

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
6:00PM, Monday, April 22, 2024
By Zoom or at the West Tisbury School**

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

Others: Murphy Lamere Murphy – Peter Sumner,
Supt's Shared Services Office: Richie Smith, Mark Friedman,
Hope MacLeod,
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Mary Boyd, Susan Stevens,
Staff: Mary Ambulos, Donna Swift,
Chilmark SAC: Jessica Mason,
Chilmark Preschool – Anne Mayhew, Deb Zetterberg,
Press: Julie Soikkeli – MVTV

*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 February 12, 16, and March 18, 2024 – Tabled

Principal's Reports (Agenda Item #III)

B. Susan Stevens – Chilmark School

1. Resignation (See documents on file.)

The UIRSC would miss Ms. Barca-Tinus for her excellent work and forthright manner.

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO ACCEPT WITH GRATITUDE AND REGRET THE RESIGNATION OF CHILMARK SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY TEACHER AND TECHNOLOGIST REBECCA BARCA-TINUS AT THE END OF THE 2023-24 SCHOOL YEAR; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE.*

• A replacement presented some challenges since traditionally the technology teacher and technologist were 2 different positions, one required teacher certification and was part of the Massachusetts Teachers Retirement System and teachers union, the other was a contracted position not requiring certification. Options depended on potential candidates: possibly within the UIRSD or the Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS), and then submitted for Mass. Retirement System for a designation of status.

2. New Principal Visiting Events

Head of School Susan Stevens invited future Principal Kate Squire on a visit to see the May Day celebrations, staff and class set-up.

3. Surplus Materials

The recent construction left a mini-split (donated – see 6/18/18 Minutes p.5 #VI A) and 2 Energy Recovery Ventilation units (ERVs). Ms. Stevens proposed keeping one ERV for parts and surplus the mini-split and the additional ERU—which were requested for the preschool building project. The surplus process was reviewed:

- determination of value (if over \$10,000 a bid process is required);
- advertisement,
- disposal to municipalities and then private entity/non-profits/etc.

• *ROXANNE ACKERMAN MOVED TO DECLARE SURPLUS THE CHILMARK SCHOOL MINI-SPLIT AND ENERGY RECOVERY UNIT TO BE OFFERED TO THE UP ISLAND TOWNS AND THEN TO THE CHILMARK PRESCHOOL IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROPER PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE.*

4. Class Setup for Next Year

In view of their concerns, Chilmark School staff set out to visit other kindergarten/1st grade (K/1) classes and found almost none in the United States. Further research showed that kindergartens were most effective as a stand-alone class. After months of discussion it was proposed the class configuration be changed to: kindergarten, 1st grade, 2nd/3rd grade, and 4th/5th grade. Students would still share activities: reading time, recess, lunch, etc. Previously class configuration was dictated by enrollment numbers (e.g. K/1, 1st, 2nd, 2nd/3rd, 4th/5th), sometimes altered to insure consistent curriculum learning. There was sufficient space, staffing and budget to accommodate the proposed change, which would be discussed with Ms. Squire.

5. Update on Status of Basketball Court Construction Work

The Chilmark Summer Committee instituted a change to the basketball court while School was in session without consulting or notifying the School. As part of the School play area, construction was not fenced and the School had to forego use of the entire blacktop. The project was partially completed (but not to the satisfaction of the School PhysEd teacher) and work would resume in a couple weeks. The UIRSC informed the Chilmark Select Board (CSB) who intervened, and a letter from the construction company had been received informing the School of the timing for the next part of the project. For the safety of the students the School should be informed in a timely manner of all future projects which should be properly fenced.

6. Update/Discussion of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)/Lease

Terms with Town and Preschool (See 3/18/24 Minutes p.1-2 #III B 5.)

After meeting with MVPS Counsel Peter Sumner, UIRSC representative Robert Lionette brought the matter before the meeting. Mr. Sumner explained that as a 30 year standard commercial lease with no requirement for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) he recommended further clauses be embedded in the lease itself to protect the UIRSD as a public school facility such as: shared septic, access, liability, parking, construction process assurances, specification of the “lessor”, who signs the lease for the UIRSD, etc.

- The lease extension had not yet been signed; changes would not constitute wholesale revisions and with the cooperation of all parties, it should be possible to work within the preschool design

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and construction timeframe for a fall 2024 ground-breaking—after the close of summer camp. Mr. Sumner recommended a UIRSC representative be appointed to work with Counsel.

- The sessions should be limited to the UIRSD whose interest they would be protecting.
- Hopefully the amended lease could be voted at the May meeting (see below: Meetings/Events).
- Negotiations for the MOU would be suspended pending the lease outcome.
- Lease negotiations would not conflict with the Friends of Chilmark Preschool continuation of the permitting process.

