

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
3:00PM, Thursday, December 5, 2024
West Tisbury School and/or By Zoom Cloud Conference**

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Present: Chair – Jim Newman, Roxanne Ackerman, Robert Lionette,
Skipper Manter, Alex Salop,
Others: Supt.'s Shared Services Office: Richard Smith, Mark Friedman,
Hope MacLeod
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Kate Squire, Mary Boyd,
Press: Lynn Fraker – MVTN, 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.

- Chair Jim Newman requested that UIRSC meetings return to the regularly posted 3rd Monday of each month. It was acknowledged that budget workshops were harder to schedule given the proliferation of Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) meetings.

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

Acceptance of Grant/Rural Aid (Agenda item #III)

- The UIRSC requested research on Open Meeting Law (OML) protocol about agenda revisions and consequently tabled this item until the next meeting.

Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) Budget Discussion (Agenda item #II)

(See documents on file, & Minutes 10/28/24 p.2 #D, & 11/18/24 p.1-3 #II.)

- At \$17,920,700 Version #3 spending was up \$1,619,434 or 9.93% from FY25. It included the:
 - \$271,577.97 increase to the UIRSD allocation for the Superintendent's Shared Services (or Central) Office budget as discussed and approved by the All Island School Committee (AISC);
 - and ~ \$13,000 UIRSD allocation increase from the current draft of the Transportation budget.

The only change to the **West Tisbury School (WTS) Site** from Version #2 was about a \$23,000 downward adjustment of the Specials Teacher line for a 0.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) co-teacher—now partially covered by Title One grant funds.

- Some **Chilmark School Site** changes from Version #2 mirrored spending actuals, including:
 - \$600 increase to Postage,
 - \$1,200 increase to Student Data Management,
 - \$2,000 decrease to Bus Duty, and
 - \$2,997 increase to Student Insurance (the FY25 actual plus projected 10% increase).

Principal Kate Squire explained the complex shift in staff.

- The co-teacher previously funded by the Contingency line and the Student Opportunities Act (SOA) grant (see 3/18/24 Minutes p.3-4 #B.3) was now budgeted.
- A one-year-only 0.6 FTE Math Specialist would be replaced by a 0.6 FTE general education teacher to address the consistent enrollment status projected for the next 5-6 years.

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- The **Districtwide site** changes from Version #2 was a fairly accurate (but not final) assumption on the Chilmark Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning (HVAC).
- The UIRSC then returned to the issues on the Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB) annual \$50,000 increase (see 10/28/24 Minutes p.1 #II A, & below: Meetings/Events):
 - reducing taxpayer burden without affecting education,
 - reducing debt burden pending larger draws such as the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) project, WTS energy/renovation, etc.
 - contributions exceeding the UIRSD Actuarially Determined Employer Contribution (ADEC);
 - Aquinnah Town and taxpayer financial constraints.
- The UIRSC proposed to cover the increase with Excess & Deficiency (E & D) funds, discussing; transparency, E & D spending protocols, priorities and fluctuating balances. Last year's E & D was ~ \$181,000; this year's was expected to be ~ \$460,000,—out of which about \$90,000 was committed to cover the Contingency line.
 - The proposal was to keep the \$50,000 increase in the budget line item, while offsetting it with E & D funds if available and appropriate.
 - The UIRSC would consider this each year, rather than forming a policy which might be too rigid and/or require too much red tape.
 - The UIRSC asked that the 3 Town Finance Committees (FinComs) be asked about their recommendations for the ongoing future of UIRSD OPEB contributions.
- *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED THAT THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THE PROCESS OF OFFSETTING UP TO \$50,000 OF THE DUKES COUNTY OTHER POST EMPLOYEE BENEFITS TRUST INCREASE WITH EXCESS AND DEFICIENCY IF AVAILABLE AND APPROPRIATE; SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ALEX SALOP—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, JIM NEWMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE.*
- The UIRSC also revisited the Contingency line placement in the Districtwide site.
 - E & D apportionment tracking was still impossible. Finance staff could track the portion coming from expense residuals, but not from revenue overages.
 - E & D emergency spending was now a cumbersome, time-consuming process (see 3/18/19 Minutes p.4 #E).
 - The Contingency was largely for emergency or unforeseen situations, which should not be restricted by site constraints.
- The almost 10% FY26 Budget increase was a large raise despite no requests for significant programmatic or other changes; for example the Chilmark request for 6 teachers to cover 6 classrooms was not unreasonable. However the consistently heavy and annual education increases were a burden to the Towns; last year West Tisbury had to float a \$750,000 override.
 - Grant funded positions should be carefully reviewed after the grant expired and not automatically continued into the budget.
 - In this negotiations year the unknown contractual expenses had to be accounted for.

