

Tisbury School Committee
4:00PM, Tuesday, April 9, 2024
American Legion Post # 257

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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, Mark Friedman – Business Administrator,
Student Support – Hope MacLeod, ELL Director – Leah Palmer,
ELL Tisbury – Jen Demirs, Liz Bradley, Laura Weisman – Interpreter,

Town: Louise Clough – FinCom,

Others: Michael Owen – Daedalus/CHA, Steven Brenner – W.T. Rich
Marcia De Castro Borges – Translator, Marni Lipke – Recorder,

* Late Arrivals or early departures of TSC members.

The Tisbury School Committee (TSC) meeting was called to order at 4:00PM. Translator Ms. Marcia De Castro Borges was welcomed. Unfortunately there was no internet to broadcast her services at the current location.

I. Approval of Minutes of Past Meeting Minutes

• **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. JEN CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MR. MICHAEL WATTS THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 12, 2024 AND MARCH 28, 2024 MEETINGS WERE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED AS WRITTEN: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

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

A. Project Update (See documents on file.)

• The windows and curtain wall were almost complete with all materials and glazing on site. The Palladium wood windows were in fabrication and awaiting better weather. Entry vestibules were in process.

- Metal flashing and roof edges on the gym wing were being finished. The Kalwall was scheduled to be delivered April 25th, and the large front opening would be closed once large equipment/ceiling lifts had finished interior work.

- Preparations were in process to pour the concrete slab for the School's backup generator. Eversource would replace secondary power lines with permanent power and transformers. Verizon ran copper communication wires into the building and ComCast was expected mid-May.

• Interior work from the top down was at a construction milestone, having resolved the differential wall heights to level the 3rd fl. floors and install carpet tiles in the Media Center. The 2nd fl. would start the same process next week, followed by the 1st fl.

- Ceiling grids were being installed and the 1929-1995 building portions would be in the finishing phases hopefully by the end of May.

- Painting was proceeding.

- Kitchen mechanicals were being inspected.

- The elevator was almost done and waiting a State inspector in June.

- West elevation site work would start shortly, along with cleaning out the ‘bone yard’; then moving to the south and east grounds.
- Finances were 67% complete.
- The Owners (Town) Contingency was down \$225,000 for Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (FFE) (with one more purchase order to go out), and another \$40,263 for technology equipment.
- The grant program should reduce the \$1,923,000 in Change Orders by \$70,000.
- The audit process increased Buyout Savings by \$887,000 showing strong fiscal management. Costs were a little under standard range for a 100 yr. old renovation/addition. The TSC praised the W.T. Rich/CHA/Tappé team.

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

These were standard monthly charges that had been vetted as usual.

- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MR. WATTS THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED AND RECOMMENDED (3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS) THE FOLLOWING MARCH 1 THROUGH 31, 2024 INVOICES TOTALING \$2,712,224.00 TO BE SENT TO TOWN HALL FOR APPROVAL AND PAYMENT:**
- CHA APRIL 1, 2024 INVOICE FOR \$45,000.00,
- W.T. RICH MARCH, 2024 INVOICE FOR \$2,616,465.00,
- TAPPÉ ARCHITECTS FEBRUARY 23, 2023 INVOICE FOR \$48,125.00
- CARROLL’S MVRT INVOICE FOR \$2,635.00.

C. Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (FFE) (See below: Actions.)

- CHA was checking final FFE and ordering floor burnishing machines and 1 or 2 g-lifts to reach high ceiling fixtures/lightbulbs.
- As there were sufficient funds to purchase new FFE, the next step was to dispose of the old Tisbury School furnishings stored in 3 large tractor trailers. The Inspector General’s Office was contacted. Once declared surplus they could be donated to municipalities or school districts without further process—disposal to private organizations was more complex.
- Tappé reported a school district interested in taking the complete package, so it was suggested the receiving district pay for transportation/delivery.
- As the contents were not inventoried, Principal John Custer and Asst. Principal Melissa Ogden should be present when the old FFE were transferred to mark anything that should be retained. There was also the climate controlled library storage to be moved.
- The timeline was very short, as the modulars had to be emptied by June 22nd. There was a discussion on how to process the move, how much modular furniture would be transferred to the new facility, whether interim storage was needed, and possible staff participation (see also below: IV B Staffing Update).
- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MR. WATTS THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY (3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS) MOVED TO SURPLUS ANY MATERIAL IN THE 3 TRACTOR TRAILERS PENDING APPROVAL/OVERSIGHT BY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS.**

D. Project Headway (Pre-Kindergarten) Classroom (See below: Actions.)

The TSC was excited to welcome a Project Headway classroom into the Tisbury School with thanks to Principal John Custer and Assistant Principal Melissa Ogden for determining space and equipment needs.

