sections during the night shift. Another day-shift custodian (\$60,424 + \$17,000 benefits & \$8,000 OPEB) was needed to care for student mishaps, as well as increased breakfast and lunch needs, and would support and free-up the Head Custodian for maintenance and projects.
  - A part-time or school-year-only position would decrease the salary but not the benefits or OPEB.
  - The custodian contract only allowed subcontracting if no candidates were found to fill the position.
- More students were involved in sports so the Sport Expense line (uniforms) was insufficient. The gap was usually filled by the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) but should be in the budget (\$1,500).
- Off-Island field trip bus costs had risen and if drivers could not be found buses had to be rented. Upper level classes were large enough to need 2 buses. (\$2,000)
- Furniture costs were increased according to trending (\$2,000).
- The thriving After-School program (see Minutes: 10/29/18 p.2, & 11/15/18 p.2 #III, & 10/18/21 p.1 #III B) generated an increase in supervision stipends (\$860). The fully implemented program was having to turn away students and parent feedback was very grateful. An expanded fun learning program was partially grant funded (\$10,000).
- Universal preschool costs were not yet known (see 8/15/22 Minutes p.3 #B4),

**Superintendent's Report**

(Agenda Item #VI)

**A. General Update – None**

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

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**C. Student Census** (See documents on file.)

The Chilmark School had jumped from 55 students to a historic high of 70. The WTS was fairly stable, showing 351 students in 2019, 341 in 2020, 352 in 2021 and 337 in 2022. Enrollment affected the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) assessments. The New England School Development Council (NESDEC) projections were usually reported in December or January.

**D. Non Union Salary Adjustments**

There were 44 of these positions across MVPS with 6 in the UIRSD. Collective bargaining units received a 2% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) and a one-year-only \$1,000 or \$1,500 payment. In recognition of the extraordinary service and in the hopes of establishing a uniform objective matrix for Administrators, Superintendent Richie Smith had researched principal and assistant principal salaries for elementary, middle and high schools across the Cape and Islands region showing a range of \$118,000 to \$160,000. He proposed:

- 3% COLA salary raise;
- \$3,000 for a 2<sup>nd</sup> Masters degree or Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies (CAGS);
- \$3,500 for substantial work towards a PHD/Doctorate,
- \$4,000 for a PHD/Doctorate.
- As applied to the UIRSD non-union personnel, the matrix resulted in the following recommendations:
  - Principal Donna Lowell-Bettencourt – 3% COLA plus \$3,500 for CAGS + degree;
  - Head of School Susan Stevens – 3% COLA, plus \$3,000 for a CAGS equivalent, plus 3 additional days to increase her contract to cover building preparation, UIRSC meetings, Cabinet retreat, staffing interviews, etc.;
  - Assistant Principal Mary Boyd – 3% COLA.
  - Technologists David Crawford & Rebecca Barca-Tinus – 3% COLA plus salary market corrections (budgeted in FY23 but not yet expended) \$10,000 for Mr. Crawford, \$5,000 for Ms. Barca-Tinus, as initiated but not consistently implemented for across all MVPS by former Supt. Matt D'Andrea;
  - Treasurer Marylee Schroeder – 3% COLA.
- The UIRSC thanked the non-union personnel for their patience in waiting until union negotiations were settled. They also commended Supt. Smith for action towards his first goal to evaluate principals.
  - Supt. Smith reviewed the start of an unsuccessful matrix by former Superintendent Jim Weiss, and noted that his own proposal had met with amendments from 3 other MVPS School Committees so that there was now less consistency than previously in both salaries and increases.
  - There was a clarification re: technologist market corrections not being implemented until the UIRSC approved the proposal.
  - There was general agreement to the 3% COLA.
  - Without being disrespectful to Supt. Smith, and in consideration of the extraordinary service during the 2 years of the pandemic an additional one-time payment of \$5,000 for principals and \$2,500 for assistant principals was suggested—similar to other MVPS employees.
  - There was disagreement among the UIRSC on whether this circumvented the budget process and on compensation for advanced degrees.
- The total exceeded the FY23 pool which assumed a 2.5% increases, so members debated additional funding resources. The union contract and other obligations would exhaust the Contingency Line, but there were more-than-adequate residuals in other lines.

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- *ROXANNE ACKERMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE NON UNION SALARY INCREASE RECOMMENDATIONS OF SUPERINTENDENT RICHIE SMITH; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 1 NAY—SKIPPER MANTER, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*
- *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE TRANSFER OF MONEYS FROM THE TEACHERS SALARY INCREMENT LINE TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE SALARY LINE; SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*
- Robert Lionette would discuss the additional one-time-payment funding with Mark Friedman.

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

**A. Selection of New UIRSC Chair**

Alex Salop was stepping down after 2 years as Chair. Other UIRSC members were new or had obligations to other school committees.

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO NOMINATE ROXANNE ACKERMAN AS CHAIR OF THE UP ISLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE STARTING IN FEBRUARY 2023; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED 4 AYES, 1 NAY—ROXANNE ACKERMAN, 0 ABSTENTIONS—ROXANNE ACKERMAN REFUSED THE NOMINATION.*

**C. Secretary of State Letter - Tabled**

- As the UIRSC had resumed in-person meetings (see 6/22/20 Minutes p.5 #VIII):
- *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO REVISIT AND RESCIND THE MOTION DESIGNATING WARRANT SIGNING AUTHORITY TO THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE CHAIR OR THEIR DESIGNEE AND TO RETURN TO REQUIRING 3 UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE SIGNATURES ON WARRANTS, PREFERABLY AT COMMITTEE MEETINGS; JIM NEWMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

**Personnel** (Agenda Item #VIII)

**A. Leave of Absence – Tabled**

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

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

- The UIRSC requested that Aquinnah meetings be reinstated and/or meetings with the Wampanoag Tribe on Indian Education Policies and Procedures.

**Adjournment**

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:19PM; JIM NEWMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

**Documents on File:**

- Agenda/Revised Agenda (2 p.) 11/21/22
- Up-Island Regional School District, 2021 Audit Exit Conference, November 21, 2022 (9 p.)
- Up-Island Regional School District Financial Statements and Required Supplementary Information, Year Ended June 30, 2021, (52 p., including covers & blanks) 9/1/22
- Up-Island Regional School District Management Letter June 30, 2021, (8 p. including covers & blanks) 9/1/22
- CliftonLarsonAllen LLP letter re: Significant Audit Findings or Issues (3 p.) 9/1/22

**continued >**

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

- Chilmark School Service Needs Proposal (3 p.) November 2022
- Stevens/Mason cover emails re: Chilmark School Space Planning Memo 11/16/22
- Chilmark School and Chilmark Preschool Space Memo (11 p.)
- Chilmark School Weekly Peek (4 p.) 11/18/22
- All Expenditure Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2021-2022 (15 p.) 11/21/22
- West Tisbury School FY 24 Budget Presentation (13 p.)
- Up Island Regional School District Wellness Policy (4 p.)
- Martha's Vineyard Public School Enrollment Census Worksheet 10/1/22
- Smith Memo re: Management and Non-Union Salary Adjustments 11/21/22
- UIRSD Student Support Services Update November 2022 (2 p.)
- Chat Messages
- Warren Doty 01:10:03: please remove screen share
- Mary Boyd 01:10:35: Thank you Warren, all set.
- Anja May 01:42:13: It's hard to hear the speakers further in the back of the room
- Mary Boyd 01:48:37: Thank you. I will try to address.

**Minutes approved 1/17/23**