

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
5:30PM, Monday, August 18, 2025
West Tisbury School and by Zoom Cloud Conference**

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Present: Acting Chair – Alex Salop, Chair – Robert Lionette, Skipper J. Manter,
Jessica Mason, Marsha Shufrin,
Others: CHA: Amanda Sawyer, Tappé: Chris Blessen, Recorder Marni Lipke,
Supt.'s Shared Services Office: Superintendent Richie Smith,
Business Administrator Mark Friedman,
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Kate Squire, Mary Boyd,
Towns: Aquinnah: Select Board – Tom Murphy,
Press: Louisa Hufstader,

*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 5:32PM.
(Recorder's note: Discussions are summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.)

Approval of Minutes (Agenda item #II)

A. Including But Not Limited to 5/28/25 Amended Minutes, 5/28/25 Executive Session, and 6/23/25

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE JUNE 23, 2025 MINUTES: MARSHA SHUFRIN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION due to absence; MARSHA SHUFRIN—ABSTAIN, JESSICA MASON—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE.*
- The May 28, 2025 Executive and Regular Session Minutes were tabled.

Superintendent (See documents on file.) (Agenda item #III)

A. Aquinnah Select Board (ASB) Letter – Discussion and Possible Vote

- With deep respect for the Wampanoag Sovereign Nation and Tribal land, the letter requested clarification of the responsibility for educating students living on Sovereign Nation land (for which Aquinnah could not receive/levy taxes). The letter was due diligence in response to comments at the 2025 Aquinnah Annual Town Meeting (ATM) and to plan for future payment of Aquinnah's share of high UIRSD operating costs (\$48-51,000 per pupil) and imminent Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) Building Project (2.4% or ~ \$2,600,000).
- At this time ~ 20 students resided on Sovereign Nation land, with additional housing planned.
- Peter Sumner and Nancy Campany of Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) counsel Murphy, Lamere & Murphy (MLM) worked on the opinion, which, citing Massachusetts General Law (MGL) 71 Ch. 5 and the MVRHSD and UIRSD Regional Agreements, put the sole and complete responsibility for all children residing within the Aquinnah Town boundaries, including those residents of Sovereign Nation land, with the Town of Aquinnah.
- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO RELEASE THE LETTER AND THE MURPHY, LAMERE AND MURPHY LEGAL OPINION TO THE PUBLIC; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED;*

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MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, JESSICA MASON—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE.

- ASB member Tom Murphy thanked the UIRSC for this positive outcome.

Principal's Reports (Agenda Item #IV)

A. Kate Squire— Chilmark School

1. Principal's Report

- The School was busy in the last week before students returned on September 2nd. Monday was new staff orientation and Wednesday was for All Island Professional Development (PD).
- All positions were filled including 3 new Education Support Professionals (ESPs), a 1st/2nd grade teacher and a UIRSD shared Phys Ed teacher.
 - There were few West Tisbury School (WTS) part-time positions, but the two schools sometimes shared teachers: instrumental, strings, phys ed, reading, English Language Learners (ELL), etc.
- Thanks to the WTS administrators, 8 Chilmark students happily attended the exciting Summer Boost program, which was supported by some Chilmark Title One funding. The Chilmark School hosted 5 weeks of reading and math tutoring for high needs students.
- Enrollment was up 7 students to 77 continuing the growing trend.
- The campus had been busy with summer projects.
 - The foyer looked great after it was painted and the floors refinished.
 - The Rural Aid Grant (see Minutes: 12/16/24 p.2 #VI B, & 1/15/25 p.3 #B) funded some interior and exterior door security.
 - The old boiler was removed and the basement organized (see below #3).
 - The previous specials classroom was converted for the new 1st/ 2nd grade space with new paint, furniture, technology, and sliding bulletin boards.
 - Preschool project fencing was up and a new 1,500 gal. denitrification septic tank was installed.

2. Resignations

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE FOLLOWING RESIGNATIONS:*
 - *EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL CASEY ESPOSITO AS OF AUGUST 13, 2025;*
 - *EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL KATHERINE REID AS OF AUGUST 18, 2025;*
- *JESSICA MASON SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, JESSICA MASON—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*
 - Casey Esposito was now the Chilmark Preschool Interim Program Director.

3. Request to Surplus Items: Mini-Split, Compressor

(See above #1 & 4/22/24 Minutes p.2 #3).