- Friends of Chilmark Preschool would submit the final stamped plans to the UIRSC.

• *JIM NEWMAN MOVED TO APPOINT ROXANNE ACKERMAN TO REPRESENT THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE WORKING WITH COUNSEL MURPHY LAMERE & MURPHY AND THE SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE ON THE LEASE FOR THE CHILMARK PRESCHOOL; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE.*

• The above issues and Ms. Stevens' retirement highlighted the need for clear understanding of responsibilities of all the parties on the Town Campus, in particular lack of a lease with Town of Chilmark after 20-25 years (see 1/24/00 Minutes p.1 #VII A). The West Tisbury School lease had been submitted to the CSB as a model. The focus of the lease was not to impose rent but rather to delineate the basic rights and liabilities of all parties. Despite Skipper Manter's objection that he would be a difficult representative:

• *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO APPOINT SKIPPER MANTER TO REPRESENT THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO ENGAGE WITH COUNSEL MURPHY LAMERE & MURPHY TO NEGOTIATE AN UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT LEASE WITH THE TOWN OF CHILMARK; JIM NEWMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE.*

• The UIRSC and Ms. Stevens had received complaints that Chilmark School students' photographs might be included in publicity for a private entity using the School building. Confidentiality laws required public schools to obtain parental releases for photos of children, however this did not apply to private entities. Authority was unclear but the Superintendent and/or School Principal could instruct the entity to remove the photos of any Chilmark School children. Robert Lionette would meet with Superintendent Richie Smith on the issue.

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

WTS Principal Donna Lowell-Bettencourt was working with Town Boards on the kitchen trailer permitting process.

1. School Improvement Plan (SIP) (See documents on file.)

This was a 2-year SIP with examples of specific actions.

• Initial work would establish measurable outcomes. Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt and the School Advisory Council (SAC) would submit progress reports in late summer 2024 and again in January and June 2025.

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- Currently all funding was:
 - in the Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) budget—e.g. summer school (see 11/3/23 Minutes p.2), or
 - from outside sources like the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) or grants e.g. Family Engagement grant (see 1/10/24 Minutes p.4 #III A 1).
- Goal 1: Strengthen community engagement by fostering partnerships with families in order to create an inclusive learning experience for all students.
- Goal 2: Support all students in the attainment of grade-level essential standards.
- Goal 3: Research current finding on adolescents (middle school age) and share salient information with students and parents. Also, identify areas of impact for implementation of research-based practices from findings.
 - This last goal was based on substantial feedback, observation and requests for support due to a mental health crisis among all grades but especially with middle school students. WTS had a long practice of 2 guidance counselor who were now highly sought after. Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt was exploring a State grant for a part- or full-time additional counselor.
- *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO APPROVE THE WEST TISBURY SCHOOL 2023-2025 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN; ROXANNE ACKERMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE.*

2. Out of State Travel

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE FOLLOWING OUT OF STATE TRAVEL FOR WEST TISBURY SCHOOL STUDENTS AND STAFF;*
 - *7TH GRADE SKI TRIP TO GUNSTOCK MOUNTAIN, GILFORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE WITH HELMETS, FEBRUARY 5-7, 2025, AND*
 - *8TH GRADE UNITED KINGDOM EXCHANGE, WITH UNITED KINGDOM STUDENTS IN WEST TISBURY SCHOOL IN OCTOBER 2024 AND WEST TISBURY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM IN JUNE 2025;*
- JIM NEWMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE.*

3. Follow Up on Status of Affordable Housing Project Abutting Campus

- Discussion of Regional Agreement** (See documents on file.) (Agenda Item #VII)
- The antiquated 1993 Regional Agreement should be updated. Much of this could be done by embedding current Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) regulations and updating language. Some areas were at the discretion of the UIRSC and Towns:
- West Tisbury interest in a 3 yr. enrollment averaging to smooth out assessment spikes and dips;
 - possible changes in student count definitions, e.g. building vs. foundation census;
 - Skipper Manter request to re-argue finances (see Minutes: 6/19/06 p.4-6 #IV A, & 8/21/06).
 - It was agreed that it be a late summer project after the Preschool and lease actions but before budget season.

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Finance (Agenda Item #IV)

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

- There were no new issues. WTS site had very few negative variances. The Chilmark site had more but they were small (e.g. Advertising, Postage, etc.) and could to be covered by residuals. The Districtwide site's previously noted variances (mostly insurance) should remain stable.
- Revenues showed a number of changes. Assessments were on target. Medicaid funding could fluctuate based on students.
 - Chapter 70 would exceed projections by ~ \$76,000. Higher rates increased interest income.
 - Chapter 71 Transportation was more than last year but slightly less than FY24 projections.
 - Charter School costs (tuition/reimbursement) would be substantially greater than expected due to higher enrollment of UIRSD students.
- Overall there could be a \$25-30,000 revenue shortfall (in a \$14,400,000 budget) that would likely be covered by expense residuals.

