

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
5:00PM, Monday, October 16, 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: Recorder – Marni Lipke,
Supt.'s Shared Services Office: Richard Smith, Mark Friedman,
Hope MacLeod,
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Mary Boyd, Susan Stevens,
Staff: Susan Conlan, Mary Kuh-Ambulos, Jeffrey Majkowski,
Donna Swift, Rebekah Thomson, Bea Whiting,
Chilmark SAC – Nelia Decker, Jessica Mason, Jessica Seeman,
Towns: WT FinCom – Greg Orcutt,
Press – Eunki Seonwoo – MV Times,
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: July 12, 2023 and September 18, 2023

- *ALEX SALOP MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF*
- *JULY 12, 2023 AND*
- *SEPTEMBER 18, 2023;*
- SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION—*
- ROBERT LIONETTE.*

Principals' Report (Agenda Item #III)

A. Susan Stevens – Chilmark School

- The UIRSC celebrated the Strings Program.
 - 1. Possible Future Warrant Articles**
 - 2. 5 Year Look Forward for Building Needs**

Head of School Susan Stevens announced her retirement at the end of the 2023-24 School Year. In consideration of this she was drafting a 5 year look back at capital/maintenance/repair costs as well as future building needs which would include:

- re-shingling courtyard walls (the shingles were damp from concrete wicking);
- front door locks with buzz-in capability (involving electrical work);

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- gutter repair, estimate range \$6,200 (see documents on file) to \$26,000.
- Ms. Stevens would send out the 5 year look-back.
- The UIRSC discussed recent Martha's Vineyard Regional High School District (MVRHSD) legal opinion on whether capital projects could be funded by warrant articles:
 - whether the MVRHSC could/would release the legal opinion to the public;
 - how it impacted the UIRSD;
 - solution to prioritize, itemize and group capital projects for borrowing—payments in UIRSD budget (see Minutes: 12/14/15 p. 2-3 #III, & 3/21/16 p.2) and noting increased interest rates.
- IT WAS THE CONSENSUS OF THE UIRSC TO REQUEST COUNSEL ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUNDING PROTOCOL FOR THE UIRSD.
- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO RELEASE THIS LEGAL DOCUMENT FROM COUNSEL AS SOON AS THE UIRSC RECEIVED IT; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

3. Update on Building Project

At the end of the meeting, Ms. Stevens reported that 3 of 7 classrooms were finished. Two classes remained in the Chilmark Community Center (see 9/18/23 Minutes p.3-4 #III B) and the others shifted from room to room. The switch gear manufacturer reported the Chilmark unit was in production for November delivery—new conduit installation during Thanksgiving break. The Project Team hoped for January/February completion/run thru/systems balance.

MCAS Report (See documents on file.)

- Only cohorts of 10 or more students were reported, which made it difficult for small schools. Ms. Stevens outlined the School standing:
 - 3rd Grade – 8 students: English Language Arts (E/LA) - 6 met, 1 partially met, 1 exceeded; and Math - 5 met, 2 partially met, 1 exceeded;
 - 4th Grade – 12 students: E/LA – 6 met, 3 partially met, 2 exceeded, 1 not met; and Math – 3 met, 6 partially met, 2 exceeded, 1 not met—this student qualified for alternate testing but chose to try mainstream.
 - Overall the School made moderate progress towards its targets and did not need intervention. Absenteeism improved 5.6% with 100% test participation. E/LA exceeded State and District averages; Math exceeded State and matched District average; Science exceeded State average.
- Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Edwin analytic tool allowed Superintendent Richie Smith, UIRSD Administrators and teachers to view specific results for patterns to inform lesson planning. The UIRSC discussed:
 - the “high stakes” nature of the test (especially the gateway 10th grade required for graduation);
 - press and community reactions and assumptions;
 - whether State averaging promoted satisfaction with mediocrity,
 - usefulness as an instruction planning tool for further improvement;
 - UIRSD in an advantageous position to move forward;
 - mCLASS literacy intervention that included forms on how parents could help reinforce lessons.

