

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
5:00PM, Monday, November 20, 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,
Parents/Families: Allison Cameron Parry
Towns: WT FinCom – Greg Orcutt,
Press – Eunki Seonwoo – MV Times, MVTV – Julie Soikkeli,
*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. The UIRSC observed a moment of silence for West Tisbury School alumna and Martha's Vineyard Regional High School student Waylon Sauer who was tragically killed in a car crash. Later in the meeting Superintendent Richard Smith recognized the tremendous tragedy and thanked the Up Island Regional District in general and the West Tisbury School Administration in particular for their sensitive, expert support for the community's children, families and staff.

Approval of Minutes (Agenda item #II)

A. Including But Not Limited to: July 12, 2023 and September 18, 2023

• *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF*
- *OCTOBER 16, 2023,*
- *OCTOBER 19, 2023,*
- *OCTOBER 25, 2023 AND*
- *NOVEMBER 3, 2023;*
SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0
ABSTENTIONS AS ABSENT: ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, JIM NEWMAN—AYE, SKIPPER
MANTER—AYE.

Principals' Report (Agenda Item #III)

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

1. Principal's Report – Nothing new to report.

A. Susan Stevens – Chilmark School

* Roxanne Ackerman entered the meeting during this discussion at 5:34PM.

3. 5 Year Look Ahead at Building Projects

• The UIRSC requested the 5-year facilities plan be email distributed for discussion at the next meeting.

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2. Out of State Travel

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING OUT OF STATE TRAVEL FOR THE CHILMARK SCHOOL:*

- *FIFTH GRADE (INCLUDING TWO STAFF) SKI TRIP TO SUGAR LOAF, MAINE FEBRUARY 12-16, 2024; AND*
- *TWO STAFF TO ORLANDO, FLORIDA FOR THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE, JANUARY 23-26, 2024;*

ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, JIM NEWMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE. There was sufficient Professional Development (PD) funding for the travel to the technology conference.

1. Chilmark School Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Artist in Residence

Reinstatement (See 11/3/23 Minutes p.3 & 4.)

• Head of Chilmark School Susan Stevens requested the re-instatement of Artist In Residence funding cut from last year's budget. The funding covered instruction outside school staff (library assistant, arts integration, yoga, drumming workshop, etc.) and allowed contractually mandated planning time for staff. The UIRSC asked Ms. Stevens to report on the use of the funds.

• *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO TRANSFER UP TO \$10,000 FROM NEW HIRE SAVINGS TO THE ARTIST IN RESIDENCE LINE; SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE.*

Finance (Agenda item #IV)

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

* During this discussion Alex Salop entered the meeting at 5:50PM.

As noted last time, the only significant variances were in 2 teachers salary lines, one each in the Chilmark and WTS sites which would be covered by School Choice funding. Smaller variances were being monitored.

• Revenues were as expected

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

• UIRSD FY25 Version #3 included:

- a placeholder for the Superintendent's Shared Services (Central) Office Version #2 assessment, which was up 15.4% overall with the UIRSD assessment up 12.8% or ~\$234,000;

- nothing yet for transportation expenses; and

- various insurance changes based on FY22, FY23 or FY24 actuals.

• The highlighted changes of this version were shown in 3 categories for each site/part:

- required expenses that could only be changed with difficulty and against recommendation: contractual, insurance, etc.;

- previously approved increases such as the \$20,224, 5-year WTS technology upgrade and the \$50,000 Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB) contribution; and

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- new items/initiatives, some of which might already exist but were not specifically budgeted, e.g. grant or Contingency funded positions.

Each item and category carried the percentage increase within the site/part and for the total budget. The UIRSC requested a WTS Special Education teacher salary be re-positioned to the required category.

- As requested, the Administrative increment pools were separated into one line with the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) and another line with merit or market adjustment.

- The WTS increase was up \$884,524 (of which \$545,000 was required) or 10.8% by site and 5.9% of the total budget.

- The Chilmark School increase was \$184,393 (of which \$42,188 was required) or 9.5% by site and 1.2% of the total budget.

- The District part was up \$267,262 or 1.5% within the site and 0.3% of the total budget.

- OPEB expenses included the \$50,000 increase and contributions for new hires (see 10/17/16 Minutes p.2 #III B). OPEB personnel contributions were the same for 0.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) and 1.0 FTEs. The latest actuarial report would be distributed for the next meeting.

- This section did not include the standard \$99,000 Contingency funding because, the UIRSC depleted FY23 Excess & Deficiency (E & D) which had offset the line.

