

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD  
6:00PM, Wednesday, May 28, 2025  
Chilmark School and by Zoom Cloud Conference**

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Present: Acting Chair – Alex Salop, Robert Lionette, Skipper J. Manter\*,  
Marsha Shufrin—Aquinnah appointed representative but not yet sworn in,  
Others: Marni Lipke – Recorder,  
Supt.'s Shared Services Office: Superintendent Richie Smith,  
Business Administrator Mark Friedman,  
Student Support Director – Hope MacLeod,  
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Mary Boyd, Kate Squire,  
Staff: Christopher Mara,  
Chilmark SAC: Jessica Mason, WTS SAC/PTO: Zoe Thompson,  
Chilmark Preschool: Deb Zetterberg, Richard Andre, Rebekah Thomson,  
Towns: Chilmark: Select Board – Matt Poole,  
West Tisbury: Greg Orcutt – FinCom,  
Press: Louisa Hufstader – Vineyard Gazette,

\*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 at 6:06PM. The agenda was changed to hear reports before attaining an official quorum\*.

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

• The Committee recognized former member Roxanne Ackerman with a moment of silence. Ms. Ackerman died unexpectedly two weeks ago. Always cheery and fiercely dedicated to children, with over 40 years of public service, she took with her institutional school committee knowledge from before the UIRSD was created.

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

**B. Donna Lowell-Bettencourt – West Tisbury School (WTS)** (See also below p. 3.)

**2. WT School Advisory Council (SAC) Update** (See documents on file.)

\* During this conversation Skipper Manter entered the meeting at 6:21PM.

Goal #1 of the WTS 2024-25 School Improvement Plan (SIP) (see 4/22/24 Minutes p.3-4 #A 1) was to engage the community, and the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) had been impressively revived into a strong active organization with a wide range of elementary and middle school parents. Activities included:

- Back-To-School Barbecue – a social engagement inviting parents into the School, with an opportunity to complete Criminal Offender Records Information (CORI) check so parents could participate in field trips and classroom events;
- a screening of socio-emotional film “Screenagers” – not robustly attended but greatly appreciated by attendees;
- Kindergarten families Pizza-in-the-Playground get-together;
- movie trips to the Edgartown Cinema as well as winter in-school movie showings;

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- silent auction to raise funds;
- Stuff-a Truck Food Pantry student food drive with a celebratory hot chocolate social;
- staff brunches during the Holidays and after the Parent Teacher week;
- Dine-to Donate with school spirit trivia cards on each restaurant table;
- student bake-off;
- dinner for the School Play dinner theater;
- adult Bingo Night – strongly attended by faculty—raised \$1,100;
- Teacher Appreciation week with yoga, beverage cart, brunch, student gratitude themes, etc.
- and looking forward to promoting parent classroom helpers.
- UIRSC commended the PTO and SAC for the most comprehensive fulfillment of a SIP goal.

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

**A. Including But Not Limited to April 14, 2025**

- *ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO APPROVE THE APRIL 14, 2025 MINUTES: SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS; SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

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

**A. Kate Squire– Chilmark School**

- The end of the School Year was a busy and exciting time for all Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS). Chilmark School events included:
  - the Memorial Day Walk to the Sea—including Taps, poems and a visit to the Coast Guard;
  - Professional Development (PD) in Executive Functioning and Unified classroom strategies;
  - the School play on June 4<sup>th</sup> –all are invited,
  - the annual solar car race,
  - water safety training at the YMCA,
  - field trip to Penikese Island,
  - 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade class whale watch,
  - annual 5<sup>th</sup> grade visit to the West Tisbury School (WTS),
  - Graduation on June 13<sup>th</sup>.

**1. Playground Status**

- During construction for the new preschool:
  - fencing would bisect the playground;
  - some structures would be removed, stored on an abutter's easement and relocated after Project completion;
  - others would be removed for disposal and replacement. Regulations prohibited institutions from acquiring used equipment, but structures could be declared surplus and sold privately.
  - The Preschool was already exploring and pricing new age-appropriate structures. Prin. Squire and Friends of Preschool President Deb Zetterberg wanted more American Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible equipment.
- Principal Kate Squire was very confident and working closely with Preschool representatives.

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Priorities, were as follows:

- 1) safely installed fencing allowing playground use during construction;
- 2) in consultation with engineers, establishing appropriate fall zones for equipment (which could be limited by the septic field) as well as
- 3) installing mulch or concrete as required.

The Friends committed to do everything they could to insure student safety and preserve playground use during construction.

