

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD  
5:30PM, Thursday, March 20, 2023  
West Tisbury School and  
by Zoom Cloud Conference**

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

Others: Recorder: Marni Lipke

Supt's Shared Services Office: Richie Smith, Mark Friedman,

Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Susan Stevens,

Staff – David Crawford

Press – Michelle Vivian-Jemison – MVTV, 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.

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

**C. School Choice Vote** (See documents on file.)

The Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) were unique in their close proximity, allowing families to participate in School Choice to maximize what's best for their children. Edgartown and Tisbury School Districts voted to continue and Oak Bluffs would vote later today. School Choice deadlines were as follows: advertisement – April 1<sup>st</sup>, applications – June 15<sup>th</sup>, acceptance announcement July 1<sup>st</sup>.

• ROXANNE ACKERMAN MOVED TO CONTINUE TO PARTICIPATE IN SCHOOL CHOICE FOR THE 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR; JIM NEWMAN SECONDED; MOTION WITHDRAWN. Two UIRSC members had concerns about continuing this year.

- The UIRSC had not received accurate School Choice data for some years. More students “choiced” into the UIRSC than into all other Island School Districts put together.

- UIRSC burdens went beyond the \$5,000 per student tuition it received. UIRSC per student cost was \$40-45,000.

- The UIRSC was about to ask for capital improvements on its buildings while hosting 50+ out of district students.

- There was undue pressure to ask for a vote at this meeting.

The ensuing discussion covered many issues.

- Principals had discretion over acceptance of school choice students on a per class basis, taking into account class configuration and student designation as well as class size. Principal Donna Lowell-Bettencourt had been increasingly limited in accepting students over the last few years:

° only 9 were accepted out of the 36 (now mostly in 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grades) Tisbury School students that applied during the Tisbury School facility emergency;

° lower grades had an 18 student cut-off in consideration of Chilmark students move;

° in some cases children of staff had been turned away;

° families complained that children were turned down despite small class sizes.

- School Choice policy gave preference to siblings of those already in the School.

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- Acceptance of staff children was a practice rather than a policy. Since all Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) started and ended at the same time, having a child in the same school was sometimes an important staff convenience. Administrators worked out a clear protocol for the situation. Technologist David Crawford attested to the benefits of the practice both for himself and for his children.
- Continuing School Choice did not require the UIRSD to accept students.
- (The Charter School was an application process rather than a School Choice process.)
- Principals recommended the UIRSC vote to continue the policy.
  - ° School Choice was generally helpful and beneficial for those choosing in and out of the District, particularly when a student was not fitting into a school culture. Education was about what was best for the student.
  - ° There were no complaints from families about school choice students.
  - ° Families sometimes moved, so many School Choice students were UIRSD residents finishing out their elementary education.
- School Choice decisions for slots were settled by lottery.
- As to cost, everything had a cost. Regionalizing the entire MVPS was a possible solution, although deciding on assessment formulas was a large stumbling block.
- *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO AUTHORIZE SCHOOL CHOICE TO BE ADVERTISED FOR THE 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR BUT THAT NO STUDENTS BE ACCEPTED UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE SCHOOL CHOICE POLICY HAD BEEN RECONSIDERED; SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION—ROXANNE ACKERMAN.*
- The principals strongly advised the subject be settled as soon as possible for the sake of all UIRSD and MVPS families and schools. The topic would be on the April agenda.
  - A. General Update** – Tabled
  - B. Student Support Update** – Tabled

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

**A. Including But Not Limited to: February 21, 2023 and March 9, 2023**

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 21, 2023 MINUTES; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*
- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MARCH 9, 2023 MINUTES; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

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

**A. Susan Stevens – Chilmark School**

**1. Yoga Donation**

- *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO ACCEPT WITH APPRECIATION A \$5,250 SOUND FOUNDATION DONATION TO THE CHILMARK SCHOOL; SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

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

**1. Out of State Travel – Conference(s)**

This company owned Munis, Infinite Systems, Budget Sense, etc., incredibly large complex systems. Trainings were highly profitable in efficiencies and labor savings. Returning staff shared their expertise.

