

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD  
6:00PM, Monday, September 18, 2023  
West Tisbury School and By Zoom Cloud Conference**

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Present: Chair – Jim Newman, Roxanne Ackerman\*, Robert Lionette,  
Skipper Manter, Alex Salop,  
Others: CLA – Chris Rogers, Recorder – Marni Lipke,  
CHA/Daedalus – Michael Owen,  
Supt.'s Shared Services Office: Richard Smith, John Stevens,  
Mark Friedman, Hope MacLeod,  
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Mary Boyd, Susan Stevens,  
Chilmark SAC – Jessica Mason, Jessica Seeman,  
IGI: Emily Armstrong, Grace Turnbull,  
Press – Jenna Bernstein – MV Times, Julie Soikkeli - MVTV,  
Louisa Hufstader – Vineyard Gazette,  
\*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: August 22, 2023**

• *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 22, 2023 MINUTES; ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE.*

**Finance** (Agenda item #IV)

**A. Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) Audit Presentation** (See documents on file.)

- \* During this discussion Roxanne Ackerman entered the meeting at 6:08PM.
- The terms of engagement were to advise whether UIRSD financial statements were in accordance with United States Generally Accepted Accounting Principals (US GAAP), to report on internal controls compliance with laws, regulations, contracts and grants, and to provide a management letter. The Audit looked slightly different due to regulation changes.
- The UIRSD received an unmodified opinion which was the best available, with no findings or material weaknesses.
- There were 3 different Financial Statements:  
Governmental Activities – full accrual, assets, liabilities, debt, etc.  
Fund – modified accrual, cash basis with payables;  
Budgetary – similar to Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) Business Manager reports.
- The net position was negative \$7,000,000 as follows:  
- \$942,000 net investment in capital assets,

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- \$492,000 restricted assets such as school choice and food service funds which can only be spent on specific activities, and
- (\$8,400,000) unrestricted liabilities (Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB) & Pension)—consistent with other governmental entities.
- The General Fund total balance was \$1,200,000:
  - \$341,000 committed/voted to fund a portion of the FY23 Budget,
  - \$92,000 assigned or encumbered;
  - \$755,000 unassigned.
- The Unrestricted Liabilities were highly volatile, moving substantially up or down depending on market and actuarial factors: discount rates, healthcare insurance costs, mortality tables, etc.
  - The net OPEB liability for FY22 was \$7,400,000 or 38% funded, which was about half of FY18's \$13,100,000 mostly due to the reduced discount rate. Funding of the Dukes County OPEB Trust was having a positive effect on UIRSD financial liabilities.
  - Similarly the discount rate helped reduce the UIRSD Pension liability to \$314,000 or 96.41% funded, so that a further 1% rate increase could leave the Fund with a \$500,000 asset.
  - Although noting the volatility, Chris Rogers of CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA) felt the annual \$50,000 increase to the Dukes County OPEB contribution had a minimal impact. Furthermore if the UIRSD had reached its Actuarially Determined Employer Contribution (ADEC) it was ahead of most governments. Skipper Manter emphasized it was not only each year's \$50,000 but the compounding effect and referred to the agreement with the FinComs (see Minutes: 11/14/22 p.1-2, & 12/7/22 p.1-2, & 12/12/22 p.2). Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) Business Manager Mark Friedman reported:
    - the FY23 UIRSD actuarially determined ADEC was \$848,298,
    - the FY24 UIRSD budget included a \$658,286 contribution to the Dukes County OPEB Trust,
    - as well as \$368,820 in current pay-as-you-go (pay-go) spending,
    - for a total contribution of \$1,027,118, well over the ADEC.

There were 2 Management Letter comments.