**B. Donna Lowell-Bettencourt – West Tisbury School (WTS)** (See also above #III B2.)

- The WTS was also very busy with end-of-year events:
  - Memorial Day band concert with student recitations and songs, etc.,
  - over 30 MCAS tests in grades 3 through 8—this year including Civics/Social Studies;
  - Student Council warm weather get together with games, prizes, and snack money donations;
  - K – 5<sup>th</sup> grade music concert with the new Music teacher;
  - PTO games day,
  - United Kingdom exchange trip departure May 31<sup>st</sup>;
  - egg cracking engineering/technology contest, now raised to 400 ft. and new 5<sup>th</sup> grade/upper level drone work and certification;
  - PD day on new socio-emotional, literacy and math programs;
  - Graduation at 5:30PM on June 12<sup>th</sup>—UIRSC members encouraged to attend.
- Two first graders were winners for 16<sup>th</sup> annual Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) My Ideal School contest (first time for 2 awards in the same class). The contest promoted student/teacher discussion on model schools. Winners and their families would meet in the Massachusetts Senate Docket Room on June 11<sup>th</sup> for awards, a \$100 check each and a drawing for publication on MSBA website and Annual Report cover.
- Reporting on the continuing success of the Spanish curriculum (see Minutes: 11/14/13 p.2, & 11/18/13, & p.4, & 1/20/15 p.3 #V C): 22 WTS students qualified for Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) Spanish II Honors, 2 more for Spanish II C, with the remaining 4 opting for Portuguese, Latin or American Sign Language.

**1. Status of WT Capital Projects as Funded at Town Meeting**

- Once all 3 Up-Island Towns certified and confirmed their ballot vote, Business Administrator Mark Friedman and Bond Counsel would start the borrowing process for \$200,000 and concurrently begin procurement—not to be contracted before July 1, 2025. UIRSD Owners Project Manager (OPM), CHA Solutions, should be sufficient oversight for the limited projects:
  - \$70,000 – WTS Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning (HVAC) upgrade (contract for UIRSD HVAC service now out to bid—and work with the Energy Committee for possible rebates);
  - and \$120,000 Chilmark Bell Tower/roof—schedule not yet established but taking School days into account.

**3. Rural Aid Grant** (See Minutes: 12/16/24 p.4 #VII 1/15/25 p.1 #III.)

- Resealing the basketball court was on time and under-budget.
- New doors and door handles had been completed and installed.
- Solarium repairs were on track.

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- The floor scrubbing machine was purchased,
- as was the new UIRSD reading curriculum (see above PD Days & 3/5/25 Minutes p.2 #B);
- Architects were working on the Bell Tower plans.
- The UIRSC requested a full Rural Aid Grant accounting at their July Meeting.

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

- Student Support Services Director Hope MacLeod commended the above-noted PD trainings.
- Education Support Professionals (ESPs) usually unable to participate in PD sessions, were offered online, in depth modules, specific to student ages and challenges. Many ESPs participated, took the tests and submitted their certification and feedback.
- New Artificial Intelligence (AI) software and technology for Special Education teachers facilitated better Individual Education Plans (IEPs), lesson plans and monitoring, coordinated with State standards.
- There was scant turnout at the first basic rights meeting of the Special Education Parents Advisory Council (SETAC—formerly the Island Parents Advisory Council—IPAC), but the Department was working on publicity and outreach for the next meeting on June 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Superintendent Update**                                      (Agenda Item #V)

- Superintendent Richie Smith reviewed the upgraded Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) PD website (<https://sites.google.com/mvyps.org/mvyps-pd/home>) with links for both Islandwide and district specific opportunities.
  - The graduations were the most joyous week of the school year:
    - 1:30PM, June 8<sup>th</sup> MVRHS at the Tabernacle,
    - 5:30 PM, June 10<sup>th</sup> the Oak Bluffs School (OBS) at the Tabernacle,
    - 5:00PM, June 11<sup>th</sup> the Tisbury School in their new gym;
    - 5:30PM, June 12<sup>th</sup> the WTS at the Agricultural Hall;
    - 10:00AM, June 13<sup>th</sup> the Chilmark School in the School lobby; and
    - 5:00PM, June 13<sup>th</sup> the Edgartown School at the Old Whaling Church.
  - MVRHS Principal Sarah Dingley was moving to the Central Office. Supt. Smith was at MVRHS all week to collect staff feedback on a search for a new principal: school visions, strengths to continue, Principal characteristics, etc. The 30 member Search Committee would start meeting May 29<sup>th</sup> on a tight schedule that might curtail some search depth (e.g. extended candidate visits). Supt. Smith had confidence in a process which had resulted in very successful hires: Prin. Kate Squire, OBS Prin. Jeremy Light, and Edgartown School Prin. Kate Campbell.
  - A Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) 4-year Rural Teachers Apprenticeship Grant for \$220,000 would fund Fitchburg State, Adult Community Education (ACE), and mentors for 5 MVPS ESPs to obtain teaching bachelor degrees.
  - Supt. Smith announced that UIRSD graduated a record number of English Language Learners (ELL) by passing the ACCESS language efficiency classes and test—about a 5-7 yr. program:
    - 4% (15 students) in 2021,                      - 6% (31 students) in 2022,   - 12% (47 students) in 2023,
    - 15% (57 students in 2024), and           - 21% (77 students in 2025).
- He credited co-teaching, priorities in staffing, and staff PD.