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

2. Student Spotlight (See documents on file.)

WTS Technology Teacher Jeff Majkowski prided himself in making a classroom where students would want to be. The curriculum conformed to many instructional standards:

- digital safety and citizenship, email etiquette, cyber-security;
 - typing, Google systems, coding, balance, website design, photo-shopping;
 - Artificial Intelligence (AI) and human relations;
 - 3D printing (students' favorite—fishing lures, baggage tags, doodle pens, etc.);
 - robotics (Matilda Robot Wars), drone practice (partnering with Martha's Vineyard Airport);
- He was looking forward to coordinating with MVRHS teachers and he thanked everyone for the chance to present.

1. Good News Phone Calls

Principal Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Assistant Principal Mary Boyd and classroom teachers teamed up to implement “Good News Phone Call Awards,” nominating students to come down to the Administration offices and call their parents about an important achievement, some academic others socio-emotional, sports, etc.: determination in Math, being responsible for and completing work, setting a considerate and kind tone, being an ambassador to a new student; showing leadership in a class or on the soccer field, etc. The program got great feedback and joy from families, students and faculty. Other schools practiced commendation letters for teachers.

3. MCAS and Assessments (See documents on file.)

- WTS ACCESS test results for English Language Learners (ELL) in 4 categories (oral, literacy, comprehension, overall—certain score required to exit) showed 79% developing and expanding language, good results for students averaging 3.1 yrs in Massachusetts schools. ELL student MCAS scores did not count their first year, and after were reported as a subgroup. Groups were: all students, lowest performers, high needs, low income, ELL, Hispanic/Latino, and white).
- WTS MCAS results were reviewed:
 - Substantial progress was seen with all students and lowest performers at: 2 out of 4 points in E/LA, 3 out of 4 points for all and 4 out of 4 for lowest performers in Math, and 3 out of 4 for both groups in science;
 - Strong growth percentile in E/LA and Math was seen with 3 out of 4 for both all and lowest performing students;
 - chronic absenteeism (a national problem) also earned 4 of 4 points in both groups.
- Staff would only be satisfied when all students achieved ‘met or exceeded’. Noted issues were:
 - The focus on Math for pandemic recovery resulted in all subgroups achieving high scores.
 - Written performance on tests was often not as good as it was in the classroom.
 - Lowest performing students faced many obstacles, frustration, disenfranchisement, chronically underperforming minorities, etc.
 - The UIRSC supported MCAS progress by such things as accepting grant funded positions and building budgets to expand co-teaching.

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- The Cabinet and Central Office used the results to share strengths and improve Islandwide continuity of curricula for entry into the MVRHS.

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

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) funded an inspection and the Playground Committee, (see 11/21/22 Minutes p.4 #2) submitted a placeholder article and recommended a Community Preservation Act Committee (CPA/CPC) application. Thanks went to the Committee for helping navigate the process. The new surface would require substantial maintenance as to depth, milling, rock clearing, etc.

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE FIELD FUND TO WRITE A LETTER OF APPLICATION TO THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE FOR FUNDING TO REMOVE AND DISPOSE THE EXISTING PLAYGROUND POURED-IN-PLACE RUBBER SURFACE AND TO INSTALL A WOOD MULCH SURFACE ACCORDING TO CODE; ROXANNE ACKERMAN AND ALEX SALOP SECONDED: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

Superintendent's Report (Agenda Item #V)

A. Superintendent's Evaluation – Tabled

Now and later the process and deadline were reviewed. In consideration of the full agenda this was tabled and another meeting scheduled (see below: Meetings/Events).

• The UIRSC requested the evaluation material be resent.

B. Discussion of Head of School Susan Stevens Retirement, Administrative Model in the Up Island Region and Budgetary Implications

• After 15 years as Head of School Ms. Stevens announced her retirement to staff, the School Advisory Council (SAC)), parents and tonight to the UIRSC, before submitting her retirement notification. The Superintendent would take direction from the SAC after hearing discussions on: the most beneficial administrative structure for the entire UIRSD, budget implications, and search protocol.

- The timeframe was to appoint a search committee in October, draft a job description (by Superintendent and committee) in November, advertise in December and initial interviews and visits in January 2024.

• While acknowledging the differences between the 2 schools, there was interest in increasing regional advantages and continuity between schools, incorporating economies of scale, sharing resources such as supplies, furnitures, and people across schools to eliminate redundancies and reduce intra-district competition for limited staff. The Schools already showed close collaboration with technology and lunch programs, but scheduling and other problems prevented sharing of special teachers, such as music. Teachers exchanged status, experience and expectations at monthly Learning Communities.

