

MARTHA’S VINEYARD REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL
School Committee Meeting
Monday, July 14, 2025 at 5:30 pm
Library or Zoom

Present: Chair – Skipper Manter, Jennifer Cutrer, Kathryn Shertzer,
Marsha Shufrin, Amy Houghton
Zoom: Vice Chair (VC) – Rizwan Malik, Robert Lionette*

Staff: Director of Student Affairs – Jared Andrews, Assistant Principal
– Justine DeOliveira, Finance Director – Suzanne Cioffi Zoom: Facilities
Director - Jason O’Donnell, Coordinator of Pathways and Special Projects
– Samuel Hart

Supt.’s Office: Superintendent – Richard M. Smith, Ed.D., Director of Student
Support Services – Hope MacLeod, School Business Administrator –
Mark Friedman

Towns/County: West Tisbury – Clark Rattet

Press: Vineyard Gazette – Louisa Hufstader

Recorder: Rebecca Claussen

*indicates late arrival

Please note: All business will consist of a discussion and possible vote to take action.
(Recorder’s Note: Discussions are summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity).

I. Welcome - Chair

The meeting of the Martha’s Vineyard Regional High School Committee (MVRHS SC) was called to order at 5:35 PM by Chair Skipper Manter. Welcome to new member Marsha Shufrin. Per Skipper Manter, Robert Lionette indicates he will be late, attending via zoom.

II. Routine Reports

A. Principal

1. Handbook Updates

Vote Required

Jared Andrews presented this data from slides showing - removing “phone collection” language, and removing “burner phone” language, and removing opinion language. In addition to removing the tiered consequence structure for phone infractions and moving that back into the general Code of Conduct Consequence Structure. Amy Houghton asked about the state legislation regarding schools and phones and if MVRHS is in alignment with that, John Fiorito said it has been and that we are following the guidance and are ahead of the curve. [Amy Houghton asked if these proposed changes have gone to the School Advisory Council (SAC), as they need to approve the handbook before it goes to the School Committee for approval. Justine De Oliveira indicated that participation and attendance were not great due to inconsistent membership. In the upcoming school year Administration will be more intentional about inviting specific thought partners and community members, including PTSO participation. SAC has been informed and in agreement, but there was not an official vote]. Artificial Intelligence (AI) best practices, Guiding Principles and Portrait of a Learner from the NEASC Self Reflection work and guidance and Away for the Day work will be continued through teacher duties for the 2025-2026 School Year. Additionally due to the schedule changes for the coming year MVRHS will be changing “Mentor Meeting” to “Morning Meeting”. *Amy Houghton motion to accept handbook for 2025-2026 school year only, returning for review no later than May 1, 2026 / Seconded by Robert Lionette. Motion passed - 7 Aye(s) - 0 Nay(s). Malik- Aye / Lionette - Aye / Houghton - Aye / Shufrin - Aye / Cutrer - Aye / Shertzer - Aye / Manter - Aye.*

a) Competency Determination and Graduation Requirements

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Justine De Oliveira and John Fiorito presented portions to include a change in language regarding MCAS as a graduation requirement, which it no longer is, to using MCAS testing to help determine academic “mastery in skills” in specific areas (English, Algebra, Geometry, Biology). State expectation was released on June 3, 2025 which allows school flexibility for more rigorous expectations, which MVRHS already has in place as graduation requirements. This will be in the handbook for this year only, as there is expected to be new requirements released by the state for 2027 and beyond. The state says the “Governing Board” must approve this language. Skipper Manter (Chair) asked for clarification on what needs to be voted on [Competency slide(s)]. *Amy Houghton motion to accept Competency Determination language for 2025-2026 only, to be revisited Spring 2026 / Seconded by Robert Lionette. Motion passed - 7 Aye(s) - 0 Nay(s). Malik-Aye / Lionette - Aye / Houghton - Aye/ Shufrin - Aye / Cutrer - Aye / Shertzer - Aye / Manter - Aye.*

Vote Required

Administration seeks to increase the passing grade from 60 to 65, and update the grade table to remove a D- grade. Amy Houghton asked if that would define “Mastery”, John Fiorito said “yes”. In addition Amy Houghton, with clarification from Kathryn Shertzer, asked about the 50 grade as the “floor” grade. John indicated the 50 floor grade would remain the same and based on the math for averages this would still encourage students to engage in a course as they can still pass the course the year. Amy Houghton is happy to vote on the increase to 65 for a passing grade but has concerns about the floor needing to be changed. Marsha Shufrin asked about the support and interventions available to students, of which there are many (Child Find, Counseling Services, Beyond the Bell & Summer School). The committee is seeking additional data in the coming year. *Robert Lionette motion to move from D- to a D as presented by John Fiorito / Seconded by Jennifer Cutrer. Motion passed - 7 Aye(s) - 0 Nay(s). Malik- Aye / Lionette - Aye / Houghton - Aye/ Shufrin - Aye / Cutrer - Aye / Shertzer - Aye / Manter - Aye.*

2. Data from Away for the Day

Jared Andrews provided the requested data regarding phone infraction numbers by Month. Skipper Manter indicated comparisons may be hard based on shorter months. Justine De Oliveira suggested looking at the data quarter by quarter. The committee looks forward to next year's data for comparison.