- The Debt part included a Chilmark School Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning (HVAC) debt estimate at \$229,000 (\$130,000 principal & \$99,000 interest) 9.2% of the District site or 1.8% of the total budget.

- If all new items were approved the overall Version #3 budget increase would be 9.0%.

Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) Business Administrator Mark Friedman then reviewed projected revenue and assessment factors.

- Shifts in enrollment changed the assessment proportions to the 3 Towns, slightly increasing Aquinnah's and Chilmark's, while decreasing West Tisbury's.

- Medicaid revenue was projected at FY23 levels. Interest income was updated to current rates.

- Chapter 70 placeholder was based on FY23 levels.

- A portion of Ch. 70 was the Governor's Student Opportunity Act (SOA) revenue based on demographics, dedicated to (and UIRSD accountable for) supporting high need students.

- Last year Charter School enrollment was higher than expected, and although Prin. Donna Lowell-Bettencourt reported some student returns, nevertheless, Charter School tuition (minus reimbursement) still slightly exceeded Ch. 70 funding, resulting in "negative State aid", i.e. higher assessment than revenue.

- Chapter 71 reimbursement was lower than last year but the rate was still 75-80%. Causes could be pandemic changes to bus routes. The UIRSC requested this revenue be confirmed.

- School Choice remained profitable and was traditionally used to offset UIRSD budgets.

- Part D capital borrowing rose this year from \$251,000 in FY24 to \$481,000.

- E & D balances usually contained previous years' rollover but since the UIRSC reduced the balance to \$0, the FY24 E & D (usually certified in February) was expected to be quite low. In addition the E & D FY24 Budget offset could not be repeated, further raising the assessment.

- The result was that Version #3 expenses increased 9.0%, but the assessment increased 13.34%.

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Administration requested the UIRSC give direction on what it wished to include or exclude for the next version.

- The UIRSC addressed the new Chilmark Principal salary projection.
- The Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) Principal salary range was \$165-170,000, other MVPS kindergarten (K) thru 8th Grade school principals' salaries were in the \$150,000 range. Ms. Stevens current salary (at 8.5 FTE) was ~ \$140,000.
- The new full time (260 day) salary should account for the 1.5 FTE differential.
- However, a starting salary need not equal Ms. Stevens final salary reflecting 15 years seniority.
- There was disagreement regarding parity with other MVPS K-8 school principals, given: the smaller size of the school with less staff and fewer students, as well as the absence of 6th – 8th grades or middle school, that constituted a major and complex responsibility.
- There was an objection to over-estimating the placeholder, since if the salary was negotiated lower, there would be excess money in the budget.
- There were some local candidates but the high cost of housing would be a factor for off-Island candidates.
- Public comment from a Chilmark parent advocated paying a professional rate.
- **ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO PUT A PLACEHOLDER OF \$150,000 AS THERE WAS NOT YET A JOB DESCRIPTION: THERE WAS NO SECOND.**
- ***ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO PUT A PRINCIPAL'S SALARY PLACEHOLDER IN THE CHILMARK SITE BUDGET FOR A 260 DAY POSITION AT \$150,000; ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 3 AYES, 2 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, JIM NEWMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—NAY, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—NAY, ALEX SALOP—AYE.***
- It was agreed that a Contingency was necessary to cover emergencies and unforeseen expenses. It was argued that emergency funds could be taken from unspent residuals, however, unspent and unencumbered funds were changeable based on such things as seasonal spending, or leave of absence salary fluctuations. E & D's unpredictability was also noted.
- There was a request that contingency funds be divided by site which was countered by the assertion that emergencies were not necessarily site specific.
- ***ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO ACCEPT BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR MARK FRIEDMAN'S SUGGESTION FOR A \$99,000 CONTINGENCY LINE ITEM IN THE DISTRICT SITE BUDGET: ROXANNE ACKERMAN SECONDED: MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 1 NAY, 0 ABSTENTIONS: JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—NAY.***
- There was general acknowledgement that a double digit (1/7) increase, was higher than any recent years and that if it was to go forward, there would have to be strong justification to Finance Committees and taxpayers, especially as enrollment was down.
- Almost every new "ask" directly impacted students.
- A member requested the increase be reduced by 50%—Principals to decide on cuts.
- Another asked that Principals draft a District plan/vision with goals, objectives and measurable outcomes.
- The increase came after some years of tight budgets and cuts.