- A new accounting standard in force for FY23 required identification and evaluation of any subscription based Information Technology (IT) arrangements/agreements/leases with annual or monthly payments, to determine if they were assets. Identification would be substantial work for MVPS financial staff.
  - The UIRSD asked about software costs/leases as operational (not asset) expenses. The new standard counted a one-year-or-more right-to-use service as an asset and corresponding liability.
- The IT vulnerability comment was a repeat of many years standing (see Minutes (all p.2) 4/6/15, & 3/7/16, & 4/3/17, & 5/17/18, & 7/1/19, & 7/20/20, & 2/22/22) It included: risk assessment, end-of-life operating systems, disaster recovery planning, vendor management policies, laptop user access, etc. CLA was struggling to connect its own IT specialists to the right UIRSD/MVPS staff resulting in delayed or missing audit information. Chris Rogers and Mark Friedman would meet to correct the situation.

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- Last year's audit was delayed by MVPS technologists springtime commitments: unanticipated budget problems and MCAS testing. It was hoped that the FY23 Audit would be better timed. The comment should be remediated when MVPS technologists, who had been working hard to keep tight security, had time to document their actions.

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

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

**1. Principal's Report**

Despite the hot, humid (climate change) weather, opening day was a happy time for students and staff was amazing, engaged and active. The Back to School Barbecue was very well attended and Curriculum Nights would be scattered through the next couple weeks for families to see classrooms and instruction. It was great to see parents back in the School after the challenges of the COVID pandemic.

**3. Island Grown Schools (IGS)** (See documents on file.)

IGS Director Emily Armstrong, and IGS UIRSD teacher Grace Turnbull, presented IGS 2022-23 School and Summer School Year achievements: growing, cooking and tasting food, along with farm field trips and school garden maintenance/construction: for WTS; 362 lessons and almost 5,000 engagements with individual students, and for Chilmark School: 117 lessons and almost 2,400 engagements. A slide show highlighted Kindergarten (K) enjoying the watermelon they planted, indoor mushroom cultivation, fiber hats and art work, partnering with Beetlebung Farm, gleaning potatoes and cooking ginger carrot soup for the lunch program as well as for Island Elderly and the Food Pantry. Activities, collaboration and problem solving were coordinated with the curriculum. IGS and UIRSC spoke of the honor of giving and having the service.

- IGS fundraised half the program cost and asked MVPS to fund the remaining 50%. UIRSD program cost was \$51,980, funded in FY24 Budget at \$20,704, just short of the \$25,990 goal.

**2. Kitchen Update**

The fire suppression system passed and the project was waiting on the Town Electrical and Building inspections before being fully operational. The food trailer (which processed and transported harvested/gleaned food for the deep freeze) was on hold until the kitchen was finished. The UIRSC was invited to tour the newly refurbished kitchen: dishwasher, freezer, refrigerator, stove, oven, etc. Costs were expected to be covered within Revolving Lunch funding—although any overage (delay, installation, Owners Project Manager (OPM), etc.) would be have to be covered by UIRSC vote.

- An electrical study showed sufficient power from the road conduit to the WTS. However, due to the sprawling nature of building add-ons, some locations didn't have sufficient access. Therefore the task was to get power around the School from its source to where it was needed. Money was in the FY24 budget but research was needed to determine to work parameters/costs.

**B. Susan Stevens – Chilmark School**

- Due to construction the School had a rough start with teachers access to classrooms on September 4<sup>th</sup> and opening day September 5<sup>th</sup>.

