

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
6:15PM, Monday, December 19, 2022
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: Katherine Barnes-Horenstein, Kevin Casey, Kim Patterson, Samantha Look Strom, Tom, Tessa Wall, Jessica Whiteley,
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: Robyn Dorie, Jackie Guzalak, Katherine Mafcher, Melissa McNickels, Joane Rice, Ellen Rossi, Marsha Shufrin, Donna Swift,
SAC: Chilmark – Co-Chair Susan Bernard, Robyn Dorie, Jackie Guzalak, Jessica Mason, Rebekah Thomson,
West Tisbury – FinCom - Greg Orcutt, Energy - Kate Warner,
Chilmark PreSchool - Anja May, Rebekah Thomson, Deb Zetterberg,
Press – Louisa Hufstader – Vineyard Gazette, Eunki Seonwoo – MV Times,
*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: November 21, 2022 - Tabled

Principals' Report (Agenda Item #VI)

A. Susan Stevens – Chilmark School (Agenda Item #III)

1. Preschool Space

- * During this discussion Roxanne Ackerman entered the meeting.
- The UIRSC raised purview issues: who authorized the lease, (see Minutes: 10/18/04 #VII A, & 5/31/05 #II), what was the UIRSC vote, status of the lease (ending June 30, 2023) and/or payments.
 - The Town of Chilmark was pursuing long-term solutions such as modulars and so was looking for 2-3 years of interim space.
 - *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED THAT AN INFORMAL TASK FORCE BE FORMED TO DISCUSS AND REPORT TO THE UIRSC, WITH THE FOLLOWING REPRESENTATION: SUPERINTENDENT, CHILMARK PRESCHOOL BOARD, CHILMARK SELECT BOARD, UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE; HEAD OF CHILMARK SCHOOL; JIM NEWMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

2. School Advisory Council (SAC) Presentation

The Chilmark School Improvement Plan (SIP) was still in progress (see 8/15/22 Minutes p.2 #5).

- Goal 1 – insure a welcoming atmosphere of belonging for the entire community, focusing on

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diversity, equity and inclusion. The School community was completing/evaluating the PollyAnna curriculum and reaching out to Island organizations for to enhance their work—minimal cost possibly for some Professional Development (PD).

- Goal 2 – deliver the best educational and socio-emotional support to students, including the additional 0.4 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Special Education (SpEd) teacher and the 0.2 guidance expansion to meet next year’s student population requirements. Progress would be monitored.
- Goal 3 – continue work on greening the community and the School: composting, Chilmark Energy Committee, bulk purchasing of environmentally friendly supplies—Parent Teachers Organization (PTO) would continue to be a funding source.
- Goal 4 – finding and re-defining space for the most effective classroom sizes and structures in relation to School growth (see 10/17/22 Minutes p.1 #III A 1), requesting a fifth classroom and teacher, considering class groupings and systematic curriculum progress so that students receive the same content if in the same grade but different classes.
- A discussion on class size and configuration touched on the following issues:
 - testimony of several experienced teachers and a parent on their preference for multi-age classes;
 - challenges of teaching a wide spread of learners in two grades, including pandemic impact delays to academic and socio-emotional learning;
 - smaller class sizes (studies recommended 18 student hard cap) allowing teachers to better address all students: struggling, SpEd, advanced;
 - proven efficacy of early intervention to prevent Individual Education Plans/SpEd (IEP/SpEd) designation;
 - higher cost if the School moved to single grade classes.

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

1. Universal Preschool (See documents on file & 12/7/22 Minutes p.1-2.)

- Principal Donna Lowell-Bettencourt reviewed her long dedication to universal preschool and the history of the movement including review of the MV Youth survey on islandwide need, outreach to the Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) Early Childhood Coordinator and private preschools, culminating in the proposed pilot program.
- A letter of concern was received from some private preschool directors which showed misinformation about the pilot. After attempting to contact all the signatories, consulting the WTS SAC, and considering the difficult Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) budget as well as pending MVPS plans such as the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) project, the pilot was reluctantly delayed. Superintendent Richie Smith stated his perspective to institute an all-MVPS public/private preschool collaborative for children 2.9–4 years, a monumental task the UIRSD push might vitalize/prioritize.

2. Update on Capital Projects

The elevator/lift was completed. There would be a report on the roof at the next meeting.

3. Generator Update (See Minutes: 9/19/22 p.2-3 #IV C, & 10/17/22 p.3-4 #4.)

Kraftpower, an off Island company, reassessed the generator. Repaired it for less than projected, and advised that it was not in need of replacement. The temporary generator was returned.

Old / New / Business (Agenda Item #VI)

D. Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) UIRSD Budget

(See documents on file & Minutes: 12/7/22 p.1-3 #II, & 12/12/22 p.2-3)

Chair Alex Salop thanked administrators for the burning the midnight oil to prepare the following two scenarios within 4 business days.