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- It was important to put education first, but also to get budgets approved at Town Meetings.
- E & D was too volatile to be used to reduce budgets because if equivalent E & D was unavailable in a following year, that budget was saddled with an automatic increase.
- After some discussion on set amounts, places to cut, Town Meetings presentations, etc.
- IT WAS THE CONSENSUS OF THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO ASK THE PRINCIPALS TO LOOK AT THEIR BUDGETS FOR POSSIBLE REDUCTIONS.
- Capital projects remained as previously noted.
- **WTS:**
 - \$52,000 to air condition strategic rooms (not the gym),
 - \$9,500 for interior door upgrades,
 - \$10,500 for exterior door upgrade,
 - \$8,500 to repair the solarium,
 - \$12,000 for basketball court maintenance.
- **Chilmark School:**
 - \$47,436 for exterior door upgrade,
 - \$225,000 for Bell Tower repair. Bell tower problems were reported during the HVAC project. The repairs would involve lifting the tower off the roof, so the UIRSC requested Administrators to research the availability of a more local crane and to obtain a second estimate. Although repairs were needed the situation was not dangerous. The bell tower had a history of issues (see Minutes: 8/24/04 p.2 #V.A, & 11/27/12 p.1, & 7/28/16 p.2).
 - There were not enough funds in E & D to cover these requests and bundling the projects into a borrowing presented some allocation formula challenges.
 - The UIRSC had not managed to meet with West Tisbury Town Administrator on the WTS energy renovation project. If the initial feasibility study was voted this year, the project would be several years in the future. A placeholder article was discussed.
 - The Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) application process was lengthy and not likely to happen while there was another major project on the Island.
 - Similarly, Central Office staff again emphasized there was no staffing capacity for another major MVPS construction project.

Meetings/Events

- Aquinnah FinCom – 3:30PM, Tuesday, December 10, 2024 Aqu. Town Hall
- Chilmark FinCom – 4:00PM, Thursday, December 11, 2024 Chilmark Town Hall
- **UIRSC & Public Hearing – 5:30PM, Monday, December 16, 2024 – WTS/Hybrid**
- AISC - 5:30PM, Thursday, December 19, 2024 – MVRHS
- **UIRSC – TBD 5:30PM, January 20, 2025 – Aquinnah/Wampanoag Tribal location**
- **UIRSC – 5:30PM, Mondays – Location TBD:**

<u>January 20, 2025</u>	<u>April 21, 2025</u>
<u>February 17, 2025</u>	<u>May 19, 2025</u>
<u>March 17, 2025</u>	<u>June 16, 2025</u>

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Adjournment

• *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 4:46PM; SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ALEX SALOP—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, JIM NEWMAN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROXANNE ACKERMAN—AYE.*

Documents on File:

- Agenda/Revised Agenda (2 p.) 12/5/24
- Friedman cover email re: UIRSD FY26 Budget – Version #3 12/4/24
- UIRSD FY26 Budget Version #3 12/05/2024 – Proposed, Changes from FY25 Budget (3 p.)
- Up-Island Regional School District, FY26 General Fund Budget, Version # 3, 12-05-2024 Proposed (9 p.)
- UIRSD FY2026 Assessment – V#3 Proposed 12/05/2024

Minutes approved 1/27/25.