E. Tisbury School Building Committee (TSBC) Membership, Appointment, Duration (See 1/9/24 Minutes p.4 #VI A, & below: Actions.)

- Members would be sworn in next week and the TSBC would meet shortly.
 - A small Graphics Working Group was needed to determine colors, graphics, etc.
- IT WAS THE CONSENSUS OF THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE THAT ANY LANGUAGE INCLUDED IN GRAPHICS BE ALSO SHOWN IN PORTUGUESE.

III. Superintendent's Report

- Ann Davey was leading the union negotiations unit.
- Edgartown School Principal Shelley Einbinder and Oak Bluffs School (OBS) Principal Megan Farrell announced their retirements. Superintendent Richie Smith would post the positions for on and off Island candidates.
- Mr. Watts and Ms. Tracey Stead met with Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) representatives on the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) Project design selection process, and would interview 3 proposals by: Tappé Architects, Mount Vernon Group Architects, and Jonathan Levi Architects (see below: Meetings/Events.)

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

B. Shared Services Update

- The annual Special Needs parents rights training would be in May with Cape Cod Advocates as presenters.
- The Office was able to hire Mr. Shane Schofield to replace retiring Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) Sue Conlan.
- The summer English Language Learners (ELL) program for incoming kindergarten and new students entering after March 1, 2023 would be at the MVRHS from July 1st – 12th. Regarding a request for Tisbury School community English classes for parents ELL staff recommended the following free programs:
 - Martha's Vineyard Adult Learning, September through March evening English classes levels 1 through 4 at the MVRHS;
 - many Martha's Vineyard public libraries,
 - Martha's Vineyard Community Services Family Center classes.

C. Student Opportunity Act (SOA)

(See documents on file & Minutes: 11/14/23 p.5, & 12/12/23 p.5 #2.)

This ongoing 2019 program would continue for at least 5 years, requiring cumulative Chapter 70 increases be used to target challenged student groups: economically disadvantaged, ELL, and Special Needs (SpEd). Although eventually regulation was expected to tighten SOA was a new program still somewhat unformed and unpredictable. For example the Tisbury increases were ~ \$624,000 last year, but only \$30/child (\$7-8,000) for FY25.

- The Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) were still resolving the revenue process, since Ch. 70 funds came directly to the Town via the Cherry Sheet, but the School had to account to Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for the targeted programs, evaluations and progress.

- Unlike previous Ch. 70 revenue which was simply to help fund schools/education, the SOA portion was restricted to spending on under-served students. All told this meant Tisbury School was required to spend a minimum of \$700,000 on SOA programs.
- DESE also required the School report all revenues used to implement the goals, in Tisbury School's case this included Title One grant funds.
- The Tisbury School budget could be viewed as \$9,359,000, assessed minus the \$150,000 School Choice commitment (see 3/28/24 Minutes) and subsidized by \$700,000 Ch. 70 SOA funds, with additional support coming from grants.
 - At first the required 3-year cycle was generated by the Shared Services Office but now individual school principals were better suited to report on their programs.
- The second cycle report was due and submitted by April 1st and already DESE approved, pending TSC approval at this meeting.
- Ms. Ogden presented the report which chose two strategies—with an annual review in 2025, hopefully exceeding the goals:
 - hiring both an intervention and a co-teacher for an English/Language Arts (E/LA) curriculum for consistent intervention; and
 - expanding opportunities beyond the school day and year, to address chronic absenteeism among ELL students: expanding the Homework Club and summer school and offering other programs once in the new facility.
- The TSC commended the strategies which supported students and their families.
 - **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MR. WATTS THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY (3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS) APPROVED THE STUDENT OPPORTUNITY ACT APRIL 2024 REPORT AS PRESENTED.**

IV. Principal's Report

A. School Events (See documents on file.)

The School musical "*Moana Jr.*" (see 3/12/24 Minutes p.3 #IV A) was a big success, well attended and a great time had by all. Thanks went to staff, students, MVPS bus drivers, various rehearsal locations (Katharine Cornell Theatre, American Legion) and the Performing Arts Center.