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO DECLARE SURPLUS A COMPRESSOR, A MINI-SPLIT AND AN AIR EXCHANGE UNIT TO BE OFFERED FIRST TO THE THREE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT TOWNS; JESSICA MASON SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, JESSICA MASON—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*

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

1. Principal's Report (See documents on file.)

- At 325, WTS enrollment was about 20 students higher than expected, partially due to a larger than usual return of middle school students from the Charter School.
- 2 WTS students were in Shared Services programs at other schools.
- There was a discussion on the number of middle school homerooms per grade. Although sections sometimes combined for instructional classes, the preference was to keep homerooms small to ensure monitoring, social-emotional checks, morning meetings and community building.
- The UIRSC requested a column delineating school choice students.
- The summer was very busy with the popular 5 week Summer Boost program which had a lot of positive parent feedback. Thanks went to the great staff, and the Islandwide district for providing some transportation for Chilmark and Aquinnah participants.
- The UIRSC thanked the Principal Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, and Assistant Principal Mary Boyd for the extra and excellent work that went into this program. It was impressive to see students actually excited about continuing in a summer school.
- The facility projects went well,
 - a newly refurbished solarium and koi pond—which was awaiting new aquatic plants;
 - cafeteria painting,
 - health room and gym floors refurbishing—in a couple years the gym would need a deep sand;
 - science room floor repair (see 4/14/25 Minutes p.2 #B);
 - high maintenance VCT tile almost final changeout for easier no-wax flooring.
- Summer PD, which saved substitute expenses and presented less schedule disruption, was quite active this year. These skills would be shared at the All Island PD day:
 - 5 staff traveled to Foxboro for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) funded Hill for Literacy training, using Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) Into Reading with high quality instruction materials.
 - 3 staff attended the Effectively Differentiating Instruction Using Guiding Math Workshop;
 - 4 third and fifth grade social studies staff found the Aquinnah Cultural Center consultation with the Wampanoag Tribe extremely helpful; and
 - 6 staff attended the RULER socio-emotional training to: Recognize, Understand, Label, Express, Regulate (RULER) emotions in Orange, Connecticut (see below: #2). Although used in all grades, it was especially helpful for middle and high schools students, who were part of a nationwide mental health crisis.
- The Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) still used the Responsive Classroom program but needed more trainers. Sometime ago Marc Brackett ran an inspiring Islandwide RULER PD and a few schools used some of the Program, however it required a trained team and resources.

2. Out of State Travel

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE OUT OF STATE TRAVEL AS FOLLOWS:*
 - *RETROACTIVELY FOR SIX STAFF MEMBERS INCLUDING ADMINISTRATORS, TO YALE WEST CAMPUS, ORANGE, CONNECTICUT FOR RULER TRAINING ON JULY 17-18, 2025;*
 - *STUDENTS AND STAFF FOR THE SEVENTH GRADE SKI TRIP TO GUNSTOCK MOUNTAIN, GILFORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE FEBRUARY 4-6, 2026;*

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- *STUDENTS AND STAFF FOR THE 8TH GRADE TRIP TO MANCHESTER AND WARRINGTON, UNITED KINGDOM MAY 31 – JUNE 8, 2026;*
ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, JESSICA MASON—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE.

3. Resignations

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE FOLLOWING:*
- *RETIREMENT OF CUSTODIAN MARIA ELIZABETE SANTOS AS OF AUGUST 30, 2025,*
- *RESIGNATION OF EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL KOTCHAPHAN SOMPARN AS OF JUNE 18, 2025, AND*
- *RESIGNATION OF MUSIC TEACHER DERAN QUINTY AS OF JUNE 30, 2025;*
ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, JESSICA MASON—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.

Space Needs Study – Discussion and Possible Vote (Agenda Item #IX)
(See 5/28/25 Minutes p.5).

The RDH Energy Efficiency study (see 9/19/22 Minutes p.4-5 #D) on the existing WTS footprint was priced at \$25-35,000,000 and the UIRSC had been and continued to be interested in some school improvements as part of the project.

• The feedback on the ATM 2025 feasibility study failed article (see 4/14/25 Minutes p.2-3) was that a more targeted look was needed, so the UIRSC was exploring a Space Needs study. Options ranged from a low cost local committee to third party professionals funded by a warrant article.

- For recent reference (~ 2016) the MVRHS conducted a number of studies, including building envelope, space needs, heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC), that helped inform the current Building Project.

• Amanda Sawyer of the UIRSD Owners Project Manager (OPM) CHA, Co. and Chris Blessen of Tappé Architects spoke to several points.

- The study would start by consulting School Administrators who were the most knowledgeable about facility strengths, weaknesses, priorities, and any adjustments needed to accommodate current learning/teaching styles.

- A subcommittee of knowledgeable stakeholders (Town, School, UIRSC, etc.) was useful especially with interpreting study results and educating the community.

- Some options, including Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) or alternate funding sources, depended on how quickly the UIRSC wanted to move—for example in time for the 2026 ATM.

- The Study could give separate solutions to a number of isolated issues, e.g. having no teacher planning space, each with separate solution(s). CHA and Tappé could then present holistic menus of these separate problems/solutions with different price tags for the Administration and UIRSC to choose or combine.

- Plans for an addition (besides renovation) would change RDH Energy Study specs and price.

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- The best opportunity was to get deep information early in the process. An educational visioning expert was also suggested.
- Space Study funding options (estimated at \$50-70,000) were again reviewed:
 - budgeting for it in Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27),
 - warrant articles from all 3 towns (historic practice and easiest to administer),
 - borrowing—requiring UIRSC vote and 60 days for Towns to vote or default to approval—and a ballot vote if the debt was excluded,
 - vote to repurpose the \$20,000 residual from the WTS parking lot planning article.
- Skipper Manter again requested the DESE opinion on capital spending—an undefined approach suggesting it be included in budgets.
- The UIRSC agreed to discuss the subject during budget season.