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**West Tisbury Energy Committee** (Agenda Item #VI)

**A. Moving on from the Feasibility Study Warrant Article**

**B. Green Communities Funding Opportunities**

Energy Committee member Richard Andre spoke to the Commonwealth push to de-carbonize encompassing transportation and heating/cooling of private and public buildings. As a Green Community and Climate Leader town West Tisbury (shortly followed by Chilmark and Aquinnah) had passed a Zero Emission Vehicle Policy (see 3/5/25 Minutes p.2-3 #VI) and were working to integrate energy efficiency into Town process with:

- a UIRSC representative (Alex Salop) on the Energy Committee (see 4/14/25 Minutes p.4 #IV);
- and Energy members on Capital Improvements and Facilities/Maintenance Committees.
- The WTS funded an Energy Analysis (see Minutes: 12/7/21 p.2 # III A, & 4/27/22 p.3 #B, & 9/19/22 p.4-5 # D) and then requested a building improvement wish list from the Administration (see 10/17/22 Minutes p.3 #III.5) as it made sense to coordinate renovation into such a comprehensive project (estimated at \$20-30,000,000). However, the resulting expanded project was so expensive that the initiative stalled and was dropped.
- The Study proposed 2 possible construction alternatives:
  - move the school into modulars and during a total retrofit, or
  - work in 4 phases: replacing the boiler, then roof, windows, doors, etc.
- Alex Salop was excited to revitalize the project after the failed Annual Town Meeting (ATM) Feasibility Study vote (see 4/14/25 Minutes p.2 #B) and suggested a Space Needs Study instead.
- Mr. Andre reported the Town saved money by appointing its own Public Safety Building Space Needs Committee which utilized information already available in Town records.
- Mark Friedman reported the 2016 MVRHS Space Needs Study cost \$80,000 (<https://www.mvrhs.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Marthas-Vineyard-Reginal-HS-2.pdf>).
- The UIRSC considered an architect lead study with usability for grant funding.
- Cape Light Compact was an excellent resource for the 3 UIRSD towns, providing technical assistance and facilitating grants such as:
  - Climate Leaders Mass. which might pay 10-15% of the energy retrofit;
  - MSBA Accelerated Repair Program (ARP) that might subsidize repairs for both the retrofit and renovation (next application process January 2027). Citing MSBA regulations attached to funding, the UIRSC requested referral to a few communities that had utilized the ARP program.
  - Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt reported \$20,000 in the unused parking lot design article (see 8/26/19 Minutes p.2 #C) that should be resolved or redirected to a Space Needs Study.
- Other discussion points were:
  - need for a cost-effective, cogent plan,
  - immediate energy conservation such as turning off lights at night,
  - questionable voter appetite for further construction after the MVRHS project and for WTS renovation on top of an energy retrofit.

**Discussion and Possible Vote Whether to Put in an Insurance Claim on the WTS**

**Science Lab Leak** – Tabled pending further information (Agenda Item #VII)

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**Advertise for New At-Large Member – Discussion and Possible Vote**  
(Agenda Item #VIII) (See documents on file.)

The UIRSC welcomed Chilmark Select Board (CSB) member Matt Poole and reviewed the CSB letter. They were happy to comply, noting both general interest and correct procedure.

