

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD  
3:00PM, Tuesday, November 18, 2024  
West Tisbury School and/or By Zoom Cloud Conference**

**Page 1 of 5**

Present: Acting Chair – Alex Salop, Roxanne Ackerman, Robert Lionette,  
Skipper Manter,  
Others: Supt.'s Shared Services Office: Richard Smith, Mark Friedman,  
Hope MacLeod  
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Kate Squire, Mary Boyd,  
Chilmark PreSchool: Rebekah Thomson, Keith Fenner,  
Music Street Architects – Dominic Dijamco, Josh Gothard  
Press: Lynn Fraker – MVTV, Louisa Hufstader – Gazette,  
Recorder: Marni Lipke \*Late arrivals or early departures

**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.)*

**Fiscal Year 2026 (FY2026 or FY26) Budget Workshop** (Agenda item #II)

(See documents on file, & 10/28/24 Minutes p.2 #D.)

- While acknowledging the very busy season involving budgets for all 5 Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) districts, the UIRSC requested more lead time on their budget versions.
- Version #2 showed a 7.9% increase and included UIRSD Administrative requests.
- Although shown as level funded, the Superintendent Shared Services (or Central) Office budget was currently at 13.8%—resulting in ~ \$210,000 increase to the UIRSD assessment.
- Transportation figures were still unknown.
- Principal Donna Lowell-Bettencourt presented the **West Tisbury School (WTS) Site** requested increases.
  - Line #249 – \$57,766.50 was for a 0.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) teacher previously funded by the Student Opportunity Act (SOA) which was expected to age out this year.
  - Line #256 – \$62,082.60 would cover a position funded by Title One—also expected to decrease.
  - Line #281 – \$2,900 for Referee Expenses followed the lower end of trended spending—the cost factor of winning more games and advancing into the finals.
  - Line #286 – \$780 Sports Expenses to keep pace with growing participation.
  - Line #336 – \$9,000 for purchase and maintenance contract on an Instructional Copier to replace the current failing machine which had logged over \$1,000,000 copies.
  - Line #407 – \$2,000 reflected real expenses for Water Testing & Maintenance no longer covered by the Town (see 6/20/23 Minutes p.5 #VIII).
  - Line #434 – \$25,299.40 in increased Building Insurance after an FY25 shortage and an estimated 10% FY26 rate rise.
  - Funds were shifted into the Education Support Professional (ESP) line from the Contingency Line for a 0.5 FTE position (see 12/19/22 Minutes p.4).

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD**  
**November 18, 2024**

**Page 2 of 5**

- A number of WTS one time capital expenses were itemized.
  - The outdoor basketball court needed refreshing and re-painting at \$12,000—there would be oversight but neither an Owners Project Manager (OPM) nor contingency were necessary. The UIRSC asked if this was eligible for Community Preservation funding.
  - Repair of the failing vestibule, koi and turtle ponds would be ~ \$8,500.
  - A section by section upgrade to interior door handles and locks was proposed at \$9,500 each section, plus an exterior courtyard door at \$10,900—both from the State Bid List, eliminating the bid process.
  - Nelson Mechanical estimated \$52,000 (plus OPM & contingency) to install mini-split air conditioning (AC) in critical areas—the nurse’s office, Information Technology (IT) room, Art room (often used in summer). [AC for the Gym (~ \$100,000) was on the list, but planned as a 2-year cost split in the near future or as part of the eventual electrification/net zero energy renovation (see below & 10/17/24 Minutes p.2-3 #VI.A/III.5)]. The UIRSC was cautious about upgrades that might be redundant to the upcoming net zero energy renovation.
  - The UIRSC requested the attorney letter on operating vs. capital funding parameters be redistributed. (UIRSD history of funding capital project through warrant articles, had not been challenged by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)).
  - Principal Kate Squire presented the **Chilmark School Site** requests which she developed as from resources as follows:
    - observation and staff input,
    - MVPS strategic goals,
    - School Improvement Plan (SIP) goals #1 & #3 (see 10/28/24 Minutes p.4 #C 1),
    - 5-8 years of population projections from New England School Development Council (NESDEC) and local knowledge—including current but not future School Choice.
- The goals were to:
- stabilize multi-age class configuration so teachers could retain curriculum planning;
  - improve the weekly schedule to include co-teaching and better resources;
  - increase Tier 2 & 3 support.
- Her education requests were:
    - a 1.0 FTE General Education Teacher and 1.0 FTE ESP;
    - restoration of a 0.8 FTE Math Specialist and 0.2 Art teacher.
- These were balanced by the elimination of the:
- 60% grant funded 1.0 FTE co-teaching position (see 3/18/24 Minutes p.3-4 #B3);
  - the 0.6 FTE one-year-only Math Specialist and the Artist in Residence;
  - some longevity lines and bus duty stipend.
- She also requested the instigation of a Long-term Maintenance line to cover on-going small capital repairs and maintenance:
    - server closet renovation,
    - door security – \$3,400,
    - heat circulation pump replacement – \$7,510
    - boiler demolition – \$3,460.
  - Larger capital projects were: American Disabilities Act (ADA) door compliance and security upgrade (\$55,385); and bell tower repair (\$225,000).

