

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD  
5:00PM, Monday, November 17, 2025  
Chilmark School**

**Page 1 of 6**

Present: Chair – Robert Lionette, Skipper J. Manter, Jessica Mason\*, Alex Salop\*,  
Marsha Shufrin,  
Others: Supt.'s Shared Services Office: Superintendent Richie Smith,  
Business Administrator Mark Friedman,  
Student Support Director Hope MacLeod,  
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Kate Squire,  
Staff: Christopher Mara,  
Towns: Wampanoag Cultural Council – Brad Lopes,  
Press: Louisa Hufstader,  
Recorder Marni Lipke, \*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.  
(*Recorder's note: Discussions are summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.*)

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

**A. Including But Not Limited to 10/20/25 & 10/28/25 Minutes, Executive Sessions 1/27/20, 5/28/25 and 10/20/25,**

\* Alex Salop and Jessica Mason entered the meeting during these votes at 5:08 and 5:10PM.

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING MINUTES:*

- *OCTOBER 20, 2025, AND*

- *OCTOBER 28, 2025;*

*MARSHA SHUFRIN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS; SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE AND NOT RELEASE THE FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES:*

- *JANUARY 27, 2020,*

- *MAY 28, 2025, AND*

- *OCTOBER 20, 2025;*

*MARSHA SHUFRIN SECONDED; MOTION WITHDRAWN.*

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE AND RELEASE THE JANUARY 27, 2020 EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES; MARSHA SHUFRIN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 2 ABSTENTIONS (not members at the time); SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, JESSICA MASON—ABSTAIN, MARSHA SHUFRIN—ABSTAIN.*

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD**  
**November 17, 2025**

**Page 2 of 6**

**District**

(Agenda Item #III)

**A. West Tisbury Lease – Discussion and Possible Vote** (See documents on file.)

- There were no substantive changes to the West Tisbury School 20 year lease with a 5 year renewal—the longest allowable term. Counsel inserted the following process as future insurance: The lease may not be amended or altered or relieved except by a duly written document signed by both parties.

- The Lease would take effect as soon as it was signed.

- The UIRSC directed West Tisbury School (WTS) Principal Donna Lowell-Bettencourt to scan and send a copy of the signed lease to Chair Robert Lionette, West Tisbury Town Manager Jen Rand, and the Chilmark Select Board (CSB).

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE TOWN OF WEST TISBURY/UP ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT LEASE AS WRITTEN; ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: JESSICA MASON—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*

**B. Chilmark Lease Update** – Nothing to report (see above).

**C. Discussion of Assessment Formula for Native American Students Living on Tribal Land**

The proposal to split the cost of Martha's Vineyard Public School (MVPS) students living on Tribal land equally among the 6 Towns was presented to the All Island School Committee (AISC). There seemed to be general support with the following provisos:

- members wished to confer with their select boards;

- counsel would be consulted on legalities—Town/School Committee purview, special legislation, agreements, etc.

- once the AISC voted, the proposal would be sent to the 6 Town Select Boards.

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

**A. Kate Squire**

**1. Principal's Report**

Chilmark School Principal Kate Squire reported on this busy time for everyone.

- The WTS invited Chilmark students to attend the coming visit of a foreign author (see below).

- The 5<sup>th</sup> grade dance concert would start at 10:00AM at the Performing Arts Center (PAC).

- Friday's Fun focus was on the Island Food Pantry including a tour and volunteering. The students returned to School, did research and educated all the other students, and will holding games and activities to raise funds for the Pantry.

- The traditional FunRun/Turkey Trot was scheduled for 10:30AM, November 25<sup>th</sup>.

- The School was not awarded the Police Security Grant so a project would be proposed during the Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) budget process as capital projects.

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

**1. Principal's Report**

- Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt reported the start of the basketball season attracted enough students to field 5 teams—which was going to be tough on the coaches. She particularly thanking the 2 coaches who took on the girls teams despite heavy schedules elsewhere.

