

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
5:30PM, Monday, October 28, 2024
Chilmark School or By Zoom Cloud Conference**

Page 1 of 6

Present: Chair – Jim Newman, Roxanne Ackerman, Robert Lionette, Skipper Manter*,
Alex Salop,
Others: Richard Andre, Recorder: Marni Lipke
Supt.'s Shared Services Office: Richard Smith, Mark Friedman, Kim Garrison,
Hope MacLeod,
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Kate Squire, Mary Boyd,
Staff: Chris Mara,
Towns: WT Treasurer Kathy Logue, Greg Orcutt – WT FinCom,
Press: Louisa Hufstader – Gazette,

*Late arrivals or early departures of UIRSC members

Call to Order (Agenda item #II)

The Up-Island Regional School Committee (UIRSC) meeting was called to order.
(Recorder's note: Discussions are summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.)

Finance (Agenda item #II)

A. Town Input on Annual Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB) Trust Contributions

- The Town of Chilmark requested a formal presentation on the history and status of the UIRSD OPEB contributions.
 - West Tisbury Treasurer Kathy Logue:
 - noted her long, serious commitment to OPEB,
 - commended the UIRSC for exceeding the Actuarially Determined Employer Contribution (ADEC) and funding 46% of its liability;
 - noted the payment of employee and new hire OPEB costs, and a large annual sum to the Dukes County OPEB Trust;
 - and that pension liability payments would be shifted to pay down OPEB in 2031.
- In view of rising education budgets, she personally advised that going forward, the UIRSD adopt a less aggressive policy by eliminating the yearly \$50,000 increase to the OPEB Trust payments, and hold them stable for a period. However, she was only in favor of this if the \$50,000 was a budget reduction, not if it was repurposed for other items.
- West Tisbury Finance Committee (FinCom) member Greg Orcutt was against this suggestion, wished to retain the annual increase, and requested the Towns be consulted.
 - When making tough decisions the UIRSC focused on the best interest of its students and communities; for example this year a substantial increase was expected in the Superintendent Shared Services (Central Office) budget.

B. Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Budget Transfers – Tabled (See 10/1/24 Minutes p.3 #B.)

C. Prior Year Invoices (See documents on file.)

In view of a processing delay due to the change of staff:

UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
October 28, 2024

Page 2 of 6

• ROXANNE ACKERMAN MOVED TO PAY THE WHAT'S IN YOUR TAP \$850 PRIOR YEAR BILL FROM THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 CHILMARK SITE MAINTENANCE LINE; ROBERT LIONETTE AND SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.

D. Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) Budget (See documents on file.)

(Executive Session: To Discuss Strategy with Respect to Collective Bargaining or Litigation If the Chair Declares that an Open meeting May Have a Detrimental Effect on the Negotiating position of the Public Body.)

* During this conversation Skipper Manter left the meeting at 5:59PM.

- Version #1 at 7.0% above FY25, was a level service budget with the same staffing as this school year projected forward for known contractual costs: salaries, health insurance, etc. In addition a few previously fully or partly grant-funded positions were shifted into the budget due to information that some grants might be discontinued (e.g. the Student Opportunities Act, (SOA) grants) or reduced (e.g. Title One funding).
- It also included the \$50,000 OPEB increase.
- So far Chilmark School capital articles were:
 - ~ \$225,000 for Bell Tower repairs, and
 - upgrades to door security and American Disabilities Act (ADA) access—not yet estimated.
- Supt. Shared Services Office FY26 first draft budget rose 16-17% but some modification was expected for the final version in late November.
- Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) transportation was expected to increase modestly.
- Final debt service for the Chilmark School Heating/Ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC) project would also show a moderate increase. However, this was the final year of the West Tisbury School (WTS) miscellaneous project bond (see 5/10/11 Minutes)—reducing the debt service by \$9-11,000.

Principals' Reports – Donna and Kate (Agenda Item #III)

A. Kim Garrison (Up Island) Education School Climate Survey (EDSCLS) and Mid Atlantic Equity Consortium (MAEC) (See documents on file.)

The EDSCLS worked on multiple levels to gauge school climate. A safe, challenging climate benefited students and teachers, fostered academic engagement and positive relations, and reduced problem behaviors and staff turnover. The same survey topics (engagement, environment, safety) were given to instructional and non-instructional staff and to caregivers (parent/guardians). A Score of 2.5 delineated equally favorable and unfavorable answers, so a score below it was problematic and above it was positive.