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE OUT OF STATE TRAVEL FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL JESSICA ESTRELLA TO ATTEND TYLER CONNECT INFINITE SYSTEMS TRAININGS IN PLANO, TEXAS FROM MAY 7-10, 2023; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

Mr. Crawford reported on the collaboration with Mr. Majkowski, and the UIRSC commended the benefits and vital importance of professional development (PD) for teachers, students and schools, from inspiration, sharing skills, networking to professional recognition.

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE OUT OF STATE TRAVEL FOR TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATOR DAVID CRAWFORD, TECHNOLOGY TEACHER JEFF MAJKOWSKI, AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHER LUCY LEOPOLD TO ATTEND THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION (ISTE) CONFERENCE IN PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, JUNE 24-28, 2023; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

**Finance** (Agenda Item #V)

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

- There were no great concerns about the budget, except for a 10% rise in property insurance. As Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) entered its fourth quarter MVPS Business Administrator Mark Friedman would meet with the UIRSD principals for an in-depth review.

- Revenues were as expected except Impact Aid had not yet been received.

• Later in the meeting, Mr. Friedman reported this was an Impact Aid audit year. The Policies and Procedures (see 2/21/23 Minutes p.2 #C) would be sent out again for review. The UIRSC discussed the Policy requirement to meet with the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head-Aquinnah and persistent UIRSC attempts to contact and set up meetings. The subject would be on the April Agenda.

**B. Chilmark School Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning (HVAC)/Inter-Municipal Agreement (IMA)** (See Minutes: 3/9/23, & 3/13/23 p.3-4 #IV & V.) (Agenda IV)

After much discussion the Chilmark Select Board voted to move forward with the project without the generator. Chilmark would examine its debt situation, but there was as yet no response on next steps. West Tisbury and Aquinnah had already be asked to amend the IMA.

- All 3 Towns had been notified of the Excess and Deficiency (E & D) vote to expend \$120,400 on the Chilmark HVAC and \$194,600 on the WTS HVAC/Electrical repairs.

- Later in the meeting Robert Lionette requested an in-depth discussion to establish a policy on use of E & D. It was agreed to put it on the April Agenda.

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**C. Rescind Warrant Article Request—West Tisbury School (WTS) HVAC and Electrical**

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO RESCIND THE TOWN MEETING ARTICLES ON THE WEST TISBURY SCHOOL HEATING/VENTILATION/AIR CONDITIONING REPAIRS; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

• In a related matter, there was some concern about proceeding with the WTS Space Needs Study this year given various asks and uncertainties:

- Chilmark HVAC cost and Chilmark debt/levy limit;
- Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) \$2,000,000 Feasibility Study article,
- West Tisbury Capital Improvement Plan Committee's request for a delay;
- unknown Shared Services/Project Headway space needs.

• The extended timeline and helpfulness of the MVRHS space study was noted. The article was for raise and appropriate, not to borrow.

• The UIRSC scheduled another meeting to discuss and vote on the subject (see below: Meetings/Events.)

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

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

Meetings/Events

- **UIRSC – 5:30PM, Monday, March 27, 2023 – WTS/Zoom**
- **UIRSC – 5:30PM, Thursday, April 13, 2023 – TBD**

**Adjournment** (Agenda Item #VIII)

• *ROXANNE ACKERMAN MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 6:40PM; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

**Documents on File:**

- Agenda 3/20/23
- All Expenditure Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2022-2023 (15 p.) 3/19/23
- Revenue Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2022- 2023 3/19/23
- Combined Up-Island Pupil Enrollment Census – October 1, 2023 (2 p.)
- WTS Inter-District School Choice and Total Enrollment

**Minutes approved as amended 4/13/23**