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- Michael Owen of OPM CHA reported that the heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC) Project had been accelerated with the goal of total completion in December 2023 or February 2024. The original end-of-summer 2024 timeline accounted for logistical issues and national supply chain delays in electrical switch gear. However the Project had a successful summer:
  - completely insulating the roof, demolishing old equipment and placing the new equipment in the attic, fabricating and hanging all classroom ductwork and shrouding it with the necessary framing and drywall; pre-school and 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms were totally finished and the remaining rooms should be completed by the beginning of October.
  - The contractor, Systems Electrical, was advocating the project and closely monitoring the switch gear manufacturer so the gear was anticipated in November 2023. The Contractor was currently working to complete all wiring in the hopes of temporarily powering up. If the gear was delayed the backup oil burner system was in place and the School would have to live with a challenged HVAC system for one more year.
- The accelerated timeline impacted the 2023-24 school year. Chilmark Select Board (CSB) Chair Bill Rossi negotiated with the Chilmark Community Center (CCC) for school space. Carroll's would move furniture on Saturdays and classrooms would be set up in the CCC to mimic school rooms. The two K/1<sup>st</sup> Grade classes would move in for 2 weeks/8 days (1 Professional Development (PD) day and 1 vacation day). Movers would then switch out the rooms for the two 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes for 2 weeks/7 days (3 field trips). Asst. Superintendent John Stevens would be in Chilmark everyday attending to details and supporting the shift to insure minimal disruption to learning.

**1. Possible Warrant Articles**

Head of School Susan Stevens outlined some upcoming issues.

- Some copper gutters were misshapen or badly angled. Estimates included less expensive materials such as lead-coated copper or aluminum. The UIRSC expressed concern with the coming winter but it was felt damage could be forestalled or other alternatives explored.
- The top of bell tower was rotted and needed to be replaced and re-painted. No estimates were available because tower height made for difficult access.
- Michael Owens was pricing out front door replacements with a locked system hardware for buzz-in admittance—as recommended by Synergy Solutions. Fobs were not included.
- The bid for the 4 exterior doors came in at a higher price by \$7,898.43 than the estimated \$50,662. This included the doors and the security hardware and installation. Chilmark School share of the standard contingency was ~ \$17,600. There were questions on the price and the contingency formula/accounting.
- *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO ALLOCATE UP TO \$7,890 FROM THE CHILMARK SHARE OF THE REGIONAL UP ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT CONTINGENCY FUND; JIM NEWMAN SECONDED: MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 1 NAY, 0 ABSTENTIONS: JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—NAY.*

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**Superintendent's Report**

(Agenda Item #V)

**A. General Update**

- Superintendent Richard Smith noted that construction/renovation projects would be prevalent in the MVPS for the next few years. He extended his appreciation to administrators, principals, teachers, staff and school committees for their constant adjustment and dedication to minimize the impact on students.
- He also recognized UIRSC members for participating in subcommittees in addition to their time on their local the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHSC), and All Island School Committees (AISC) time: Alex Salop on Personnel, Robert Lionette and Jim Newman on Negotiations, Skipper Manter on Sick Bank, Roxanne Ackerman on Calendar and as MVPS representative to the Cape Cod Collaborative.
- MVPS received embargoed MCAS results some time ago. They would be officially released tomorrow, September 19<sup>th</sup>; phone calls and discussions were welcome.

**B. Student Support Services Update**

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Tiered Focus Monitoring Report cited 27 items: 10 on Special Education (SpEd) which had been rectified, and 17 on civil rights, of which 11 had been met. The remaining 6 were partially implemented:

- the 3 policy amendments (see below),
- a MVRHS letter, and
- required training and toolkits for leadership.

Administration was happy with the designation/response. Supt. Smith and the UIRSC thanked Student Support Director Hope MacLeod for shepherding the MVPS through the audit/corrective action/self evaluation every 3 years, including this year's complex Tiered Focus Monitoring focus. The MVPS was also making good progress on cultural responsiveness.

- The start-of-school-year Student Support snapshot would be distributed for October discussion.

**Policy Readings – 1<sup>st</sup> Reading** (See documents on file.) (Agenda Item #VII)

These policy amendments (new finding updates and procedures) were triggered by the audit and not be any incident. Robert Lionette noted that when the AISC voted down \$27,000 for policy review it failed to give staff what it needed. \$10,000 in the FY24 Budget hired Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) to review MVPS policies for redundancies, omissions, appropriateness, etc. Results were expected around the end of the year.

- The UIRSC asked that the changes from the old policies be highlighted.
- The. Local school committees could customize the policies as long as the heart of the DESE approved language was retained.

