

**Tisbury School Committee**  
**4:00PM, Tuesday, December 9, 2025**  
**Tisbury School Cafeteria**

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**TSC Members Present:** Chair Amy Houghton, Jen Cutrer, Alicia Lesnikowska,  
**TSAC Present:** Prin. John Custer, Wiet Bacheller, Elizabeth Clark-Derrick,  
Kate Harding, Caitlyn Lundburg, Jane Taylor, Sarah Ward,  
Catherine Mafcher, Becky Nutton, Ashley Tartar,  
**Staff:** John Custer – Principal, Melissa Ogden – Assist. Principal;  
Megan Farrell – Asst. Superintendent,  
Mark Friedman – Business Administrator,  
**Others:** Marni Lipke – Recorder  
**Town:** Louise Clough – FinCom

\* Late Arrivals or early departures of TSC members

The Tisbury School Committee (TSC) meeting was called to order at 4:04PM and Chair Amy Houghton welcomed the School Advisory Council.

- The Tisbury School Advisory Council (TSAC) meeting was called to order at 4:04PM. (*Recorder's note: Discussions are summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.*)

I. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes

- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. JEN CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MS. ALICIA LESNIKOWSKA THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 18, 2025 MEETING WERE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED; 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS**
- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. SARAH WARD AND SECONDED BY MS. CATHERINE MAFCHER THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 28, 2025 MEETING WERE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED: 10 AYES, 0 NAYS, ABSTENTIONS AS ABSENT.**

II. Superintendent's Report

- Assistant Superintendent Megan Farrell was filling for Supt. Smith, who was out on medical leave. Central Office staff was working overtime in his absence, very busy with normal duties including budgets and meetings.
- There will be a Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) Budget public hearing (see below: Meetings/Events)—the budget was a major driver of Town operating budgets.
  - MVRHS Interim Principal Sean Mulvey would not continue, a sad announcement for many who've seen his amazing work and smooth transition.
- The Superintendent position was posted Monday with a closing date of January 21, 2026. Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) would help with requirements and parent/community surveys—all were invited to take the on-line survey about their priorities. Principal John Custer submitted 3 names for the Tisbury School representative seat on the 21 member Search Committee which would also have elementary and MVRHS parents 2 MVRHS students, community organizations, etc. Quick easy, 4-5 questions on supt. Priorities. The expectation was for interviews first

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Adjournment and second weeks of February and brought back 2<sup>nd</sup> week, after which the Committee would present the Superintendent finalists to the AISC.

A. All Island School Committee (AISC) (See below: Meetings/Events.)

- The AISC did not pass the Superintendent Shared Service (or Central) Office FY27 budget, (a part of all Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) budgets) and will try again at its December meeting.
- The Regionalization Subcommittee hired the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools (MARS), who had been researching all month, talking to schools, students, teachers, etc. They would present a report on the components and procedures necessary for regionalizing the MVPS. Regionalization would have some advantages such as:
  - ability to stretch teaching and other staff,
  - economies of scale,
  - ability to retain Excess and Deficiency (E & D) reserve funds;
  - transportation reimbursement.

However there were continuing concerns about retaining individual school characters.

B. Shared Services Update - Nothing to report

III. Tisbury School Building Project

A. Project Update

The major part of the new facility was finished in August 2024 and the gym/music room wing on November 15, 2024, so the entire building was now out of warrant. However, Construction Manager W.T. Rich and Owners Project Manager CHA/Daedalus stood by their work and were still at the School every day, finishing the loading dock, repairing reported leaks, etc. There were no new leaks despite heavy rains. A final leak requiring masonry work would be completed as weather allowed during the April or summer breaks.

- Brackets for the solar panels were being installed on the School roof but there was no projected date for the final activation.

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

This was the closing bill for the completed Project.

**• ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. CUTRER AND SECONDED MS. LESNIKOWSKA BY THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED AND RECOMMENDED (3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS) THE CLOSEOUT 2025 INVOICE TOTALING \$5,500.00 TO BE SENT TO TOWN HALL FOR APPROVAL AND PAYMENT:**

- CHA INVOICE # 039235 FOR \$5,500.00.

IV. Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) Building Project Report

(See Minutes: 9/9/25 Minutes p.2-3 #IV & 10/14/25 p.2 & IV.)

- The Bldg. Project Com continued to work through different design iterations. Cost estimates would be released on Friday and voted at next week's meetings.
- Despite guesstimates on Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) reimbursement, the actual rate would not be set until its February Board meeting.

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- The 25 member Bldg. Project Com. had been meeting twice a week for over a year, during which time plans had changed substantially; for example the need for temporary or modular classrooms had been eliminated. Once the design was set, the Committee would work to get accurate, updated information to the public.
- Committee representatives strongly urged everyone to make sure they had current information available on the Project website <https://www.mvrhsbuildingproject.info/>.
- The Bldg. Project Committee was planning a number of coffee information sessions in private homes (see below: Actions) and was particularly targeting families with students who would be attending the new MVRHS facility.
- The Office of Campaign Finance had strict rules stating no public official could only give out information, but could not advocate or finance which way to vote. However, the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) could for a non-profit Political Action Committee (PAC)—a simple process through the Town Clerk.
- Informational meetings were being planned for all Select Boards and Finance Committees, etc. as well as a community meeting in Tisbury School gym (see below: Meetings/Events).
- The Islandwide vote date was tentatively set for June 2, 2026, at the same times in every Town. This would be a simple majority vote so all could be heard.