B. Superintendent

1. Discussion & Possible Vote of Appointment of New Principal & Contract Terms

Skipper Manter (Chair) indicates the above was posted after the 48 hour posting deadline and will return to the original agenda. Superintendent Richie Smith will have remarks about the Principal search but the committee will not vote today. Superintendent Smith informed the committee that the Principal Search committee has come to an agreement with an Interim Principal after an unsuccessful search for a long term Principal. Superintendent Smith intends to appoint Sean Mulvey to the position of Interim Principal for the 2025-2026 school year, with the hope for longer. On August 4, 2025 Superintendent Smith hopes to bring a contract proposal to the school committee for approval. Kathryn Shertzer requests the possibility of a sooner meeting with one agenda item so that we can move Sean Mulvey into this position more quickly. Robert Lionette has asked for interim salary comparables for the special meeting. Agreed to a special meeting on Thursday, July 17, 2025 at 5:30 pm.

C. Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Update

1. Project Update

Sam Hart told the committee that on June 17, 2025 the preferred schematic report was submitted

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to MSBA and had until July 10, 2025 to answer the seven questions they came back with. There will be a meeting at the end of July with a MSBA subcommittee to review binder and we expect questions to come back to us at that time. The architect will have a presentation prepared for them of which Superintendent Smith will speak to some of those slides. The school building committee will meet on July 15, 2025, members were invited to attend.

a) Information from bond council

Bond Council was not invited to this meeting per Mark Friedman. Mark Friedman spoke to what is needed to borrow funds as a district. There are two options, and that is a school committee vote. They can request to borrow in the way we have done in the past which is MGL Ch. 71 sec. 16d where the school committee votes to move forward with borrowing and is communicated to towns within 7 days, who then have 60 days to take action through town meeting, special town meeting or their select board can vote to take "no action" which is default approval. This would have a time frame of November 2026 town meetings. Additionally the School committee is not a 2/3's majority vote for this but is a majority vote. All 6 towns do have to approve for us to move forward. MGL Ch. 71 sec. 16n is another option, never used before, which School Committee would vote to authorize borrowing, then directly to Town Clerks to hold a "District Wide Vote" meaning no town meeting, all 6 towns would have to hold an election for this request and the result of the vote would be cumulative majority to approve or deny. Mark will send additional information from Mr. Manly. If we use 16d we have a general idea of timeline, town meetings around Thanksgiving. If we use 16n we would likely have a different time frame, and we will seek clarification. Skipper Manter suggests we should stick with what we've done in the past. Amy Houghton encourages this to be open communication (public forum) with the community on the approach we choose so we are transparent as 16n has been both successful and contentious in other communities that have tried that approach. Robert Lionette doesn't think waiting until October is appropriate, should be sooner, Skipper Manter suggests September. Mark Friedman still has to have questions answered before the committee can make a decision and will follow up with that information as soon as possible. Skipper Manter asked about debt exclusion which Mark Friedman will make sure is covered in his list of questions to address with Mr. Manly. Kathryn Shertzer asked for clarification on which committee which was the School Building Committee Finance Sub committee meeting that is being referred to. Kathryn Shertzer suggests the above committee and Mr. Manly all attend the September meeting. Mark Friedman will make sure all members receive a link to that recording.

2. Re-vote to approve and authorize the School Building Committee's proposed use of the Construction Manager at Risk delivery method.

Votes Required

Mark Friedman reviews and what needs to be approved (The hiring of a construction manager for the building project). The motion would be: "To approve and authorize the School Building Committee's proposed use of the Construction Manager at Risk delivery method for construction services, as described in M.G.L. c. 149A, in connection with the Martha's Vineyard Regional School District's high school MSBA construction Project." Amy Houghton strongly encourages the hiring of this position based on its helpfulness with the Tisbury School Project. *Motion made by Jennifer Cutrer/ Seconded by Amy Houghton. Motion passed - 5 Aye(s) - 1 Nay(s). Malik- Aye/ Houghton - Aye / Shufrin - Aye / Cutrer - Aye / Shertzer - Aye/ Manter - Nay.*

3. Vote to approve a new School Committee representative to the School Building Committee.

Votes Required

Skipper Manter indicates Michael Watts needs to be replaced as he is no longer on the committee.

