

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
5:30PM, Monday, February 12, 2024
By Zoom or at the West Tisbury School**

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Present: Chair – Jim Newman, Roxanne Ackerman*, Robert Lionette, Skipper Manter, Alex Salop,

Others: Supt's Shared Services Office: Richie Smith, Mark Friedman, Hope MacLeod,
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Mary Boyd, Susan Stevens,
Towns: WT FinCom – Greg Orcutt,
Press: Louisa Hufstader – Gazette, MVTV
Recorder: Marni Lipke

*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.
(*Recorder's note: Discussions are summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.*)

Approval of Minutes (Agenda item #II)

A. Including But Not Limited To: January 10, 2024, and January 18, 2024

• ALEX SALOP MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING MINUTES:

- JANUARY 10, 2024,

- JANUARY 18, 2024;

SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, ABSTENTIONS AS ABSENT: JIM NEWMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.

Principals' Report (Agenda Item #III)

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

1. Principal's Report

The year was rolling out well and everyone was back after a successful ski trip. Tomorrow had just been declared a snow day.

B. Susan Stevens – Chilmark School (See documents on file.)

1. Principal's Report

* During this conversation Roxanne Ackerman entered the meeting.

Wednesday Feb. 14th was a Professional Development (PD) day where staff examined quarterly State approved test results for areas of instructional gaps or weakness from grade to grade. Chilmark also had a successful ski trip.

2. Construction Update

- Final wire covering was delayed due to a contractor with a broken leg.
- The generator was on site but not yet installed. The gas company required that the trench be re-dug. Most work was scheduled for the February break.

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- There would be a training for staff and custodians on operation and maintenance of the mini-split thermostats and system.
- After the pitched roof insulation is completed Cape Light Compact/Rise Engineering will inspect it for energy efficiency and possible rebate.

Finance (Agenda Item #IV)

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

- There were no particular concerns with any site. For both the Chilmark and WTS sites:
 - The Teacher Salary line variances were a timing issue which would be resolved by School Choice fund transfers;
 - There were sufficient residuals to cover health insurance shortfalls which were still in flux, although this was probably about the order of magnitude;
 - As part of a national trend, building insurance continued to rise more than 10% annually.
 - Skipper Manter again raised the issue of monthly transfers to deficits. However since Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) Business Administrator Mark Friedman's kept the UIRSC well-informed, other members were reluctant to increase his workload.
- Assessments were coming in as expected. Medicare and Ch. 70 funding was slightly lower than expected. Interest income was higher. Ch. 71 Transportation was sent at the end of the fiscal year.

C. Up Island Regional School District (UIRSD) Certified Excess and Deficiency (E & D) (See documents on file.)

The UIRSD financial secretaries and MVPS financial staff were commended for a clean balance sheet. E & D was certified as expected at \$181,591 of which \$50,000 was committed to the Fiscal Year 2025(FY25) Budget (see Minutes: 12/5/23 p.2, & 12/20/23 p.2). The UIRSC again discussed E & D versus Contingency noting:

- auditor recommendation for higher E & D reserves;
- E & D as a factor in bond rating;
- the 45 day and Select Board review prerequisite to E & D spending;
- Contingency line as a step closer to easy expenditure;
- FY24 Contingency draws for additional staff, and
- FY24-25 insurance increases.

D. Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Budget Recertification – Vote Required

(See documents on file & 12/20/23 Minutes.)

Now that E & D was certified the FY25 Budget certification should be confirmed and (in keeping with long-standing practice) the regional assessment formula voted.

- SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO:
 - CONFIRM AND RECERTIFY 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,
 - AND TO APPROVE THE USE OF THE REGIONAL ASSESSMENT FORMULA;
- ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION TABLED.

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The Cape Cod Municipal Health Group (CCMHG) voted an 8% health insurance rate increase, which was 0.5% higher than budgeted. Mr. Friedman advised that this was a small enough variance to be absorbed into the FY25 Budget, and that it was inadvisable to increase budgets so late in the season when 2 Towns had already conducted their budget hearings. The UIRSC argued that the budget should be as accurate as possible so this increase, the FY24 overages and the revenue forecast should be reflected. Mr. Friedman suggested that the E & D offset be fractionally increased to account for any changes. As calculations involved multiple sites and changes the UIRSC requested:

- the 3 Town Select Boards and Finance Committees be informed of the new insurance rates,
- and a one item meeting be posted for this Friday (see below: Meetings/Events);

E. Legal Counsel for Clean School Bus Grant (See 1/10/24 Minutes p.3-4 #IV B.)

It was a conflict of interest for MVPS Counsel Murphy Lamere & Murphy to represent/advise either UIRSD or Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) in the inter-municipal agreement for the grant and charging stations. They recommended 2 independent firms. The UIRSC asked costs in terms of budget lines and if the UIRSD would be made whole.

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROACH INDEPENDENT LAW FIRMS TO REPRESENT THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT IN REGARDS TO THE INTER-MUNICIPAL AGREEMENT NEEDED FOR THE CLEAN BUS AND CHARGING STATIONS GRANT IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER:*

- *REYNOLDS, RAPPAPORT, LLC*
- *KAPLAN & HACKNEY,*
- *ANDERSON & KREIGER,*
- *BROOKS & DERENSIS, P.C.;*

ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION: JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—ABSTAIN, ALEX SALOP—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE.