V. Principal's Report

A. School Events (See documents on file.)

- The All Island Band concert at the Performing Arts Center (PAC) would be at 6:30PM, December 11<sup>th</sup>.
- The Minnesingers (4 were Tisbury alumna) gave an amazing concert in the gym today, one of 8 separate performances around the Island. Last year their concert was the first assembly in the new gym.
- The Tisbury School remained grateful to staff and community partners, who benefited students, schools and education in general.

B. Personnel

1. Staffing Update (See 11/18/25 Minutes p.2 #VI B.)

The new custodian was a strong first choice applicant Nemanja “Nemo” Radkovic.

C. Enrollment Projections (See documents on file.)

The New England School Development Council (NESDEC) report showed historic and projected enrollment, used for planning, budgeting, and school building projects. Tisbury School was projected to be pretty stable or decreasing very slightly. There was a brief discussion on NESDEC statistical resources, not only births and housing starts, but on the Island, sizable population shifts from town to town.

VI. Financial Report

A. Fund Balances (See documents on file & below: Actions.)

There was nothing of concern.

- School Choice balance was ~ \$133,000 which will be needed.

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- The School was always grateful for the Manter Estate Fund now at ~ \$193,000 which would support a lot of students for the annual field trips: 6<sup>th</sup> Grade to Outdoor Learning, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade ski trip, and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Washington D.C. trip. The fund was very conservatively invested by the Town Finance Director Jonathan Snyder and before him Tim McLean. It was greatly enhanced when the TSC chose to sell vacant land that was part of the Trust and put the principal into the fund (see 2/10/15 Minutes p.2 #VI B).

B. Grants – Nothing to report

C. Receipt of Donation

Roberta Morgan attended the Tisbury School and credited it with helping overcome her reading challenges.

**• ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MS. LESNIKOWSKA THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY (3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS) AND GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED \$200 FROM ROBERTA MORGAN TO BE USED FOR STUDENT LITERARY SUPPORT.**

VII. Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) Tisbury School Budget Report

A. Public Hearing

(See documents on file & below: Actions & Meetings/Events.)

The final draft should be ready for the TSC January meeting and Public Hearing, when it would be voted and then submitted to the Town.

B. Draft Budget (See documents on file & below: Actions.)

As previously noted (see 10/14/25 Minutes p.3 #B) this was the first look at the level service FY27 budget which, except for some SAC refinements, was essentially the same staff (76.1 Full Time Equivalents (FTE), supplies, etc. updated for contractual increases (the bulk of the increase) and inflation; e.g. the Telephone Line was adjusted because it was consistently over-budget. 8.25% above FY26, was a larger than typical increase due to collective bargaining settlements—of which FY27 was the largest impact year.

- The Superintendent's Shared Services (or Central) Office budget was not yet finalized, however a ~ 8.12% (\$196,000) increase was expected, although changes in population would drop the Tisbury allocation to ~ 1-2% increase.
- Similarly although Transportation would increase, Tisbury's share would decrease.
- Electricity remained unknown. Engineers had been asked for a solar savings estimate.

Adjournment

**• ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. CUTRER AND SECONDED BY MS. LESNIKOWSKA THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING UNANIMOUSLY (3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS) ADJOURNED AT 4:56PM.**

**• ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. ASHLEY TARTAR AND SECONDED BY MS. CAITLYN LUNDBURG THE TISBURY SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING UNANIMOUSLY ADJOURNED AT 4:57PM: 10 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

**continued**

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**Appendix A: Meetings/Events:**

- MVRHS Budget Public Hearing–6:00PM, Monday, December 15, 2025 – Hybrid/PAC
- AISC – 5:30PM, Wednesday, December 17, 2025 – Hybrid/MVRHS
- MVRHSC – 6:30PM, Wednesday, December 17, 2025 – Hybrid/MVRHS
- AISC Reg. Subcom. – 5:30PM, Thursday, December 18, 2025 – Hybrid/MVRHS
- **TSC – 4:00PM, Tuesday, January 13, 2026 at the Tisbury School**
- MVRHS Project Info. Meeting – 6:00PM, Thursday, January 22, 2026 – Tis. Sch. Gym
- **TSC – 4:00PM, Tuesdays,**

February 10, 2026

April 14, 2026

March 10, 2026

May 12, 2026

June TBD

**Appendix B: Actions**

- Prin. Custer/Ms. Lepine – post Tisbury School FY27 Public Hearing for Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Appendix C: Documents on File:**

- TSC Agenda 12/9/25
- Tisbury School Events
- Daedalus Invoice 11/30/25
- NESDEC, New England School Development Council, Tisbury, MA, Grades PK-8, School Year 2025-2026 Enrollment Projection Report (14 p.)
- Tisbury School Fund Balances Fiscal Year, 2025-2026 12/8/25
- Tisbury School FY'27 Budget Analysis Draft #1.0 proposed, Tisbury, December 8, 2025
- Tisbury School Budget for 2026/2027 Version #1, December 8, 2025 (8 p.)
- Tiger Tales, December 2025 (7 p.)

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 1/13/26*