- The 2 UIRSD Schools had some common and a few individual results.
- Staff perspective was favorable overall for both schools. Students were encouraged to take academic risks. Teachers tried to understand why students were not participating in class and recognized students for positive behavior. The Schools felt safe, clean, and pleasant. Areas that required attention included:
 - training to teach students on Individual Education Plans (IEPs),
 - staff concerns on burnout, caring for themselves and their families,

UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
October 28, 2024

Page 3 of 6

- student bullying/cyberbullying, physical behaviors and community focus on substance use.
- The UIRSD had good caregiver participation compared with rest of the MVPS. The results sometimes differed from the staff surveys; for example substance use did not come up—possibly because Chilmark School did not include a junior high. Caregivers:
 - felt staff was available and cared about their child;
 - were comfortable speaking with them about a child's behavior, and
 - felt their child belonged in the school which had a pleasant building.
- Bullying and cyber bullying were a common concern. Other concerns included:
 - instructional materials and technology to support different cultures;
 - equal fairness on school rules and discipline,
 - caregivers use of technology to support child learning.
- The Chilmark School Improvement Plan (SIP) (see below: p.4 #C 1) dovetailed nicely with this survey. WTS administration and staff had worked deeply on these issues for the last 3 years. It was good to see the schools moving in the same direction.
- The UIRSD thanked UIRSD Administrators and Behavioral Health Coordinator Kim Garrison.

The **MAEC** data, collected last winter/spring, was reviewed by small teams in each school and then sent to regional centers for analysis and posting—the website would continue to build information. The data examined 8 categories ratings were 0 (lowest) to 3 (highest)—with +, =, or – signs to show the comparison to other MVPS.

- Chilmark School's lowest score was in Organization/Administration and its highest was School Culture. WTS's lowest score was School Policy and it's highest Organization/ Administration.
- Both Schools did well hiring support for students' socio-emotional needs, and in school culture.
- Growth opportunities included policies addressing racial trauma, preferred name/use and pronouns, and an inclusive mission statement. The Schools already had many of these practices (e.g. transgender bathrooms) that were not yet codified. The All Island School Committee (AISC) Policy Subcommittee work (see below: p.5) would address these issues for all MVPS.

B. Kate and Donna (Up Island MCAS) (See documents on file.)

Both UIRSD schools showed very strong results and made significant progress towards their targets. Chilmark School (which was sometimes statistically too small for measurable results) jumped 2 spaces and the WTS was the only MVPS in the Meets or Exceeds category.

- Parents found MCAS student and school data to be very confusing.
- Superintendent Richie Smith agreed the data was highly complex. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) was primarily interested in student and school growth by calculating a composite of English/Language Arts (E/LA), Math, Science and Civics scores, along with chronic absenteeism and MCAS participation. Massachusetts was one of the highest student knowledge States in the nation and UIRSD students met and often exceeded grade levels.
- Subgroups included: English Language Learners (ELL), Special Education (students with IEPs), and economically disadvantaged families.
- All schools missed their goals during the Covid pandemic and were now on recovery paths for all students. The WTS had focused on and bought a new curriculum for Math (see Minutes: 10/21/13 p.4, & 8/19/14 p.3), and was now looking at E/LA curriculums.

C. Kate Squire – Chilmark School

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

Chilmark School Principal Kate Squire worked with the School Advisory Council (SAC) over the summer, using the EDSCLS data to update the 2-year Chilmark SIP.

- Goal #1 Refine & codify schools education framework which remained committed to multi-age education.
- Goal #2 Ensure the school is inclusive, welcoming, and fosters a sense of belonging for all students, parents, teachers, staff and community members. Ms. Squires particularly noted the streamlined community communications.
- Goal #3 Provide academic and socio-emotional support that meets the needs of all students. The multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) was Ms. Squires focus during the summer.
- Goal #4 Review, evaluate and catalog school traditions. A good example was the revived school community lunches.
- Goal #5 Create a sustainable school environment. This goal would engage parent expertise with such things as the new composting program.
- The UIRSC appreciated the timing of the SIP as a road map for budget season and as an acknowledgement of the unique Chilmark multi-age school.
- *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO APPROVE THE 2024-2025 CHILMARK SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN; ROXANNE ACKERMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

D. Donna Lowell-Bettencourt – West Tisbury School

1. Surplus Vote (See documents on file.)

- The obsolete computers could no longer be upgraded for security, and were not supported by the manufacturers.
- Although they might have some vintage value, synthesizer keyboards were 25 yrs. old and parts were more expensive than replacement.
- Central Office would advertise all the items but they were most likely to be recycled for parts.
- *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO SURPLUS THE WEST TISBURY COMPUTER AND SYNTHESIZER INVENTORY AS PRESENTED; JIM NEWMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

Superintendent's Report – General Update (Agenda Item #IV)

The Islandwide professional development (PD) day focused on updating systemwide goals, and on making sure staff recognized and celebrated progress. Thanks went to all staff for the hard work that resulted in the MCAS Accountability reports; every MVPS made progress: 1 – high performing, 1 – met goals, 4 – made substantial progress and 1 made moderate progress— compared to last year: 1 – substantial progress, 3 – moderate progress, and 1 – low progress.

- The AISC Policy Subcommittee met every 2 weeks with Jim Hardy of Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) with the goal of completing a strong MVPS policy handbook by the end of the 2024-25 School Year.
- The Personnel Subcommittee was working on the Superintendent's goals and evaluation.

UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
October 28, 2024

Page 5 of 6

- The AISC would discuss/refine the next version of the Supt. Shared Services budget, and hopefully vote it in time to be included in other MVPS budgets (see below: Meetings/Events).

