

Tisbury School Committee
4:00PM, Tuesday, November 14, 2023
Emergencies Services Building Conference Room

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TSC Members Present: Chair Amy Houghton, Jen Cutrer, Michael Watts*,
Staff: John Custer – Principal, Melissa Ogden – Asst. Principal;
Richie Smith – Superintendent, Student Support – Hope MacLeod,
Mark Friedman – Business Administrator, Nicole Shirley,
Anne Williamson,
Others: Marni Lipke – Recorder, Chris Blessen – Tappé Architects,
Dan Anjo, Steve Brenner – W.T. Rich,
Aditya Modi, Michael Owen – CHA/Daedalus,
Town: Louise Clough – FinCom

* TSC members late arrivals or early departures

- The Tisbury School Committee (TSC) was called to order at 4:02PM. Chair Amy Houghton was happy to have everyone there in person.

I. Approval of Past TSC Meeting Minutes

- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. JEN CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MR. MICHAEL WATTS THE MINUTES OF THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE OCTOBER 10, 2023 MEETING WERE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED (3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

II. Tisbury School Building Project Report

A. Project Update (See documents on file (and below: Actions.)

- Mr. Chris Blessen of Tappé Architects reported the project was progressing very well, with only a handful of architectural comments needed. He was inspired by a recent conference during which he did a little furniture shopping in preparation for the final project phase. His own tastes moderated the current trend for highly flexible furniture/equipment with multiple perspectives and uses. His enthusiasm would be part of training staff in new spaces, furnishings and tools.
- Mr. Mike Owen of Owners Project Manager (OPM) CHA Projects also commended project progress and Team (owner, designer, construction manager) collaboration.
- W. T. Rich reported the goal was weather-tight buildings/ additions in December '23/ January '24.
- The existing building rubber roof was installed. Windows had arrived and precast sills were in progress. Masonry was being repointed. Administration wing framing and structure were proceeding. The brick veneer over the completed gym wing block walls was in process. The elevator shaft, roofing and skylights were finished.
- On the interior, 2nd and 3rd floor Mechanical/Electrical/Plumbing (MEP) was almost complete with ongoing dry wall. Similar components were starting on the 1st floor— including metal framing the floor over the boiler room.

- The Energy Recovery Units (ERU) for the heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC) system would arrive this week.
- The neighborhood would be notified (and website posting) of Spring Street closings while equipment was lifted to the roof(s) (see below: Meetings/Events).
- The total project and the construction budgets were about 48% spent. Buy-out savings (~ \$803,000) were completely committed but more savings were expected. Although there were estimated or submitted unforeseen costs (mostly associated with the existing building renovation) that would be covered by the construction contingency, the owner's and the construction contingencies were as yet untouched and financially the project was in good shape.
- General Conditions/General Requirements (GC/GR) as part of the Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) was about 50% committed, and the Construction Manager (CM) allowance was about 1/3 committed.
- Tisbury School Building Committee Chair Michael Watts and Ms. Houghton stated the professional team continued to inspire confidence and always reported the project on time and on budget.

* Mr. Watts left the meeting briefly.

B. Approval of Invoices (See documents on file & below: Actions.)

These were standard invoices.

- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. JEN CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MS. HOUGHTON THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED AND RECOMMENDED (2 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS) THE FOLLOWING OCTOBER 1 THROUGH 31, 2023 INVOICES TOTALING \$4,085,817.00 TO BE SENT TO TOWN HALL FOR APPROVAL AND PAYMENT:**
- CHA NOVEMBER 2, 2023 INVOICE FOR \$45,000.00,
- W.T. RICH OCTOBER 31, 2023 INVOICE FOR \$3,984.203.00,
- TAPPÉ ARCHITECTS OCTOBER 25, 2023 INVOICE FOR \$48,125.00,
- BRIGGS ENGINEERING AUGUST 26, 2023 INVOICE FOR \$2,018.00,
- BRIGGS ENGINEERING SEPTEMBER 30, 2023 INVOICE FOR \$6,471.00.

IV. Principal's Report

A. School Events (See documents on file.)

- The School thanked American Legion Post #257 for almost 20 years of the annual Reads Across America event.
- Students and staff would be bused to the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) for the holiday sing along.
- Teachers continued to take advantage of the many local field trips and presentations by island organizations. The TSC saluted the breadth and depth of community support enjoyed by Tisbury School children and adults.

B. Personnel (See documents on file.)

The Kitchen staff were looking forward to welcoming the new assistant cook. Vacancies included an English Language Learner (ELL) teacher.

C. MCAS Analysis (See documents on file.)

* Mr. Watts returned to the meeting.

The TSC thanked Assistant Principal Melissa Ogden for sending the report.