B. Grants Donations

MVPS was adapting to State changes in grant protocol that would send funds directly to schools.

Superintendent's Report (Agenda Item #V)

A. General Update

- The Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) design selection committee including 3 Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) representatives would choose the MVRHS Project architect/designer at tomorrow's meeting—candidates being Jonathan Levi Architects and Tappé Architects.
- The Edgartown School Principal and Assistant Principal as well as the Oak Bluffs School (OBS) Principal were retiring at the end of this 2023-24 school year.
 - The OBS position was advertised with the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) with a May 7th closing date, after which the hiring process would proceed as robustly as possible (see also below: Documents on File – Chat).
 - Superintendent Richie Smith was looking internally for Edgartown School interim administrator(s).
 - Supt. Smith thanked Ms. Stevens for the manner and timely notice of her retirement, including her invitation to incoming Principal Kate Squires.
- Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt was the first MVPS Administrator to submit and get DESE approval for her Student Opportunity Act (SOA) Plan (see 3/18/24 Minutes p.3 #3).
- The UIRSC was encouraged to attend the Chilmark and Aquinnah Annual Town Meetings (see below: Meetings/Events).

B. Student Support Services Update

At the end of the meeting Student Support Director Hope MacLeod announced the annual parent training/basic rights meetings at the end of May. The Island Parents Advisory Council (IPAC) was currently inactive, although it was hoped interest could be generated at the trainings and through a Federation for Special Needs pilot program.

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Impact Aid (See documents on file.) (Agenda Item #VI)

- Supt. Smith and MVPS Business Administrator Mark Friedman had a good meeting with the Wampanoag Tribal Council—one of two annual visits. There were no concerns, questions or amendments to the Wampanoag Tribe Policies and Procedures for this cycle. The six policies were briefly reviewed:
 - dissemination of relevant information;
 - provide opportunities to tribe parents and guardians to allow for their views on activities;
 - annually assess tribe children participation in educational programs—Mr. Friedman will work with the UIRSD Principals to gather statistics to be reported to the Tribe and the UIRSC;
 - modification of the Policies and Procedures based on the Tribe's requests;
 - response in writing/email and dissemination to the Tribe of any comments;
 - provide a copy of Policies and Procedures to the Tribe.
- The UIRSD was hovering at the minimum qualification for impact aid, literally depending on a single student differential. The District did not qualify last year and if it qualifies this year the Aid would be less than \$20,000. The UIRSC requested an accounting of recent Impact Aid.
- It was emphasized that the Impact Aid/Policies and Procedures cycle was a valuable process whatever the monetary return.
- *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO APPROVE THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT WAMPANOAG TRIBE OF GAY HEAD (AQUINNAH) POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025; SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE.*

MCAS Discussion with Focus on Transitions (Agenda Item #VIII)

- During the budget cycle it was reported the 60% of 9th grade students were not at grade level in Math. The UIRSC was interested in UIRSD student transitions data, both from Chilmark School to WTS and UIRSD students to MVRHS.
- The Chilmark/WTS transition data was readily available on the DESE website. However UIRSD Administration did not have access to individual MVRHS MCAS student scores.
 - In general, UIRSD students performed and placed very well. It was noted that high academic performance did not always calibrate with good habits or MCAS scores, although high MCAS scores always indicated good academic performance.
 - The UIRSC requested Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt report on UIRSD 9th grade student status.

Meetings/Events

- AISC – 5:30PM, Thursday, May 2, 2024
- **UIRSC – TBD – 5:30PM, Monday, May 20, 2024 – Aquinnah**
- Annual Town Meetings
 - Chilmark 7:00PM, Tuesday April 23, 2024 – Community Center
 - Aquinnah – 7:30PM, Tuesday, May 14, 2024 – Aquinnah Town Hall

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Adjournment

- *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO ADJOURN; MOTION SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE.*

Documents on File:

- Agenda 4/22/24
- Lowell-Bettencourt cover email re: UIRSD Meeting Materials for Tonight 4/22/24
- West Tisbury School 2023-2025 School Improvement Plan (2 p.)
- All Expenditure Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (15 p.) 4/22/24
- Revenue Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2023- 2024 4/22/24
- Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) Policies and Procedures, Up Island Regional School District, 2023-2024 School Year (5 p.)
- Up-Island Regional School District of Martha's Vineyard for Grades Pre-K through Eighth Final Proposed Regional Agreement October 27, 1993 (8 p.)
- Chat: Richie Smith – 02:00:36 – The OB School Committee member is Laurel Schneider, professor in the Graduate Department of Religion, Vanderbilt University

Minutes approved 5/20/24