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- Supt. Smith supported the requested positions. This was essentially a level-service budget accounting for the loss of the substantial Elementary and Secondary School Relief (ESSER) III grants which funded several positions; resulting in revenue loss and increased expenses as they were added into the budget.

Superintendent's Report (Agenda Item #V)

A. Enrollment Census

Aquinnah was stable at 42 students, Chilmark was up at 73, WTS was at 315 down from last year's 337. Total UIRSD enrollment was at 381—down from 2022-23 school year at 407. Overall MVPS enrollment remained fairly stable. The census was close to New England School Development Council (NESDEC) projections.

B. Chilmark Search Update

With the support and guidance of the Chilmark School Advisory Council (SAC), limited input from Ms. Stevens, and information from community, staff and student surveys, Supt. Smith drafted and read an advertisement for a Chilmark School principal. The process was to advertise in December, convene the search committee, review applications and run first round interviews, narrow the field to 3-5 finalists, conduct 2nd interviews and if there was no clear choice, visit the finalists' home schools.

- Despite some Island candidates, he advised expanding the search to a larger regional footprint by partnering with NESDEC which facilitated executive searches for New England at their minimum rate of \$3,500 which included advertisement and consultation.

- There were a number of Chilmark site salary lines that were under-budget as well residuals in the Health Insurance line.

- *ROXANNE ACKERMAN MOVED TO ALLOW THE EXPENDITURE OF UP TO \$3,500 TO NEW ENGLAND SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (NESDEC) FOR EXECUTIVE SEARCH FACILITATION; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 1 NAY, 0 ABSTENTIONS: JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—NAY.*

C. Student Support Services Update – Nothing to Report.

Policy Readings (Agenda Item #VII)

A. Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) Proposed Bullying Policy-3rd Reading

B. Physical Restraint Policy and Procedure pursuant to 603 CMR 46.00-3rd Reading

C. MVPS Student Conduct and Discipline—3rd Reading

- *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED THE THIRD AND FINAL 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;*

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ROXANNE ACKERMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE.

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

• ROXANNE ACKERMAN MOVED THE THIRD AND FINAL READING OF THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY AMENDMENT SUCH THAT SCHOOL CHOICE PRIORITY WILL ALSO BE GIVEN TO STUDENTS OF THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT FACULTY AND STAFF; ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION WITHDRAWN.

Public Comment – None (Agenda Item #VII)

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

Adjournment

At the revelation that Skipper Manter had joined the meeting from a hospital ward, the UIRSC sent it's best wishes for a speedy recovery and saluted his dedication.

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

Meetings/Events

• **UIRSC Budget Workshop – 5:30PM, Tuesday, December 5, 2023 – WTS/Zoom**

• **UIRSC/Public Hearing – TBD, Monday, December 18, 2023 – WTS/Zoom**

Documents on File:

- Agenda 11/20/23
- All Expenditure Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (15 p.) 11/19/23
- Revenue Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2023-2024 11/19/23
- Friedman cover email re: UIRSD Materials for tonight's meeting 11/20/23
- UIRSD, FY25 Budget Version #3 11/20/2023, Changes from FY24 Budget (3 p.)
- UIRSD FY2024 Assessment – V#6 Re-Certified 2/21/2023
- UIRSD FY2025 Assessment – V#3 Proposed 11/20/2023
- Chat:
 - Martha's Vineyard Television to Everyone (Nov 20, 2023, 5:25PM) - Hello This is Julie Soikkeli from MVTV. My microphone is not working Yes! everyone sounds clear
 - Mary Boyd to Everyone (Nov 20, 2023, 5:32PM) - I'll update the chat with late in person arrivals, Marni. Susan Stevens – 5:34 Hope, Mark, Roxanne, Richie arrive at 5:35
 - Mary Boyd to Everyone (Nov 20, 2023, 5:42PM) - There is no current motion, marni. They will need to do that.

continued

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Documents on File (cont.):

- Chat (cont.):
- Allison's iPhone to Everyone (Nov 20, 2023, 6:18PM) - We need to pay wages to attract qualified and accredited employees. Can't hear him
- Mary Boyd to Everyone (Nov 20, 2023, 6:23PM) - Robert is asking about the impact of new hires on OPEB
- Mary Boyd to Everyone (Nov 20, 2023, 7:16PM) - Moved by Roxanne, seconded by Robert
Robert moved to approve the Bullying, Physical Restraint, and Student Conduct. Roxanne seconded

Minutes approved 1/10/24