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- ~ \$21,000 in Chilmark Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning (HVAC) debt service was removed from both versions as payment would not impact the UIRSD until FY25 (see 11/21/22 Minutes p.4 #VII B).

- Version #4 – 5.57-5.6% increase over FY23

WTS Site – additional cuts from Version #3 – for a 6.42% increase over FY23

- Reduce 1 Education Support Professional (ESP) – dropping from 16 to 15 FTEs - \$35,100 plus benefits from the Districtwide site—depending on elementary grades SpEd needs and requirements;
- Completely eliminate additional custodian position.

Chilmark Site – additional cuts from Version #3 – for a 9.4% increase over FY23

- Remove all furniture increase, using WTS hand-me-downs. The basic Furniture line was minimally funded (\$3-500) but there was some confusion on line coding.
- Eliminate 0.2 FTE reading specialist increase—part of various scenarios to support population growth
- Eliminate \$10,850 Artist in Residence program retaining \$4,000 for Library Services – which should be in the Library Services line;
- Eliminate 0.2 FTE Guidance expansion.

This Version posited smaller classes allowing the above reductions and shared ESPs:

- 2 kindergarten/ 1st grade (K/1) classes of 12 students each,
- 2 2nd/3rd grade (2/3) classes of 13 and 12 students, and
- 1 4th/5th grade (4/5) class of 20 students.

- Version #4 – 4.58% increase over FY23

This Version exercise was to partner with the UIRSC in defending a budget by demonstrating how severe cuts in the face of enrollment growth would effect UIRSD education. Administrators met at length and Supt. Smith visited Chilmark School to hear staff concerns. It was not recommended by either head of school or by Supt. Smith.

WTS Site – additional cuts from Version #3 - for a 5.23% increase over FY23

- \$79,750 – Eliminate 1 elementary grade teacher—plus benefits in the Districtwide site. After extensive research at least 28 WTS incoming K students were projected (plus unknown summer enrollment) requiring 2 sections.
- Reduce 1 ESP – \$35,100—plus benefits in the Districtwide site;
- Completely eliminate additional custodian position—plus benefits in the Districtwide site.

Chilmark Site – additional cuts from Version #3 – for a 7.62% increase over FY23

- \$105,000 – Eliminate the second 2/3 teacher/classroom—plus benefits in the Districtwide site—resulting in a 25 student class. Chilmark wished to retain multi-age classes . Developmental literacy was critical in the early years. (A WTS 1/2 multi-age class experiment was unsuccessful—see 6/18/12 Minutes p.4 #6A.);
- Remove total furniture increase, using WTS hand-me-downs.
- Retain the 0.2 FTE Guidance expansion—in consideration of the larger classes.
- Of the 14 Chilmark School Choice students only 3 were actual inter-district choices—mostly from the preschool, the remainder having lived in Chilmark and moved, or were living with divorced/separated parents, or were siblings of students, or staff children. The actual School Choice proportions were the same in both schools. The UIRSC voted to support School Choice every year and this discussion did not inform the FY24 budget.

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- Facilities were needed for every student on the Island. Chilmark School growth had already disenfranchised the Chilmark Preschool.
 - Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt advocated strongly that the UIRSC not vote for the 4.58%.
 - There was a suggestion to consider the 5.57% Version (Chilmark School 5 classroom model), with an offset from Excess & Deficiency (E & D) to the Contingency Line, and to:
 - reinstate the one-time Chilmark furniture expense as well as the WTS Furniture line;
 - increase the Contingency line by 3 ESP positions so Administrators could draw on it if additional support was necessary (\$71,000 each or \$213,000 total).
 - Issues were:
 - E & D projections of ~ \$770,000;
 - use of FY23 Contingency funds for the new union contracts one-time payments (see below: #IV C);
 - objections to “shell-game” operating budget/gross spending versus assessed spending (5.11%);
 - E & D offset in Contingency budgeting for possible future needs without adding to the tax burden;
 - furniture needs and commitment (see 7/16/18 Minutes p.2) versus furniture in storage;
 - taxpayer priority and UIRSC obligation to best educate students versus financial cuts;
 - objections that the Contingency Line was not properly assessed according to the Regional Agreement;
 - a friendly amendment to restore the 0.2 FTE Chilmark reading specialist/early intervention expansion.
 - **ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO SUPPORT THE 5.61% OPERATING BUDGET PROPOSAL (I.E THE 5.57% PROPOSAL PLUS \$4,000 FOR CHILMARK LIBRARY SERVICES) WITH THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONS:**
 - **RESTORATION OF 0.2 FULL TIME EQUIVALENT EXPANSION OF THE CHILMARK READING TEACHER SPECIALIST FROM 0.8 FTE TO 1.0 FTE;**
 - **INCREASE TO THE CONTINGENCY LINE BY EXCESS & DEFICIENCY OFFSET TO FUND THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IF FOUND NECESSARY/CALLED FOR:**
 - \$5,000 FOR CHILMARK SCHOOL FURNITURE,
 - \$2,000 FOR WEST TISBURY SCHOOL FURNITURE,
 - \$213,000 FOR THREE EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS;
- ROXANNE ACKERMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 1 NAY, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—NAY, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.** Mr. Manter disagreed with the budget process.
- The UIRSC requested a discussion on gross spending versus assessed budgets. The above motion resulted in an operating budget increase of 7.33% assessed at 5.29%.