B. West Tisbury School Computer Equipment Lease (See documents on file.)

The WTS replenished computers on a rotating basis, and this year a lease agreement was chosen.

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE LEASE FOR WEST TISBURY SCHOOL COMPUTERS AS PRESENTED; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE.*

Superintendent's Report (Agenda Item #V)

The All Island School Committee (AISC) was meeting at each MVPS and the March 7th meeting was set for the WTS.

C. Student Support Services Update

• *Think Kids* trainings were scheduled and on-going, with a goal to training MVPS staff to become trainers. The UIRSC had some hesitation with this system. It was designed to give teachers a way to think about a situation from a child's perspective in order to deescalate problematic situations.

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- The State was instigating a new Individual Education Plan (IEP) format—no changes to the law or the process. The new format was more child centered and visual with clear responsibility for teachers to collect data and track progress. The UIRSC noted the increased burden on teachers. The trainings were to alleviate some of this sense of being overwhelmed. It was noted that a lot of data was collected but not used. The new format was mandated to take effect in Fall 2024, but the MVPS signed up for staff trainings and a parent information session for a possible spring 2024 roll out.

B. Chilmark Principal Search Update (See documents on file.)

The following organizations were represented on the Search Committee:

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), MV Youth, Wampanoag Tribe, Island Grown Initiative (IGI), Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), Chilmark School Advisory Council (SAC), Chilmark Select Board, UIRSC, Chilmark School staff, the Martha's Vineyard Educators Association (MVEA), WTS Principal Donna Lowell-Bettencourt and Superintendent Richard Smith. The ad was posted with New England School Development Council (NESDEC) on School Spring, Indeed, Ed Week, National Association of Elementary School Principals, School Leadership, 2.0 and Association of Educational Service Agencies, and locally the MV Times and the Vineyard Gazette.

- After reviewing the applications and 2 rounds of interviews the Search Committee chose 2 finalists, both with Massachusetts administrative licenses:

- Alicia Knight a 3rd Grade teacher at the Edgartown School, and

- Kate Squire a 4th Grade teacher from Concord, MA.

The candidates would each tour the School on February 16th and 20th. The tours would include meetings with parents, staff, community and UIRSC members; tours of the School and community, morning circle, assemblies, etc.

- The UIRSC was requested to meet with and ask similar questions to both candidates.

- The Principal was hired by the Superintendent with feedback from the UIRSC and educational community. Supt. Smith would be collaborative with the UIRSC on contract parameters.

- The regional housing problem had already been discussed and Ms. Squire had a fairly firm promise of housing.

Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair (Agenda Item #VIII)

- The requested Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) addendum to the Chilmark Preschool lease (see 1/18/24 Minutes p.1-2 #II) wording had not been included but the lease did not preclude an MOU. The named parties were the Town of Chilmark and the UIRSD. The lessor had the opportunity to refine the lease within 60 days after signing. Robert Lionette suggested that administrators be included in the negotiations.

- UIRSC concerns included: parking/traffic, disruption during construction, responsibility for shared resources, i.e. septic, water, utilities, etc.

- IT WAS THE CONSENSUS OF THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO AUTHORIZE ROBERT LIONETTE TO NEGOTIATE A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE TOWN OF CHILMARK AND ANY OTHER LEASE SIGNATORY.

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- The Chilmark Board of Health recommended a new water collector and testing company. (Only one date had previously been missed when the School was closed during the Covid pandemic.) Projected cost was ~ \$2,000. It was suggested the WTS and Chilmark School partner on water testing (see 6/20/23 Minutes p.5 #VIII).
- A parent letter on School Choice issues was resolved by Supt. Smith.

Public Comment – None (Agenda Item #VII)

Meetings/Events

• UIRSC – 8:30AM, Friday, February 16, 2024 – WTS/Zoom

• Chilmark Principal Candidate – 10:00AM & 1:00PM, Friday, February 16, 2024 & Tuesday February 20, 2024– Chil. Com. Center

• AISC – 5:30PM, Tuesday, March 7, 2024 – WTS

• UIRSC – TBD – 5:30PM, Monday, March 18, 2024 – WTS/Zoom

Adjournment (Agenda Item #VIII)

• ROXANNE ACKERMAN MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 7:02PM; ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: JIM NEWMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE.

Documents on File:

- Agenda 2/12/24
- All Expenditure Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (15 p.) 2/8/24
- Revenue Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2023- 2024 2/11/24
- UIRSD FY2025 Assessment – V#6 Certified 12/20/2023
- Financial Services, Education Finance, Lease Documentation Checklist (8 p.)
- Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, Excess and Deficiency Calculation, Fiscal Year 2024 (2 p.) 2/5/24
- Chat
 - 17:31:40 From Richie Smith: I have to leave for a moment
 - 17:32:34 From Mary Boyd: In Person Additions:
 - 17:32:38 From Mary Boyd: Donna LB
 - 17:36:55 From Mary Boyd: Roxanne A
 - 18:31:34 From Louisa Hufstader • Vineyard Gazette Senior Writer: running between this meeting and MVC in the other room & thought cam was OFF. Apologies to all.
 - 18:32:17 From Mary Boyd: No worries Louisa!
 - 18:48:28 From Mary Boyd: Sorry about that – small shelf for the camera.
 - 19:02:15 From Mary Boyd: Thank you everyone.

Minutes approved 5/20/24