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- Others suggested a Principal (not a Head of Chilmark School), acknowledging budgetary capacity and attesting to on-site executive duties needed by the growing School—hiring during this staff shortage, building issues, managing budgets, etc.
- The SAC listed important search factors as: unique Chilmark School philosophy, regional collaboration, versatility to fill in other duties as needed (e.g. teaching, lunch, guidance, etc.).
- To decrease administrative over-staffing, a single UIRSD Principal and 2 Heads of School or Vice Principals to fill necessary on-site duties was proposed. Debating points were:
 - difficulties of geographical distance between the 2 schools;
 - double oversight of heads of school answering to the Principal and the Superintendent;
 - a Martha's Vineyard Public School (MVPS) Facilities Director to alleviate Principal's burdens.
- The UIRSC requested Supt. Smith research other similar regional models.

The discussion would be continued at the next meeting (see below: Meetings/Events). The UIRSC appreciated Ms. Stevens early notice which allowed for a well-conducted search process.

C. Student Support Services Update (See documents on file.)

In preparation for the Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Shared Services Budget, Student Support Director Hope MacLeod projected burgeoning Shared Services needs over the next 2 year.

- 12 students were added to high needs pre-school Project Headway this year bringing it close to capacity, including the additional Grace Church Island Children School section; and next year there would be enough more to require another 5 days/wk. full day section with staff and space. As Project Headway sections graduated into kindergarten, there would be a commensurate increase in Bridge Program enrollment, including an autism spectrum contingent.

Personnel (Agenda Item #VI)

B. Retirement (See documents on file.)

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE RETIREMENTS OF WEST TISBURY SCHOOL:*

- ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL SUE MERRILL AS OF AUGUST 30, 2024;

- KINDERGARTEN TO SECOND GRADE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER KIM

PATTERSON AS OF JUNE 30, 2024;

ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS. The UIRSC wished both retirees all the best and expressed their great appreciation for Sue Merrill as a wonderful face of the school who touched children and families.

A. Leaves of Absence

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE A MATERNITY LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FOR WEST TISBURY SCHOOL ELEMENTARY INTERVENTION TEACHER ANNA MARKWICA OWEN STARTING DATE TARGET NOVEMBER 17, 2023; ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

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- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE A MATERNITY LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FOR WEST TISBURY SCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER RACHEL ENRIQUEZ-COOK, DATE TARGETS JANUARY 12, 2024 TO MARCH 4, 2024; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

Policy Readings (Agenda Item #VII)

A. Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) Proposed Bullying Policy-2nd Reading

B. Physical Restraint Policy and Procedure pursuant to 603 CMR 46.00-2nd Reading

C. MVPS Student Conduct and Discipline—2nd Reading

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED THE SECOND READING OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO FOLLOWING MARTHA'S VINEYARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS – UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICIES;*

- BULLYING,

- STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE,

- PHYSICAL RESTRAINT POLICY AND PROCEDURE PURSUANT TO 603 CMR 46.00;

ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.

D. School Choice—3rd Reading – Tabled (See 6/20/23 Minutes p.2 #3.)

Finance (Agenda item #IV)

B. Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Budget

MVPS Business Administrator Mark Friedman would distribute a level service FY25 draft, but warned there were still some unknown factors.

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

FY24 was in good shape with no issues. One negative salary line item in each site would be covered by School Choice funds.

Public Comment – None (Agenda Item #VIII)

Adjournment

- *ALEX SALOP MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:15PM; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

Meetings/Events

• **UIRSC – 6:00PM, Thursday, October 19, 2023 – WTS/Zoom**

• **UIRSC Budget Workshop – 6:30PM, Wednesday, October 25, 2023 – WTS/Zoom**

continued

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Documents on File:

- Agenda 10/16/23
- WTS Tech Program Overview (9 p.)
- All Expenditure Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (15 p.) 10/15/23
- Revenue Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2023- 2024 10/15/23
- Preschool Special Education Numbers, Headway, Community and Peers, 2015-Current
- PK Children on IEPs (actual)
- Bridge Edgartown ASD numbers
- Merrill email re: Resignation 9/18/23
- Patterson email re: Retirement 9/28/23
- Owen email re: Maternity Leave 9/21/23
- Enriquez email re: Maternity Leave 10/10/23

Minutes approved 11/20/23