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO ADVERTISE THE AT-LARGE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VACANCY IN TWO LOCAL NEWSPAPERS, THE MV TIMES AND THE VINEYARD GAZETTE FOR TWO WEEKS, WITH AN APPLICATION DEADLINE OF 4:00PM, JUNE 20, 2025; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

**WTS/SAC/Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) / Up Island Regional School Committee (UIRSC) Joint Meeting on School Improvement Plan (SIP)**  
(Agenda Item #IX) – Tabled

**Chilmark Pre-School Lease Status, Including addendum Language and Safety Measurers During Construction** (Agenda Item #X)

(See documents on file, & Minutes: 12/16/24 p.4 #VII, & 1/15/25 p.1 #III, & 1/27/25 p.1-3 #VIII B&C, & 2/7/25 p.1-4 #II/III, 3/5/25 Minutes p.3 #VII, & 3/17/25 p.1 #VI, & 4/14/25 p.3 #VII/VIII.)

- The UIRSC received a CSB letter about summer camp charges with some consternation as the District did not charge for Summer Camp use of School premises. The only costs were for shared resources maintenance and repairs. After 2025, the Summer Camp would utilize the new Preschool and the UIRSD would no longer be a party to the issue.
- There was a brief conversation on jurisdiction over non-school activities in a public school, which Massachusetts General Law (MGL) cedes to the School.
- On the separate Town/Preschool lease issue, the Friends of Chilmark Preschool were urgently pushing to break ground next month, and looking to close the lease and attendant Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the UIRSD to everyone's complete satisfaction and comfort as soon as possible. They apologized for the time and labor involved.
- The issue was made more difficult by the lack of a Town of Chilmark/UIRSD lease for the Chilmark School and grounds.

**Finance** (Agenda Item #XI)

**A. Title 1 Grant – Update**

Recently DESE notified MVPS of a change in Title 1 Grant procedure requiring restructuring:

- from a single comprehensive grant to the MVPS consortium (calculated as an amount per school), accepted by fiscal agent MVRHSD and administered by the Superintendent,
- to an allocation to each District— submitted to Down-Island districts' town halls, or to regional districts' (MVRHSD & UIRSD) Treasurers.

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**Personnel** (Agenda Item #XII)

**A. Leave of Absence (LOA)** – Nothing to Report

**B. Resignation** (See documents on file.)

**C. Retirement** (See documents on file.)

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO ACKNOWLEDGE:*
- *THE RESIGNATION WEST TISBURY SCHOOL EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL LYDIA FISCHER AS OF MAY 10, 2025, AND*
- *THE RETIREMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER JOE SCHROEDER AS OF AUGUST 12, 2025—after 37 years of service to the District schools; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

**Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair** (Agenda Item #XIV)

**Community Oriented Policing Services Office of School Violence Prevention Programs Grant, Executive Session – To Discuss the Deployment of Security Personnel or Devices, or Strategies with Respect Thereto** (Agenda Item #XIII)

- *SKIP MANTER MOVED TO ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 8:12PM NOT TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION UNDER MASS. GENERAL LAW CHAPTER 39, SECTION 23B, NO. 4 TO DISCUSS THE DEPLOYMENT OF SECURITY PERSONNEL OR DEVICES OR STRATEGIES WITH RESPECT THERETO, AND TO INVITE SUPERINTENDENT RICHARD SMITH, BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR MARK FRIEDMAN, WEST TISBURY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL DONNA LOWELL-BETTENCOURT, WEST TISBURY SCHOOL ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL MARY BOYD, CHILMARK SCHOOL PRINCIPAL KATE SQUIRE, AQUINNAH UIRSC REPRESENTATIVE MARSHA SHUFRIN, AND RECORDER MARNI LIPKE TO BE PRESENT THROUGHOUT; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY; SKIP MANTER – AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE – AYE, ALEX SALOP – AYE.*
- Marsha Shufrin and Marni Lipke attested they were alone in their rooms and could not be overheard.

**Adjournment** (Agenda Item #XV)

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:32PM; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*

continued >

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Meetings/Events

• **UIRSC – 5:30PM, June 23, 2025 - WTS**

• **AISC – 5:30PM, Thursday, June 26, 2025 – MVRHS Hybrid**

**Documents on File:**

- Agenda & 2 Revised Agendas (2 p. each) 5/28/25
- PTO, PTO Progress Update presentation (15 p.)
- Lepine/Carroll emails re; Chilmark Select Board Memos for tonight RE: UIRSC Meeting  
5/28/25 – Agenda Revision #2 (2 p.) 5/28/25
- Town of Chilmark, Select Board memo re: At Large Member vacancy 5/28/25
- Music Street Architects, Campus Plan—Construction Access 5/19/25
- Town of Chilmark, Select Board memo re: Summer costs to Preschool 5/28/25
- Schroeder retirement letter, 5/9/25
- Fischer email re: letter of resignation 6/2/25

**Minutes approved 6/23/25**

**Amendment approved 10/20/25**