Director of Support Services Update (See documents on file.) (Agenda Item #V)

- The annual Snapshot showed the prior year's data.
- The student-centered *Think Kids* was going well, with coaches available in each building and consultants on-line for questions. Families provided a lot of hard but useful information.
- Shared Services was fully hired, including a shared 3 day a week Speech and Language teacher from Cape Cod Collaborative.
- The Department was working to re-activate the Island Parent Advisory Council (IPAC). A School Committee member took a training with Hope MacLeod to recruit and engage parents.
- New Inclusion Specialist Heather Rogers Rodrigues continued assisting teachers in behavior support and assessment, and was canvassing all MVPS kindergarten teachers in order to support a large group of pre-schoolers—which she followed up with documentation and conversations with administration. Her other focus area was teenager services.

Approval of Minutes (Agenda item #VI)

A. Including But Not Limited to October 1, 2024 & July 15, 2024 – Tabled

Chilmark Pre-School and Lease Discussion to Include Liability Insurance Policies on UIRSD Schools (Agenda Item #VIII)

A. Friends of Chilmark Preschool Request for Letter of Support

- The Pre-School requested a UIRSC letter of recommendation for grant applications to add to its letters from other organizations. Robert Lionette volunteered to draft the letter.
- *ROXANNE ACKERMAN MOVED TO SEND A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION FOR THE CHILMARK PRESCHOOL GRANT APPLICATIONS; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

B. Review Recommendations of Legal Counsel

(Executive Session #6: To Consider the Purchase, Exchange, Lease or Value of Real Property If the Chair Declares that an Open meeting May Have a Detrimental Effect on the Negotiating position of the Public Body.)

(See Minutes: 3/18/24 p.1-2 #III B5, & 4/22/24 p.2-3 #III B6, & 5/20/24 p.1-2 #VI, & 7/15/24 p.3 #VI, & 10/1/24 p.6-7 #VIII.)

- To facilitate the completion of the lease, UIRSC liaison Robert Lionette suggested the UIRSC authorize counsel to release attorney/client privilege so UIRSC lease terms could be advanced to Pre-School counsel. Supt. Smith endorsed the suggestion. The lease terms would codify good protections for the Chilmark School for many years to come.
- *JIM NEWMAN MOVED TO RELEASE ATTORNEY CLIENT PRIVILEGE ON THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE TERMS FOR THE CHILMARK PRESCHOOL LEASE TO THE CHILMARK PRESCHOOL ATTORNEY; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROBERT LIONETTE —AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
October 28, 2024

Page 6 of 6

Personnel - Nothing to report.

(Agenda Item #IX)

A. Leave of Absence (LOA)

B. Resignation

C. Retirement

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

Meetings/Events

- AISC – 6:00PM, Thursday, November 7, 2024 – Zoom
- UIRSC Budget Workshop – 5:00PM, Monday, November 18, 2024 – Hybrid – WTS
- UIRSC Regular Meeting – 6:00PM, Monday, November 18, 2024 – Hybrid – WTS
- AISC – 6:00PM, Thursday, November 21, 2024 – TBD
- UIRSC Budget Workshop – 3:00PM, Thursday, December 5, 2024 – Hybrid – TBD
- UIRSC & Public Hearing – 5:30PM, Monday, December 16, 2024 – Hybrid – TBD
- UIRSC – TBD January 2025 – Aquinnah/Wampanoag Tribal location

Adjournment

Prin. Squire was delighted to welcome the UIRSC back to the Chilmark School.

• *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 7:20PM; ROXANNE ACKERMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: JIM NEWMAN—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

Documents on File:

- Agendas & Revised Agendas (8 p.) 10/28/24
- Friedman cover email re: UIRSD FY26 Budget – Version #1 10/28/24
- Up-Island Regional School District, FY26 General Fund Budget, Version # 1, 10-28-2024 Proposed (9 p.)
- UIRSD FY26 Budget Version #1 10/28/2024 – Proposed, Changes from FY25 Budget (2 p.)
- The West Tisbury School currently has a surplus synthesizer... (2 p.)
- Equitable Schools, Chilmark & West Tisbury Schools, Up-Island School Committee Meeting, October 28, 2024. Equitable Schools Co-Coordinator, Kim Garrison, MVYPS Behavioral Health Coordinator (10 p.)
- Engagement, Safety, Environment, UIRSD School Climate 2024, Chilmark & West Tisbury School Climate Surveys 2024, Prepared by Kim Garrison (10/28/24) (12 p.)
- Massachusetts School and District Profiles, Up-Island Regional, 2024 Official Accountability Report – Up-Island Regional (3 p.) 10/28/24
- *Proposed* Chilmark School Improvement Plan 2024-2026 (3 p.)
- Invoice, What's in Your Tap 6/11/2024
- Up-Island Regional Special Education – Snapshot SY 2023-2024 (2 p.)

Minutes approved 11/18/24