Finance (Agenda Item #IV)

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

B. Chilmark Window Project

The Phase 3 Request For Proposal (RFP) attracted 2 bidders. The specifications were refined to insure better construction and the bids were carefully reviewed. This local firm worked on Phase 1 but not Phase 2. The \$190,000 appropriation included Owners Project Manager (OPM) costs and contingencies however administration was hopeful there would be a small residual.

- **ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE SUPERINTENDENT TO EXECUTE AND SIGN THE CONTRACT FOR PHASE 3 OF THE CHILMARK SCHOOL WINDOW REPLACEMENT WITH BLACKPOINT BUILDERS FOR UP TO \$145,000; SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.**

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C. Use of Contingency Fund for Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) One-Time Payments – Vote (See documents on file.)

The Agreement included one-time payments in consideration of the extra work during the pandemic. An alternative suggestion to fund with end-of-year residuals and E & D if needed, was countered by:

- above proposals that committed about half of E & D to the FY24 budget;
- desire to complete the transaction.

In response to Mr. Manter's usual objection to Contingency line assessment issues, MVPS Business Manager Mark Friedman reported this distribution was almost exactly in line with the proper assessment. Mr. Manter did not consider this sufficient.

• *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE WITHDRAWAL OF \$94,000 FROM THE CONTINGENCY LINE TO COVER THE ONE-TIME-ONLY PAYMENTS PER THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS; JIM NEWMAN SECONDED: MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 1 NAY, 0 ABSTENTIONS: JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—NAY, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

Superintendent's Report (Agenda Item #V)

A. General Update – See above.

B. Student Support Services Update – Nothing to report.

Old / New / Business (Agenda Item #VI)

A. Environmental School Building Task Force (ESBTF) and Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Funding

B. Discussion of Potential Position to Support ESBTF

The OPM estimated the environmental work and school expansion/improvement was a 3-5 year project with a feasibility study estimate of \$1-1,500,000. A warrant article to cover OPM or a support position might gage taxpayer appetite for the project but might also have unpredictable consequences. There was disagreement on separating environmental from expansion/improvement work.

C. Chilmark Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning (HVAC)

Architect/OPM meetings continued fine tuning the specifications, verifying information, and suggesting better crafting of the RFP. Timing was hard to predict. UIRSC options for any additional costs were: use of E & D, amending the budget or borrowing (see 11/21/22 Minutes p.4 #VII B).

Personnel (Agenda Item #VII)

A. Leaves of Absence (See documents on file & 6/21/22 Minutes p.4 #VII A.)

Ms. Delasin would fill in for the reading specialist out on maternity leave.

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FOR WEST TISBURY SCHOOL EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL CHARLOTTE DELASIN; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

Meetings/Events

• **UIRSC Public Hearing - 5:00PM, Thursday, December 22, 2022 – WTS**

Adjournment

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:40PM; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

continued >

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Documents on File:

- Agenda 12/19/22
- Savard/Marashlian/Dillon/May letter To the Up Island Regional School District (3 p.) 12/16/22
- Friedman cover email re: FY24 UIRSD Versions #4A (5.57% Increase) and #4B (4.58% Increase) 12/17/22
- UIRSD FY24 Budget Version #4 12/19/22, Proposed Changes from FY23 Budget (3 p.)
- Up-Island Regional School District FY24 General Fund Budget – Version #4, 12-19-2022 (12 p.)
- UIRSD FY2024 Assessment – V#4 12/19/2022
- UIRSD FY24 Budget Version #4 12/19/22, Proposed Changes from FY23 Budget (3 p.)
- Up-Island Regional School District FY24 General Fund Budget – Version #4, 12-19-2022 (12 p.)
- UIRSD FY2024 Assessment – V#4 12/19/2022
- All Expenditure Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2021-2022 (15 p.) 12/18/22
- Revenue Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2021- 2022 12/18/22
- UIRSD One Time FY24 Payments per Collective Bargained Agreements December 2022,
- Massachusetts School Building Authority Module 3 Feasibility Study, January 2015 (37 p.)
- Delasin email re: LOA 12/14/22

Minutes approved as amended 1/17/23