

Tisbury School Committee
4:00PM, Tuesday, March 12, 2024
American Legion Post # 257

1

TSC Members Present: Chair Amy Houghton, Jen Cutrer, Michael Watts*,
Staff: John Custer – Principal, Melissa Ogden – Asst. Principal;
Richie Smith – Superintendent, John Stevens – Asst. Superintendent
Mark Friedman – Business Administrator, Rita Jeffers, Emily Levitt,
Climate Committee: Chair Melinda Loberg, Louise Clough, Rachel Orr, Dan Phelan,
Kate Shands,
Others: Michael Owen – Daedalus/CHA, Marni Lipke – Recorder,
Dan Anjo, Steve Brenner – W.T. Rich,
Danielle Swartz – Tappé Architects,
Press: Louisa Hufstader – Vineyard Gazette

* Late Arrivals or early departures of TSC members.

The Tisbury School Committee (TSC) meeting was called to order at 4:07PM. Chair Amy Houghton welcomed everyone and wished them happy spring. In order to keep and expand Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) inclusiveness for all, the TSC would model better community access to school committee meetings by instituting hybrid meetings, to allow Brazilian Portuguese closed captioning—enabled by the meeting host.

I. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes

- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. JEN CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MS. HOUGHTON THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS WERE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED (2 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS):**
 - JANUARY 9, 2024 AND
 - FEBRUARY 16, 2024.

II. School Building Project Report (See also below: p.6.)

A. Project Update (See documents on file.)

- On the exterior: window, curtain wall and Kalwall installation was proceeding, as well as the framing and millwork for the palladium windows. On the Administration wing the brick veneer and windows were completed and drywall work beginning. The gym wing brick veneer and siding would start in April.
- The interior was also moving along: painting the 2nd and 3rd floors including accent walls was in process, and 1st floor painting to start soon. The switch gear and Mechanical/Electrical/Plumbing (MEP) roughs were complete and boiler and pumps were being installed. Workers were starting to drywall the gym wing. The kitchen and cafeteria were almost complete including equipment installation. Elevator and stairway work was in progress.
- Site work included completed drainage, backfilling around the generator site and the team would start clearing the west side playground shortly. Telephone/communications line installation was complete.

B. Approval of Invoices (See documents on file.)

These were standard monthly charges:

- ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MS. HOUGHTON THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED AND RECOMMENDED (2 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS) THE FOLLOWING FEBRUARY 1 THROUGH 29, 2024 INVOICES TOTALING \$3,248,259 TO BE SENT TO TOWN HALL FOR APPROVAL AND PAYMENT:
- CHA MARCH 1, 2024 INVOICE FOR \$45,000.00,
- W.T. RICH FEBRUARY 29, 2024 INVOICE FOR \$3,155,134.00,
- TAPPÉ ARCHITECTS FEBRUARY 23, 2023 INVOICE FOR \$48,125.00.

C. Transition from Temporary School (See below: Actions.)

The transition timeline to the newly renovated School was very narrow, from June 18th, the last day of school to the return of the modulars on July 1st.

- Staff might stay after the last day of school to pack up and organize their rooms, which would be easier than the previous move in terms of less to move and simpler choices—i.e. discard or move. Ideally teachers would pack everything needed into totes to be directly transferred to their new classrooms, however it might be necessary to store the totes in an interim location such as the new gym if rooms were not ready.
- The TSC proposed compensating staff—taking into account union contract restrictions and possible impact bargaining.
- Carrolls would be contacted to increase manpower during the transition window.
- Newly purchased Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (FF&E) were delivered to the site for vendor teams to assemble and place.
- Much of what was stored was retained in case funds ran short, so now much of the old FF&E had to be surplussed, recycled and/or salvaged.

D. Project Headway Classroom

* During this discussion Mr. Michael Watts entered the meeting at 4:31PM.

As announced at the last staff meeting, Principal John Custer welcomed a Project Headway preschool Shared Services class to the Tisbury school.

- The ideal classroom location would include many features: 1st or ground floor, separate access to outside, proximity to bathrooms. However, as it was not included in the design the necessary code alterations would significantly disrupt the construction timeline and delay Project completion/Town sign-off beyond the September 2024 opening day—a Town as well as a staff priority.
- Consequently Project Headway would be temporarily located in Room #215, which was currently unassigned.
- It was hoped and expected that the required adjustments could be made for a more suitable space, possibly the Industrial Arts room, in the not-to-distant future.
- There was some disappointment that the alterations could not be managed at lower costs while the Project was still open.