Finance

(Agenda Item #V)

At the end of the meeting, the UIRSC asked about a first FY27 budget draft for its September meeting. This was not possible since Excess and Deficiency was unknown and union negotiation results still had to be calculated and entered.

A. West Tisbury School Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning (HVAC)

(See 11/18/24 Minutes p.2)

- Administration reached out to Cape Light Compact in the hopes of garnishing savings through a partnership and local vendors. The target date for Nurse's, Art, Technology, and Preschool rooms work was September/October. Thanks to the Energy Committee for helping coordinate.
- There were special public/private procurement regulations for energy projects.

B. Chilmark Bell Tower

(See Minutes: 1/15/25 p.3, & 1/27/25 p.5 #VIII C, & 3/5/25 p.4 #B, & 6/23/25 p.5 #XIII.)

MVPS Business Manager Mark Friedman focused on bond documentation and was awaiting the authorization letter before planning, drafting specs, obtaining estimates, and putting the project out to bid. The Town of Chilmark revisited the Bell Tower project and re-approved the UIRSC recommended option.

C. School Lease Status

The West Tisbury Town Administrator shared the latest (2014) lease with the UIRSC.

- In accordance with regulations on municipal leases it was for 1 year with 2 options to renew.
- After some discussion it was found there were no issue with the lease so:
 - *JESSICA MASON MOVED TO REQUEST MARTHA'S VINEYARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS COUNSEL TO REVIEW THE OLD WEST TISBURY SCHOOL LEASE AND SEND A SIMPLE NEW LEASE FLAGGING AREAS THAT REQUIRE SUBSTANTIVE DELIBERATION FROM THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE: MARSHA SHUFRIN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, JESSICA MASON—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*

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Appoint Superintendent Smith as UIRSC Clerk, Retroactive to June 1, 2025

(Agenda Item #VI)

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPOINT SUPERINTENDENT DR. RICHARD SMITH TO BE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT CLERK RETROACTIVE TO JUNE 1, 2025; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, JESSICA MASON—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*

Possible WTS Science Lab Leak Insurance Claim – Discussion and Possible Vote

(Agenda Item #VIII) – Tabled

Chilmark Bell Tower – See above p.5 #V B (Agenda Item #X)

Island Autism Voucher Program Article Draft – Tabled (Agenda Item #XI)

Personnel – See above p.2 #IV A 2, & p.4 #3 (Agenda Item #XII)

A. Leave of Absence (LOA)

B. Resignation

C. Retirement

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

Although Recorder Marni Lipke acted as current historian/document repository, recent events and new members highlighted the need for a central location for UIRSD documents. The UIRSC discussed:

- access on line, whether by website or Google,
- Regenerative Artificial Intelligence (AI) or (GPT) as the easiest way to answer questions;
- documents to include—Regional Agreement, final budgets, October 1st census, policies, etc.;
- documents (Minutes, Regional Agreement, policies, etc.) already available by drilling into the MVYPS website—organized by school building;
- need for repository would have to be constant updated and “cleaned” of multiple versions.

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 #XIV)

– Tabled

Reorganization: Elect Chair and Vice Chair (Agenda Item #VII)

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO ELECT ROBERT LIONETTE AS CHAIR; JESSICA MASON SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, JESSICA MASON—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*
- After a discussion on Vice Chair responsibilities:
- *ALEX SALOP MOVED TO ELECT MARSHA SHUFRIN AS VICE CHAIR; SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, JESSICA MASON—AYE, MARSHA SHUFRIN—ABSTAIN, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*

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Adjournment

(Agenda Item #XV)

- *ALEX SALOP MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 7:17PM; MARSHA SHUFRIN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, JESSICA MASON—AYE, SKIPPER MANter—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*

Meetings/Events

- AISC – 5:30PM, Thursday, August 28, 2025 – MVRHS/Zoom
- Opening Day – Tuesday, September 1, 2025
- **UIRSC – 5:30PM, Monday, September 15, 2025 – Chilmark School/Zoom**
- **AISC – 5:30PM, Thursday, September 25, 2025 – MVRHS/Zoom**

Documents on File:

- Agenda & 2 Revised Agendas (2 p. each) 8/18/25
- Aquinnah Select Board letter re: Request for Clarification Regarding Cost Allocation for Students Residing on Sovereign Tribal Land (2 p.) 7/29/25
- Company/MLM letter re: Financial Responsibility for Education of Residents of Tribal Lands (3 p.) 8/15/25
- Lowell-Bettencourt email re: Tonight's Meeting 8/18/25
- WTS 2025-2026 Projected Enrollment, Updated 8/18/25

https://mvyys.zoom.us/rec/share/LrCg8kKISMLJ6uRyCq6dBiGsOr_L8dOaqhJhGpfK-MLU2NDt00oeaLjEaEH-Eb84.Jzi6w0fZS_63WCcL?startTime=1755552757000
Passcode: 1eKP&H@^

Minutes approved 10/20/25