- The history and context of the scores were noted.
- Written MCAS moved to computer-based PARCC and then MCAS 2.
- 2020 and 2021 tests were eliminated, partial and/or impacted by:
 - the 2019-20 school split required for lead/asbestos sealing, and
 - Covid pandemic curriculum shifts through remote, hybrid and in-person learning,
- 2022 full testing was set as the new baseline.
- Tisbury performed well compared to other small schools with similar demographics—ELL, English as Second Language (ESL), Students with Disabilities (SWD), high needs, and low income percentages.
- Overall the School scored below its 2022 scores, slightly higher than State averages in math and science and just under in English/Language Arts (E/LA), and missing its targets by 3.7 points in math, 8.7 points in science and 9.1 points in E/LA.
- Teachers opened and reviewed MCAS results annually, considering 4 questions from Administration: Where are we doing well? Where do we need to improve? What will you change? What resources/support do you need?

Reasons for the disappointing performance were explored.

- This 8th grade (the 2019 5th grade) was the worst served and worst hit by the split and the pandemic, and was not highly academic, scoring below State averages in all subjects—which skewed the statistics. However the 3rd grade scores were promising.
- The constant facility disruption reduced enrollment and changed demographics.
- Staff critiqued problems with the test itself:
 - shift to smaller screened Chrome computers requiring scrolling;
 - confusing test language in all subjects, e.g. 3rd grade math question: “what part of the whole of this area is represented by the fraction”;
 - science testing every 3 years meant questions on material learned 2 years before;
 - scheduled in March but testing the entire year curriculum;
 - placing of essay at end of 3 hour test when students are tired.
- Student habitually used texts or computers that prompt, complete and correct words.
- The technology/engineering (industrial arts) teacher vacancy also had an impact.
- Outdated programs, e.g. reading/writing, were not aligned to curriculum standards.
- Students performed better in regular school due to more support and less screen time.
- In a national culture of not-producing, students expected to get through without doing their assignments, did no independent work, had no follow-through and were often absent or on vacation.
- The question was whether the scores reflected Covid impacts or some failure of the School or both.
- The School needed new programs better suited to the frameworks. This was usually a year long process, materials had to be vetted, purchased, and then teachers needed professional development (PD), training, and had to rewrite lesson plans.
- More vertical (same subject all grades) and horizontal (all teachers in a grade) meetings would be instituted.
- Time was an ongoing critical factor, not only the 6 hour school day that had to pack in all the learning requirements, but staff PD and meeting times compounded by personnel shortages and modular space restraints.

- In order to facilitate solutions the TSC suggested 3 additional paid or stipended days after the close of the school year.
- Teachers taught well and commended the Tisbury Administration as having the best attitude of any school they'd experienced.
- Superintendent Richie Smith pointed out that some Tisbury classes used to score in the top 10 in the State. Test skills were important in further education (e.g. SATs) and in life so staff and Administrators should re-dedicate to teaching for test culture. Student test anxiety was better alleviated by strong teaching and learning than by denying the high stakes nature of the test.

D. School Climate Survey (See documents on file.)

- Thanks went to Ms. Kim Garrett, who could present in person if the TSC so wished. This June 2023 (Tisbury only) survey had a good staff response and showed cultural and linguistic competence. The Central Cabinet would discuss how the instructional environment results would be released and responded to on an Island-wide basis.
- A spring 2023 socio-emotional learning indicator system survey for parents had a poor response rate.

III. Superintendent's Report

A. All Island School Committee (AISC) (See below: Meetings/Events.)

Thursday's meeting would discuss the Tisbury School modulars for possible purchase/rental (tours of modular B were available); as well as the next version of the Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Superintendent's Shared Services (Central) Office budget—hopefully completed/voted by November 30th.

- The Personnel Subcommittee would meet Tuesday, November 21st.

B. Student Support Services Update – Nothing to report.

C. Shared Services Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Budget (See 10/10/23 Minutes p.3.)

Due to contractual factors and the enrollment spike the FY25 Shared Services budget was up 18.7%—a little over \$1,000,000. The office was looking to see how to reduce spending while best serving the students.

D. Policy

1. 2nd Readings: Bullying, Student Conduct and Discipline, and Physical Restraint (No changes from the first reading.)

• ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MR. WATTS THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE SECOND READING OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE FOLLOWING POLICIES; 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS:

- MARTHA'S VINEYARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS BULLYING POLICY,
- MARTHA'S VINEYARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE POLICY, AND
- MARTHA'S VINEYARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS PHYSICAL RESTRAINT POLICY AND PROCEDURE PURSUANT TO 603 CMR 46.00.

III. Financial Report

A. Fund Balances (See documents on file.)

Town Hall reported stock market volatility significantly (but hopefully temporarily) reduced the Manter Fund value.

B. Grants – nothing to report.

C. Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Budget (See documents on file.)

- Version 1.0 showed level service at a 5.62% increase of which contractual increases (steps, salary, etc.) constituted 3.6%. It did not include some unknowns:
 - a significant Superintendent Shared Services Office increase;
 - 4.5 – 5% transportation increase;
 - student insurance raises;
 - trash removal—construction waste inclusion was unclear.
 - Island Grown Initiative/School's (IGI/IGS) increase (see 10/10/23 Minutes p.2 #III C).
- During the last few years the TSC cut the budget to bare bones, minimizing increases, and almost eliminating maintenance.
- It was hoped this year's vacancy savings would be replaced by a fully staffed School as needed, particularly in Science/Technology/Engineering/Art/Math (STEAM).