III. Superintendent's Report

To allay Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) community anxiety, Superintendent Richie Smith spoke to concerns at the Edgartown School which were incompletely

reported in the press as tied to School Choice around English Language Learners (ELL) and Special Education (SpEd). The issues were more about leadership, financing and programming. Administration had several meetings with parents and with the ELL Parent Advisory Council (ELLPAC).

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

At the previous meeting, Supt. Smith's goals were approved:

- supervision and evaluation of the Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) cabinet,
- broadening and deepening co-teaching and collaborative problem solving models,
- community and staff input for improvement of school and student achievement,
- insuring proper Tier 1 curriculum aligned with State standards.

B. Student Support Services Update – Tabled

C. School Choice

1. Vote on Participation for 2024-25 School Year

The MVPS School Choice policy was reviewed (see documents on file) noting:

- the School administration consideration of whether there was space in terms of class size, configuration, etc.;
- if there were more students than spaces, assignment by lottery with application, notification and acceptance deadlines;
- once accepted, students continuation at that school until graduation.

Supt. Smith, Prin. Custer and Asst. Prin. Melissa Ogden strongly recommended School Choice as important for students and families to find the right school culture and fit.

• ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MR. WATTS THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY VOTED (3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS) TO SUPPORT THE SCHOOL CHOICE OPTION FOR THE 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR.

IV. Principal's Report

A. School Events (See documents on file.)

- Last year's School champion would represent Tisbury in the Islandwide Spelling Bee.
- For the first time since 2019 the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades would stage an original musical with the Youth Chorus at the Performing Arts Center (PAC). A shout out went to Ms. Jessica Sanseverino for her leadership and to students for rehearsing at fill-in locations.
- The Tisbury School was grateful to the community for the many field trips and presentations and to other MVPS for hosting sports practices and "home" games.

B. Staffing Update (See documents on file & below: Actions.)

Staffing continued to be a challenge. Administration had learned to post positions early in case they needed a second round of advertisement.

- Fifth/sixth grade English/Language Arts (E/LA) teacher Ms. Cassandra Atwood would not be returning from maternity leave (see 6/14/22 Minutes p.3 #B 1).
- The support teacher, additional custodian and facilities manager (see 1/9/24 Minutes p.2) had not yet advertised as their job descriptions were still unknown.
- In order to move back to her position as Library/Media Specialist:
- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MR. WATTS AND SECONDED BY MS. CUTRER THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY VOTED (3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS) TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF FIFTH/SIXTH GRADE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER MS. KATHRYN HARCOURT.**

V. Financial Report

A. Fund Balances – No concerns. (See documents on file.)

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

1. Presentation to Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom)

The TSC appreciated FinCom member Ms. Rachel Orr for her careful review of the School budgets catching two errors.

- An Administrative and a Regular Teacher line were incorrectly budgeted, but as one exactly balanced by the other, the bottom line remained unchanged and the matter could be corrected by a line item transfer during FY25.

- A Shared Services error based on a preliminary instead of the final October 1st census data did not change the bottom line but did change the Edgartown and Oak Bluffs School Districts assessments.

2. Vote to Certify

As the bottom line was unchanged a recertification vote was unnecessary.

C. Grants

In consultation with Owners Project Manager (OPM) Mr. Michael Owen of CHA, MVPS Business Administrator Mark Friedman was able to convince the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to award the Tisbury School a \$100,000 grant for air quality and Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning (HVAC) improvement. The MVRHSC accepted the grant and accounting issues were being resolved.

VI. Climate Committee (See documents on file.)

- *Chair Melinda Loberg called the Climate Committee to order 5:10PM* and introduced the members present, who included some impressive expertise. This was an advisory committee with a mission to assess the needs of the Town for climate change resiliency; and for the development and management of power resources.

- In consultation with Tappé Architects' narrowed design, Zapotec Energy, Inc. proposed a rooftop solar installation that would provide about half the estimated 460 kw needed to operate the School.

- Post-construction installation of solar parking lot canopies would be disruptive and expensive; and a solar battery was an additional and much larger challenge.

- Hopefully this independently financed installation could capitalize on the Project's professional team (W.T. Rich, CHA, and Tappé) to cut costs and insure compatibility.

- The system cost estimate was \$803,000, with an additional \$400,000 in soft costs (OPM, contingency, inflation, etc.).

- This was an advantageous time to install solar due to a 30% Federal rebate plus annual Massachusetts payments that were projected at ~ \$11,000 per year for 20 years, and a lock-in of Eversource rates, for a total savings of about \$500,000.

- In suggesting this project, the Climate Committee was cognizant of Town finances and reluctant to burden taxpayers with another project, instead suggesting use of Free Cash or Stabilization funds.

