

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
6:00PM, Wednesday, December 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 – MVTV – Michelle Vivian,

*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.

Public Hearing and Discussion of Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Budget for the Up Island Regional School District – Possible Vote (Agenda item #I)

(See documents on file, & Minutes: 10/25/23, & 11/3/23, & 11/20/23 p.2-5 #IV B, & 12/5/23 p.2-4 #IV)

• *The Public Hearing was opened at 6:09PM.*

*Skipper Manter entered the meeting at 6:10PM and apologized for his tardiness.

• Version #5 was reviewed

• **West Tisbury School (WTS) Site** showed \$55,712 in changes as requested.

- The additional custodian was maintained at 0.4 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) to avoid paying benefits.

- Shared Services was tweaked for a \$14,000 reduction.

- The \$5,800 Island Grown Schools/Initiative (IGI/IGS) share was postponed until FY26.

• **Chilmark School Site**

- The new Chilmark Principal place-holder was not included but would be a \$25,377 increase.

- Undistributed Conferences was scaled back to previous levels. Typically a new principal spent their first year getting to know a school before starting professional development (PD) courses.

- Although there should be efficiency savings from the Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning (HVAC) and insulation project, the school had not previously been air conditioned so the Utilities line was tweaked up \$1,900. The UIRSC briefly discussed heat savings, building preservation and system use.

• **Districtwide Site**

- The previously arbitrary Contingency amount (see Minutes: 5/26/20 p.2 #B & 6/2/20 p.4) was rounded down to \$90,000.

- There was still no final HVAC Project debt information from the Town of Chilmark.

• This brought the Budget to a 9.4% increase, assessed at 12.11% or \$16,098,376.

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- The UIRSC questioned the sharp rise in Audit costs. There were a very limited number of audit firms specializing in municipal accounting. (It was also noted that the Dukes County Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust audit costs were apportioned according each entity's share of the Trust, a small liability associated with the UIRSD's large share.
- As requested the Non-Union increase pools were separated into Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA), and "structural" i.e. merit, restructuring or market rate increases.
- The **Assessment** page now showed the Shared Services and Part D Debt as requested.
- Net School Choice (sending vs. receiving) was shown. Chapter 70 was increased slightly. Charter School tuition and reimbursement was tweaked down as a guesstimate on the number of students. There was no Circuit Breaker income, and Medicaid was level at FY23 amounts.
- Excess and Deficiency (E & D) was projected at \$181,000 of which \$50,000 was recommended as a Contingency line offset. The usual discussion on spending down E & D was repeated.
 - The Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) mandated cap for this Budget was 5% or ~ \$885,000.
 - E & D was a reserve against such things as revenue shortfalls, unexpected Charter School costs, etc. particularly in these tight budgets without much flexibility—an end-of-year deficit should be avoided at all costs.
 - E & D was one of the bond rating determinants.
- The UIRSC returned to discussing Version formatting on 2 issues.
- There was an objections to including the major structural raises for Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) technicians (see 6/20/23 Minutes p.5) in the District site pool rather than the School Sites. Superintendent Richie Smith explained that inclusion in the structural pool was necessary until decisions were made on salary details. The raises would likely be consistent across the MVPS and he was not yet ready to commit to the amount.
- MVPS Business Manager Mark Friedman would prefer to eliminate the "New Hire OPEB" line, merging it into the OPEB benefits. Currently the line was redundant and could not be decreased as "new hires" became standard staff. The UIRSC argued for compounding. Finally it was agreed accede to Mr. Friedman's expertise on the matter. Mr. Friedman reminded the UIRSC that they could be less aggressive on OPEB and still pay down the liability faster than usual.
- *The Public Hearing was closed at 7:04PM.*

Discussion and Possible Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Budget Certification (Agenda item #II)

- The UIRSD Superintendent's Shared Services Office Budget assessment was ~ \$2,050,000.
- Past practice was to apportion School Choice offsets within each site.
- The UIRSC was not proud of the overall 10% spending increase. Mr. Manter reported it was a difficult year for the Town of West Tisbury and the UIRSC should consider looking at personnel.
- *ALEX SALOP MOVED TO CERTIFY THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT FISCAL YEAR 2025 OPERATING BUDGET AT \$16,293,039.56 OR 9.4% INCREASE ASSESSED AT \$16,098,376.35 OR 12.11% INCREASE; ROXANNE ACKERMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 1 NAY, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ALEX SALOP—AYE, JIM NEWMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—NAY, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE.*

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- Teachers were excited to get the first shipment of school supplies from \$52,000 in small grants from an anonymous donor.

Adjournment

(Agenda Item # III)

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:17PM; ROBERT LIONETTE AND ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

Meetings/Events

- **UIRSC – TBD, Wednesday, January 10, 2023 – WTS/Zoom**

Documents on File:

- Agenda 12/20/23
- Posting Chilmark Elementary School Principal 12/13/23
- Weekly Peek (5 p.) 12/1/23
- Friedman cover email re: UIRSD FY25 Budget – Version #5 12/18/23
- UIRSD, FY25 Budget Version #5 12/20/2023, Changes from FY24 Budget (4 p.)
- UIRSD Expense Budgets Before School Choice Offsets & Student Census Data
- UIRSD FY2025 Assessment – V#5 Proposed 12/20/2023
- Up-Island Regional School District, FY25 General Fund Budget, Version # 5, 12-20-2023 (11 p.)
- UIRSD, FY25 Budget Version #6 12/20/2023 – Certified, Changes from FY24 Budget (4 p.)
- UIRSD FY2025 Assessment – V#6 Certified 12/20/2023
- Up-Island Regional School District, FY25 General Fund Budget, Version # 6, 12-20-2023 Certified (11 p.)

Minutes approved 1/10/24