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

- Three staff had been hired but there were still several positions to fill.
- The additional custodian and the Facilities Manager job descriptions were in process. The positions would be advertised shortly.
- The meeting discussed whether custodian duties could include supporting the move from the modulars to the new building. Normally custodian duties were to clean during the school year, however summer work might be more flexible. Complications included job description/union restrictions, building and Certificate of Occupancy regulations and status, possible temporary storage.
- A "barn-raising" parent/community moving event was also suggested.
- Summer staff was: 2 administrators, 1 technician, 3 non-union staff and 2 Administrative Support Professionals (ASPs).
- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MR. WATTS AND SECONDED BY MS. CUTRER THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY ACKNOWLEDGED (3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS) THE RESIGNATIONS AT THE END OF THE 2023-24 SCHOOL YEAR OF:**

- **SPANISH TEACHER KELLY HAYES, AND**
- **FIFTH GRADE ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS AND SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER MS. CASSANDRA ATWOOD** (see 6/14/22 Minutes p.3 #B 1).
 - Prin. Custer received considerable passionate and articulate comment on both sides of a controversy about whether or not to move into Portuguese instead of Spanish. The ensuing discussion covered many points.
 - Spanish as a universal language,
 - asking students to choose, e.g. OBS English speaking students taught themselves Portuguese to connect with their peers;
 - unique Island opportunity to improve fluency by using the language in everyday life;
 - Spanish and Portuguese similarity allowing Portuguese speaking students to enter High School Spanish at a higher level;
 - possibility of a bilingual MVRHS;
 - increased Island job/career opportunities for bilingual Portuguese speakers;
 - immigrants learning to read and write their own language;
 - complexities and impact of shifting languages across the MVPS;
 - loss of Spanish teacher opportunities—although in this case by attrition;
 - possibility of a combination position 50% Portuguese/50% Spanish.

V. Financial Report

A. Fund Balances (See documents on file.)

The FY24 Budget was very tight due to unforeseen circumstances, e.g.

- a new hire was \$40,000 above her predecessor,
- a long-term substitute had to be hired.

Hopefully the budget would balance on the Shared Services Office assessment return.

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

1. Presentation at Annual Town Meeting (ATM) – Tabled

- Ch. 70 / SOA funding would be discussed if raised as part of the budget.
- Other rural New England towns were seeing double-digit school budget increases.

C. Grants – Nothing to report.

D. Receipt of Donation to Student Activity Account

- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MR. WATTS THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING UNANIMOUSLY AND GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED \$954.66 FOR THE STUDENT ACTIVITIES FUND FROM VINEYARD GOLF CLUB TO PAY FOR T-SHIRTS FOR THE SCHOOL PLAY CAST AND CREW; 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

Adjournment

- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MR. WATTS AND SECONDED BY MS. CUTRER THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING UNANIMOUSLY ADJOURNED AT 5:40PM: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

continued >

Appendix A: Meetings/Events

- MVRHS Design Interviews – 8:30AM, Tuesday, April 23, 2024
- AISC – Thursday, May 2, 2024 – Chilmark School
- TSC – 4:00PM, Tuesdays, May 14, 2024 June 11, 2024
- Project Status & Planning – 1:00PM Tuesdays,
- Annual/Special Town Meeting – Tuesday, May 28, 2024
- Town Election – Tuesday, June 11, 2024

Appendix B: Actions

Prin. Custer/Asst. Prin. Ogden – coordinate with professional team re: old FFE surplus.
- ELL Director Leah Palmer will take any little student chairs/desks/tables

Asst. Prin. Ogden – coordinate with Warner Lawson & Jenny Royal re: Project Headway equipment.

Asst. Prin. Ogden – email SOA submittal to anyone requesting it.

Prin. Custer – contact Chris Blessen re: Graphics Working Group
- Any/all language should also be in Portuguese.

Prin. Custer – request Cabinet agenda item: Portuguese vs. Spanish curriculum

Prin. Custer/Supt. Smith – consider custodian job flexibility.

May Agenda

- Minutes 4/9/24
- Staffing Update – Portuguese vs. Spanish,

Appendix C: Documents on File

- Agenda 4/9/24
- Tisbury School Events (March 2024)
- TSC/TSBC Meeting – Construction Manager Update 04/09/24 (4 p.)
- Tisbury School, School Committee Meeting April 09, 2024 (7 p.)
- Tisbury School Addition and Renovations Project Invoices, For Period: February 24, 2024 – March 29, 2024
- Ogden cover email re: Student Opportunity Act Info for 4/9/24 SC Meeting (2 p.) 4/5/24
- Section 1 Summarize your district’s plan... (15 p.) 4/4/24
- Tisbury School, Staffing – update (as of April 9, 2024)
- Hayes email re: Letter of Resignation 3/18/24
- Tisbury School Fund Balances Fiscal Year, 2023-2024 3/8/24
- Tisbury School Site Budget Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (4 p.) 4/9/24
- Friedman cover email re: Tisbury School Budget – FY25 Version #5
- Tisbury School FY’25 Budget Analysis, Version #5, March 28, 2024
- Tisbury School Budget, Version for 2024/2025 #5, March 28, 2024 (6 p.)

Minutes respectfully submitted by Office On Call/Marni Lipke.

Marni Lipke – Recorder

Date

Amy Houghton – TSC Chair

Date

Minutes approved 5/14/24