**A. Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) Proposed Bullying Policy**

*• ALEX SALOP MOVED THE FIRST READING OF THE MARTHA'S VINEYARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS – UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BULLYING POLICY PROPOSED AMENDMENT; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS; JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE.*

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**C. MVPS Student Conduct and Discipline**

• *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED THE FIRST READING OF THE MARTHA'S VINEYARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS – UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE POLICY PROPOSED AMENDMENT; ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS; JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANter—AYE.*

**B. Physical Restraint Policy and Procedure pursuant to 603 CMR 46.00**

• *ALEX SALOP MOVED THE FIRST READING OF THE PHYSICAL RESTRAINT POLICY AND PROCEDURE PURSUANT TO 603 CMR 46.00 PROPOSED AMENDMENT; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANter—AYE.*

**Personnel** (Agenda Item #VI)

**A. Leaves of Absence**

Each year the state determined how much time a retiree could work, consequently:

• *ALEX SALOP MOVED TO APPROVE THE 0.8 FULL TIME EQUIVALENT 2023-24 SCHOOL YEAR LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FOR WEST TISBURY SCHOOL MUSIC TEACHER MARY ALICE MCCANN; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANter—AYE.* Staff was shifted to fill the position.

**B. Resignation** (See documents on file.)

The Chilmark School SpEd and Reading Specialist teachers took jobs at other MVPS. The union contract designated no resignations so close to the beginning and end of the school years. After meetings with the union, it was decided to allow the teacher to start the school year in their new position. This has been an issue for the Chilmark and Edgartown Schools.

• *ALEX SALOP MOVED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE RESIGNATION OF CHILMARK SCHOOL READING SPECIALIST JESSICA WHITELEY; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 1 NAY, 0 ABSTENTIONS: JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—NAY, ALEX SALOP—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANter—AYE.* A replacement had not been found. There were issues with the process as well as the lack of a reading teacher as unfair to the students.

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

**Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair** – None (Agenda Item #VIII)

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**Adjournment**

- *ALEX SALOP MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 7:36PM; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE.*

**Meetings/Events**

- **UIRSC Meeting – TBD - 6:30PM, Monday, October 16, 2023 – WTS/Zoom**

**Documents on File:**

- Agenda/Revised Agenda (2 p.) 9/18/23
- Up-Island Regional School District, Fiscal Year 2022 Audit Exit Conference, September 18, 2022 (9 p.)
- Independent Auditors' Report of Internal Control over Financial Reporting and on Compliance and other Matters Based on an Audit of Financial Statement Performed in Accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* (2 p.) 9/1/23
- Up-Island Regional School District Financial Statements and Required Supplementary Information, Year Ended June 30, 2022, (56 p. including covers & blanks) 9/1/23
- Up-Island Regional School District Management Letter June 30, 2022, (13 p., including covers & blanks) 9/1/23
- Island Grown Schools/Island Grown Martha's Vineyard (19 p.)
- Up-Island Regional Special Education – Snapshot SY 2022-23 (2 p.)
- MVPS Proposed Bullying Policy
- Martha's Vineyard Public Schools Student Conduct and Discipline (7 p.)
- Martha's Vineyard Public Schools Physical Restraint Policies and Procedures pursuant to 603 CMR 46.00 (7 p.)
- Whitely email re: Resignation Letter 8/19/23
- McCann letter re: Leave of Absence 6/30/23
- Chat:
  - Mary Boyd to Everyone (Sep 18, 2023, 6:03 PM) Jessica, Can you let me know your role and last name?
  - mvtv to Everyone (Sep 18, 2023, 6:03 PM) - MVTV Programming Coordinator named Julie Soikkeli
  - Jessica - is Hi, I am Jessica Mason, Chilmark School SAC Co-Chair and parent
  - M. Lipke to Everyone (Sep 18, 2023, 6:42 PM) email is marnivh@vineyard.net please send IGI presentation. Thanks

**Minutes approved 10/16/23**