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD**  
**November 18, 2024**

**Page 3 of 5**

- Various capital funding options were discussed:
  - bundling many small projects into a short term borrowing (see 5/10/11 Minutes);
  - separate or bundled warrant articles;
  - fitting them into the budget on a one-year-only basis or long term maintenance line;
  - separate account or stabilization fund—the UIRSD capital formula would require one for each school, both to be approved and variously funded by all 3 Towns.
- The **Districtwide site** changes were:
  - attorney fee increase,
  - merging Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB) into a single line, including the \$50,000 increase (see below: #III A),
  - retiring of the State House bond (\$100,000 in principal and \$10,000 interest),
  - Chilmark heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC) bond costs—not yet finalized.
- With some shifts, **Assessments** were up 8.3%—which, with the Central Office increase could come to around 9.5%. The UIRSC requested total gross spending figures on Assessment sheets.
  - School Choice revenue assumptions were down because there were slightly fewer students, plus a surplus from previous years was being reconciled.
  - The Medicaid offset decreased.
  - Chapter 70 was set slightly higher on the FY25 DESE allocation;
  - Chapter 71 revenues were trended higher for the same reason.
  - Charter School tuition and revenue was leveled.
  - Interest rates were higher and set here at the FY24 actuals
  - The Excess and Deficiency (E & D) offset was level, awaiting UIRSC consideration.
- The UIRSC considered it might be time to start the WTS energy efficiency renovation project process (see Minutes: 1/20/22 p.3 #B, & 1/17/23 p.4-5 #VI B, 2/21/23 p.1 #IV). Members were in contact with WT Town Administrator Jen Rand and a tentative meeting was set (see below: Meetings/Events). However, MVPS Business Administrator Mark Friedman stated Central Office staff was overworked with the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) project. The UIRSD could hire its own staff, and/or apply to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). This would be a separate warrant article and not part of the operating budget.
- The UIRSC requested the following issues be addressed for the next Budget Workshop (see below: Meetings/Events):
  - all education expenses and other operating inputs;
  - further clarity on operating expenses versus capital spending definition and protocol;
  - itemized, segregated funding options on capital items.
- Mr. Friedman welcomed all feedback on the current Version #2.

**Finance** (Agenda item #III)

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

- Mr. Friedman contacted all 3 Town Finance Committees (FinComs) but had not yet heard back from any of them. The UIRSC requested long-term direction from the FinComs.

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD**  
**November 18, 2024**

**Page 4 of 5**

**Principal's Reports** (Agenda Item #III)

**A. Kate Squire– Chilmark School**

- Parent teacher conferences had almost 100% participation, as did Back to School Night which offered free babysitting for the first time.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders worked for 2 weeks with a Ugandan artist and participated in the African Dance Showcase at the Performing Arts Center (PAC).
- Long-time School friend Phyllis Vecchia worked with the kindergarten on their own version of *The Ant and the Grasshopper*.

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

The UIRSC praised the busy, noisy aspect of the WTS after school activities.

- Morning activities were also robust including an open gym from 7:00-8:00AM followed by a well attended breakfast.
- After school clubs included knitting, Leggo, babysitter training, and 2 homework clubs.
- A dedicated Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) was bringing back events: a parent movie—elementary age *Screenagers*, and a fun movie night for all with picnic blankets in the gym.

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

Negotiations were continuing with a meeting tonight.

- It was hoped the Central Office budget would be voted at this Thursday's meeting (see below: Meetings/Events) along with a discussion on the Superintendent's evaluation.
- The Transportation Subcommittee would meet on its budget tomorrow.

**Director of Support Services Update** (Agenda Item #V)

Administrative staff was working hard on the Shared Services budget.

**Approval of Minutes** (Agenda item #VII)

**A. Including But Not Limited to July 15, 2024, October 1, 2024, October 28, 2024**

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE JULY 15, 2024 MINUTES, OCTOBER 1, 2024 MINUTES AS AMENDED AND THE OCTOBER 28, 2024 MINUTES; ROXANNE ACKERMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, ABSTENTIONS AS ABSENT: ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE.*

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

**(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 documents on file & 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, 10/28/24 p.5 #VIII.)

After some very collaborative work, Music Street Architects presented a Preschool parking plan to the: Friends of Preschool, the Chilmark Center Campus Committee, and the UIRSC to be followed by a Martha's Vineyard Commission (MVC) submission.

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD**  
**November 18, 2024**

**Page 5 of 5**

- Drop-off would be at the Chilmark Community Center front, with staff parking at the side.
- A 500 ft. ADA compliant walking path with a water-permeable hard/packed surface and solar powered lights would lead past the playground and Chilmark School to the Preschool, without impacting the large playing field. This was a major benefit to the School.
- The walkway was awaiting civil engineering final design, ADA review, water run-off consulting, and Fire Chief input (for heavy equipment access). The UIRSC would be kept informed of any significant changes.
- Except for emergencies, there was no regular vehicle accommodation at the Preschool.
- The Preschool clearly informed parents of parking and drop-off regulations.
- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO SUPPORT THE PRESENT DRAFT OF THE PARKING DESIGN FOR THE CHILMARK PRESCHOOL; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

**Personnel** - Nothing to report.

(Agenda Item #IX)

**A. Leave of Absence (LOA)**

**B. Resignation**

**C. Retirement**

**Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair** – None (Agenda Item #VIII)

Meetings/Events

- AISC – 6:00PM, Thursday, November 21, 2024 – TBD
- Joint UIRSC/WTSB – Monday, November 25, 2024 – Town Hall
- 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**

- *ROXANNE ACKERMAN MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 4:38PM; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

**Documents on File:**

- Agenda (2 p.) 11/18/24
- Friedman cover email re: UIRSD FY26 Budget – Version #2 11/18/24
- Up-Island Regional School District, FY26 General Fund Budget, Version # 2, 11-18-2024 Proposed (9 p.)
- UIRSD FY26 Budget Version #2 11/18/2024 – Proposed, Changes from FY25 Budget (3 p.)
- UIRSD FY2026 Assessment – V#2 Proposed 11/18/2024
- Chilmark School Budget (8 p.)
- Chilmark School Belltower Repair Project, Estimated Cost \$225k
- Music Street Architects, Chilmark School Campus Plan 11/12/24

**Minutes approved 1/27/25**