1. Maintenance/Operations (See below: Actions.)

The modern school made complex and essential demands on maintenance staff, for example: the standard calcium based cleaners would “eat” the new sidewalks. Information Technology (IT) security would be paramount.

- It was agreed the school budget (not the Town) should include a facilities manager.
 - Given the increased square footage, Principal John Custer recommended an additional custodian—although the facilities manager position might make this unnecessary.
- The Preventive Maintenance line would definitely increase, and there would be service contracts for systems the School never had before—especially after the one-year guarantees expired.
 - Heating fuel would be eliminated while electricity/power would rise significantly—but how much was not yet known.
 - It was suggested that any savings from the modular rent be dedicated to solar panels.
- Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) Business Administrator Mark Friedman explained Chapter 70 Student Opportunity Act (SOA) funding instituted by Governor Maura Healey. These were earmarked to be spent on high needs students (ELL/ESL, SWD, low income, etc.)—regulations were still evolving. SOA amounts were initially minimal (\$1,640) but had been growing to ~ \$629,000 in FY24. Some towns considered Chapter 70 money as general revenue because taxpayers supported education beyond State requirements, consequently it was important to convey:
 - to Town Hall that Schools were accountable (and had to report) to Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for SOA spending.
 - to voters and finance committees that budget increases were partially compensated by the SOA revenue increases.
- Other budget factors were noted.
 - Tisbury sent more School Choice students than it received which was a revenue drain.
 - The Elementary and Secondary School Relief (ESSER) III grant that covered 2 full time teachers would sunset in FY25.
 - Although enrollment had shrunk, Tisbury had the highest ELL/ESL population on the Island and Special Education (SWD) was growing.
 - For the first time Tisbury might include a Shared Services class (see above #III C).

- The School Advisory Council (SAC) would give budget recommendation at the December joint meeting with the TSC.

Gratitude went to everyone for their support after the death of Tisbury School ELL teacher Shannon Carbon. The 3 days of mourning gave people the opportunity to grieve, and consult an Islandwide guidance counselor. Everyone expressed their pain at the loss of this remarkable person and educator—see documents on file, Prin. Custer’s letter in Tiger Tales).

Adjournment

- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MR. WATTS THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING UNANIMOUSLY ADJOURNED AT 5:58PM: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

Appendix A: Meetings/Events:

- AISC – Thursdays, November 16 & 30, 2023 - MVRHS / Zoom
- Spring St. Closing: 7:00AM-4:00PM, Saturdays, November 18, & December 2, 2023
- **TSC – 4:00PM, Tuesdays, - ESF/Zoom December 12, 2023 (with SAC)**
- January 9, 2024 March 12, 2024 May 14, 2024
- February 13, 2024 April 9, 2024 June 11, 2024
- Project Status & Planning – 1:00PM Tuesdays,
- Special Town Meeting – 7:00PM, Tuesday, January 11, 2024
- Annual/Special Town Meeting – Tuesday, May 28, 2024

Appendix B: Actions

Prin. Custer / Ms. Houghton – send Project motion & invoices for Town Hall payment.

Prin. Custer – notify custodians of possible AISC tours of Building B.

Prin. Custer / Mr. Blessen – staff meeting on new spaces / furniture / equipment.

Mr. Watts / Mr. Blessen – report on: facilities manager / building technician (IT security) & custodian job descriptions, budgeting

Prin. Custer / Ms. Houghton – contact Town Hall & FinCom re: SOA revenues.

December Agenda reminders:

Please note: All business will consist of discussion and possible vote.

- Approval of Project Invoices
- Policy Amendments – 3rd Reading
- Tisbury School Building Committee
- FY25 Budget
- Staff Comment
- Public Comment
- Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair

FY25 budget issues:

- possible Project Headway classroom,
- loss of ESSER III grants,
- facilities manager / custodian,
- preventive maintenance / service contracts

continued

Appendix C: Documents on File

- Agenda 11/14/23
- Tisbury School, School Committee Meeting, November 14, 2023 (22 p.)
- Tisbury School Addition and Renovations Project Invoices, For Period: October 01, 2023 –October 31, 2023
- Friedman cover email re: Tisbury School FY25 Draft Budget – Version #1 11/13/23
- Tisbury School FY'25 Budget Analysis, Version 1.0, Tisbury November 14, 2023
- Tisbury School Budget for 2024/2025, Version #1.0 – November 14, 2023 (5 p.)
- Tisbury School 2023, MCAS Data (16 p.)
- Tisbury School Events (November 2023)
- School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS) (2 p.)
- Tisbury School Fund Balances Fiscal Year: 2023-2024 11/14/23
- Tiger Tales, November 2023 (10 p.)

Minutes respectfully submitted by Office On Call/Marni Lipke.

Marni Lipke – Recorder

Date

Amy Houghton – TSC Chair

Date

TSC Minutes approved 12/12/23