- Although the Town would prefer a power purchase agreement, bond counsel for the School borrowing advised it was not legally possible.

- The building was solar ready but the TSC requested further consultation with Tappé (see below: Actions)

- The Committee was looking to the future when it could interconnect a number of municipal building solar units so power could be coordinated and drawn as needed.
- The Town Administrator requested a joint meeting with the Climate Committee, the Tisbury Select Board (TSB), the TSC and the FinCom.
- Thanks were exchanged and *the Climate Committee adjourned at 5:39PM.*

II. School Building Project Report (See documents on file & below: Actions.)

- FF&E cost was estimated at \$750,000, of which \$525,000 was available in the budget. Mr. Owen proposed using the Owner's contingency for the additional \$250,000.
- The FF&E choices from reputable vendors were vetted by staff and then the School Advisory Council (SAC). They would be put out as a Request For Proposal (RFP) and rapid-fire purchase—procurement in consultation with the Tisbury Town Administrator and Interim Accountant.
- IT WAS THE CONSENSUS OF THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO ALLOW THE PROPOSED USE OF \$250,000 FROM THE OWNERS CONTINGENCY TO PROCEED.
- There was an opportunity to re-insert graphics into the Project and a number of images and locations (such as outside the 2nd and 3rd floor media centers) were presented. Graphics were on vinyl which was more durable than paint.
- Staff suggested the Administration and SAC be consulted about some graphics with Tisbury School socio-emotional standards.
- ALTHOUGH IT WAS THE CONSENSUS OF THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO HAVE GRAPHICS IN THE BUILDING, THEY REQUESTED TIME TO WALK THE BUILDING FOR LOCATIONS AND VIEW IMAGE CHOICES ON THE TAPPÉ WEBSITE.
- The Project was 64% complete at \$52,408,000 with \$29,000,000 remaining.
- \$3,042,000 remained of the \$3,267,000 owner's (Town) contingency.
- The Construction Managers savings and contingency was expected to be exhausted.
- The TSC thanked Mr. Owen and Ms. Danielle Swartz of Tappé.

Public Comment – None

Adjournment

• ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MR. WATTS THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING UNANIMOUSLY ADJOURNED AT 6:01PM: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.

Appendix A: Meetings/Events

- Moana Junior Musical – 6:30PM, Friday & Saturday, April 5-6, 2024 - PAC
- TSC – 4:00PM, Tuesdays, April 9, 2024 May 14, 2024 June 11, 2024
- Project Status & Planning – 1:00PM Tuesdays,
- Annual/Special Town Meeting – Tuesday, May 28, 2024

Appendix B: Actions

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

continued >

Appendix B: Actions (cont.)

Prin. Custer/Ms. Houghton – consider staff compensation for extra work days.

CHA/W.T. Rich/Prin. Custer/Ms. Ogden

- organize list of what teachers will and will not need to pack for transition;

- organize location for packed totes (modular rooms too small).

Mr. Owen/CHA – increase transparency/reality re: Owner’s contingency spending.

Ms. Swartz/Tappé – consult Administration & SAC re: graphic content on school standards/pillars

TSC – walk building and view Tappé website re: graphics location and choices.

Climate Com./Mr. Phelan – consult:

- Tappé on 1929 building roof weight bearing capacity.

- would the Project professional team help if installation is independently financed.

April Agenda

- Staffing Update – Resignation of Cassandra Atwood

Appendix C: Documents on File

• Agenda 3/12/24

- Tisbury School Events (March 2024)

• Tisbury School Site FY’25 Budget, Version # 4.1, Tisbury February 12, 2024

• Martha's Vineyard Public Schools School Choice Policy 2/11/2014

• Tisbury School Fund Balances Fiscal Year, 2023-2024 3/8/24

• Tisbury School, Staffing – vacancies (as of March 12, 2024)

• Tisbury School, School Committee Meeting March 12, 2024 (18 p.)

• TSC/TSBC Meeting – Construction Manager Update 3/12/24 (4 p.)

• Tisbury School Addition and Renovations Project Invoices, For Period: February 01, 2024 – February 29, 2024

• Tisbury Elementary School Project Budget, CHA (4 p.)
2024 – February 29, 2024

• Tisbury School FF&E, March 12, 2024 (25 p.)

• Tisbury School Rooftop Solar, Background for 2024 Warrant Article s

• Tisbury Elementary School Environmental Graphics (8 p.)

Minutes respectfully submitted by Office On Call/Marni Lipke.

Marni Lipke – Recorder

Date

Amy Houghton – TSC Chair

Date

Minutes approved 4/9/24