

**Tisbury School Committee**  
**4:00PM, Tuesday, January 13, 2026**  
**Tisbury School Cafeteria**

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**TSC Members Present:** Chair Amy Houghton, Jen Cutrer, Alicia Lesnikowska,

**Staff:** John Custer – Principal, Melissa Ogden – Assist. Principal;  
Richie Smith – Superintendent,  
Hope MacLeod – Student Support,  
Mark Friedman – Business Administrator,

**Others:** Marni Lipke – Recorder

\* Late Arrivals or early departures of TSC members

The Tisbury School Committee (TSC) meeting was called to order at 4:04PM. Chair Amy Houghton welcomed back Superintendent Richard Smith. TSC members were urged to attend community forums for the Superintendent Search Committee (see below: Meetings/Events)

## II. Public Hearing

### A. Tisbury School Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) Budget

(See documents on file & 12/9/25 Minutes p.4 #VII B.)

- The Public hearing was called to order at 4:06PM.
- At \$11,339,756 (a 6.89% increase), Version #2.0 was slightly updated with:
  - more accurate numbers on fall 2025 hires, and
  - final Superintendent's Shared Services (or Central) Office budget total, up 7.7%, with Tisbury's assessment up only 1.2% due to the drop in enrollment.
- This Version #2 was sent to the Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee.
- Ms. Alecia Lesnikowska considered this increase to be insane, objecting principally to staff salary levels. She herself lived on the Island with great difficulty at \$42,000 a year. She also objected to schools taking on roles that parents used to fill.
- Ms. Houghton, Supt. Smith and Business Administrator Mark Friedman, reported several budget factors.
  - Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) just concluded collective bargaining negotiations which compensated for low increases during the Covid pandemic as well as recent steep inflation. FY27 was the highest increase of the 3 year contract.
  - This was a lean, level-service budget of which \$2,445,000 was Central Office assessment, \$8,000,000 (70%) was contractual, and \$760,000 covered all other expenses—which only increased \$455.
  - Tisbury and Oak Bluffs Schools' increases were about the same, Up Island Regional School District (UIRSD) and Edgartown were higher.
  - MVPS was well aware of the burden these budgets placed on taxpayers but they were the principal entity that took responsibility for the Island children.
  - It was the responsibility of School Committee members to partner with the Principals on budgets. Participation in collective bargaining strongly impacted budgets.
  - The recent Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools (MARS) report outlined the logistics and some financial benefits of regionalization (see 12/9/25 Minutes p.2 A).
- The Public Hearing closed at 4:19PM.

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III. Financial Report

A. Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) Budget - Discussion and Certification

- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. ALECIA LESNIKOWSKA AND SECONDED BY MS. JEN CUTRER THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED (3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS) THE TISBURY SCHOOL DISTRICT FISCAL YEAR 2027 GENERAL FUND BUDGET AS PER VERSION #2.0 AT \$11,339,756.44 (AN INCREASE OF \$731,220.86 OR 6.89%).**
- Cape Cod Municipal Health Group (CCMHG) would set health insurance rates (estimated at 15%) on February 12<sup>th</sup>, which might effect the Central Office assessment.

B. Fund Balances (See documents on file.)

- The Funds showed good balances, particularly School Choice and the Manter Fund. The Title One grant reimbursed spending, and so showed a negative at present.
- The last electric bill was ~ \$19,000 as projected. Since solar installation was not completed by December 31, 2025 (see below: #V A) it was difficult to estimate the Line Item shortfall, possibly \$40-60,000 (see 10/14/25 Minutes p.3) and hopefully could be covered by School Choice. (The FY27 budget level funded this Line).

B. Grants – Nothing to report

IV. Superintendent's Report

A. All Island School Committee (AISC)

The Superintendent's Search Committee (Co-Chaired by Ms. Jessica Mason, Mr. Alex Salop, and Ms. Kelley Scott) met yesterday to be trained on search and open meeting laws. The posting would close January 21<sup>st</sup>. Initial interviews were scheduled for the first week of February and final (in-person/live) interviews the second week, after which the Committee would recommend the finalists to the AISC. Student Support Director Hope MacLeod commended the Committee as a good working group.

B. Shared Services Update - Nothing to Report

V. Tisbury School Building Project Report

A. Project Update

The solar panels were on the loading dock but completion date and hook up to the grid were still unknown (see 9/9/25 Minutes p.1 #III A).

B. Approval of Invoices (See documents on file.)

- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MS. LESNIKOWSKA THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED AND RECOMMENDED (3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS) THE FOLLOWING DECEMBER 1 THROUGH DECEMBER 30, 2025 INVOICES TOTALING \$1,237,624.00 TO BE SENT TO TOWN HALL FOR APPROVAL AND PAYMENT:**
- CHA INVOICE # 39235-57 FOR \$5,500.00,
- W.T. RICH REQ # 40 FOR \$1,232,124.00.



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**Appendix B: Actions**

- Prin. Custer – text Ms. Sally Rizzo’s contact information to Ms. Lesnikowska.
- Prin. Custer/Ms. Houghton – send Project motion & invoices for Town Hall payment.
- All – are urged to attend a Supt. Search community forum.

**Appendix C: Documents on File:**

- TSC Agenda 1/13/26
- Tisbury School FY’27 Budget Analysis Draft #2.0 proposed, Tisbury, January 13, 2026
- Tisbury School Fund Balances Fiscal Year, 2025-2026 1/9/26
- Anjo/WT Rich email re: Tisbury School WTR Project Updates, 1/13/26
- Tisbury School Events
- School Attending Report “Worksheet”, Census Data as of January 1, 2026, 2025-2026,  
School: Tisbury School 1/1/26
- Tisbury School Site Budget Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (4 p.) 1/9/26
- Tisbury School Addition and Renovations Project Invoice Summary Sheet, For Period:  
December 01, 2025 –December 30, 2025,

Minutes respectfully submitted by Office On Call/Marni Lipke.

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Marni Lipke – Recorder

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Date

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Amy Houghton – TSC Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Minutes approved 2/17/26*