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Jen Cutrer makes the motion to appoint Amy Houghton to the School Building Committee / Seconded by Malik. Motion passed - 6 Aye(s) - 1 Abstain. Malik - Aye / Lionette - Aye / Houghton - Abstain / Shufrin - Aye / Cutrer - Aye / Shertzer - Aye / Manter - Aye.

III. Consents

A. Minutes

1. Approval of May 5, 2025 Draft Minutes

Votes Required

Skipper Manter seeks a motion to have the May 5, 2025 minutes approved. *Amy Houghton makes a motion to approve the May 5, 2025 minutes, seconded by Jen Cutrer. Motion passed - 5 Aye(s) - 2 Abstain. Malik - Aye / Lionette - Nay / Houghton - Abstain / Shufrin - Abstain / Cutrer - Aye / Shertzer - Aye / Manter - Aye.*

2. Update: Minute Taker Position

No Update at this time

B. Personnel

No update at this time

C. Grants & Donations

No update at this time

D. Overnight Travel & Out of State Travel

No update at this time

IV. Re-Organizing School Committee for FY 26

Skipper Manter suggests we wait until after the All Island School Committee meeting to move forward with direction.

A. Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer

Votes Required

- Suzanne Cioffi indicates a vote should occur before the early departure of Jen Cutrer. *Amy Houghton motions for Mary Lee Schroeder to remain treasurer, Second by Cutrer. Motion passed - 7 Aye(s). Malik - Aye / Lionette - Aye / Houghton - Aye / Shufrin - Aye / Cutrer - Aye / Shertzer - Aye / Manter - Aye.*
- *Indicated* as Mark Friendman is current secretary and will stay in role until a minute taker is appointed. Amy Houghton wants to make sure this is filled before the borrowing vote as the secretary is involved. All in agreement to wait until a minute taker is appointed. Chair and vice chair need to be done by ballot vote. Paper votes for in house, zoom participants will send a text to Richie Smith in lieu of paper votes.
- Skipper Manter suggests starting with Chair vote replacement. Amy Houghton asks Skipper what the current commitment to being the chair is. Amy Houghton asks Skipper if he would like to continue as chair, having two years for continuity is good. *Kathryn Shertzer nominates Skipper Manter as chair, Second Amy Houghton. Motion passed - 6 Aye(s) - 1 Nay(s) for Manter. Malik - Aye / Lionette - Nay / Houghton - Aye / Shufrin - Aye / Cutrer - Aye / Shertzer - Aye / Manter - Aye.*
- Skipper Manter moves the group to Vice Chair vote replacement. *Amy Houghton nominates Jen Cutrer as vice chair, seconded by Kathryn Shertzer. Motion passed - 6 Aye(s) - 1 Nay(s) for Jen Cutrer. Malik - Aye / Lionette - Nay / Houghton - Aye / Shufrin - Aye / Cutrer - Aye / Shertzer - Aye / Manter - Aye.*

B. Subcommittee Membership

Skipper Manter speaks to how many sub committees we now have. Robert Lionette indicates how

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important some sub committees have been at certain times but it does feel as though sometimes they meet just for the sake of meeting. It feels as though the school committee is occasionally working out of their purview and spending a lot of time meeting. Kathryn Shertzer disagrees, referencing the Athletics sub committee and struggling to meet about work that needed to be done before going to the school committee. We should look to have them scheduled and then cancel if they are not needed. Amy Houghton suggested time changes, in the morning instead of evenings. The sub committee meetings are valuable unless we don't get the attendance and ask how many we need on a sub committee. Richie Smith suggests a more consistent day and schedule for all meetings. Robert Lionette indicates that the MVRHSSC should work on goals and objectives for the committee which should indicate which sub committees are needed for the year. This is on the All Island School Committee agenda, and will table until after that meeting.

V. Subcommittee Updates

A. Athletics

No updates at this time

B. Budget

No updates at this time

C. Facilities

No updates at this time

D. Transportation

No updates at this time

E. Subcommittee Roles & Responsibilities

See IV. B. minutes

VI. Old/New Business

No updates at this time

VII. Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair/Announcements

There is a school choice request at the high school and it has been discovered that we need to opt out annually through vote by June 1. All Massachusetts schools are school choice schools by default.

VIII. Public Comment

No public comment at this time

IX. Adjournment

Votes Required

*Jen Cutrer makes a motion to adjourn, seconded by Amy Houghton. Motion passed - 7 Aye(s).
Malik - Aye / Lionette - Aye / Houghton - Aye / Shufrin - Aye / Cutrer - Aye / Shertzer - Aye /
Manter - Aye.*

Minutes submitted by Rebecca Claussen

Date of Approval of Minutes: 8/4/2025