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD**  
**November 17, 2025**

**Page 3 of 6**

- Last Friday was the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) family movie.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> grade was excited to raise \$700 from their bake sale for Jamaican relief.
- The author of Star Wars Jedi Academy (see above) would be speaking to the school.

**2. Wampanoag Tribal Flag** (See 10/20/25 Minutes p.1-2 #III A.)

When asked for a policy exemption to allow the WTS to fly the Wampanoag Tribal flag the West Tisbury Select Board (WTSB) modified their policy to include flying the flag at any West Tisbury building.

**3. West Tisbury Water Filtration System** (See 10/20/25 Minutes p.2-3 #IV A 2.)

Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt was working with Prin. Squire and Water Systems Operator Todd Everson on quotes for the possible eventuality of a water filtration system. After encountering some challenges it became evident that unless the system was installed immediately a quote would be ineffectual as prices and filtration technology were constantly changing. Advice was that funds would be better spent on water testing.

- Various chemicals had different timelines so the requirement was testing every 3 years.
- The UIRSC requested that both Principals research annual testing costs for the (FY27) budgets.

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

At Marsha Shufrin's suggestion the UIRSC (and possibly the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School Committee—MVRHSC) would have a regular agenda item on needs of indigenous children on the Island. Wampanoag Tribe at Aquinnah Education Manager (and part-time Cultural Center Director) Brad Lopes introduced himself and gave his credentials including his experience with the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe.

- He strongly recommended Native American teacher recruitment, as well as representation on the School Committees, and parental input—all topics for the All Island School Committee (AISC). His long range goal was an indigenous students office at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).
- There was a discussion on the best way to address the Thanksgiving Holiday since it was also considered a national day of mourning for Native Americans.

**Finance—Mark A. Friedman, School Business Administrator** (Agenda Item #V)

**A. Expense and Revenue Report** (See documents on file.)

FY26 finances were healthy and quiet with very few negatives all easily covered within each site. Revenues showed no significant issues.

- Grants were in a separate fund and administered according to grant criteria.
- MVPS Business Administrator Mark Friedman would research Charter School assessments and reimbursements for the FY27 budget process.

**B. October 1, 2025 Census** (See documents on file, & 10/20/25 Minutes p.6 #V B.)

- West Tisbury foundation population rose from 323 in FY25 to 335 in FY26, with the WTS enrollment rising from 308 students in FY25 to 329 students.
- Chilmark enrollment rose from 69 in FY25 to 74 in FY26.
- School Choice numbers showed fewer students 'choicing' out of WTS than 'choicing' in. The large contingent of Tisbury students who choiced in during the 2019 lead removal and construction project were moving up and would graduate soon (see 9/15/19 Minutes p.1 #III A).

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD**  
**November 17, 2025**

**Page 4 of 6**

- There was a request to break out students living on Tribal land—although these were documented in the impact aid applications. Native American students of any tribe did not necessarily self-identify. Brad Lopes volunteered to work on this issue (including with the Charter School) which was complicated by multi-racial identification statistical anomalies and tribal citizenship regulations. Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt suggested a simple addition to the school enrollment form. The data would be needed to calculate the cost of students living on Tribal land for the proposed 6-Town split.
- As above, this was an AISC issue, however the UIRSC could take the lead as a pilot model.
- The UIRSC requested a column showing which school choice students came from staff families (see 5/15/24 Minutes p.3 #VI B). Prin. Squire reported that 7 children were from staff families, a critical factor in retaining staff who otherwise could not fulfill family and work obligations.
- The low \$5,000 per student reimbursement rate (also a subject of interest for Western Massachusetts) would best be addressed with State legislature advocacy.

**C. Rural Aid Grant – Discussion and Vote**

Although the State level funded the Rural Aid Grant, as Priority 1 districts, this year's UIRSD and MVHRSD awards showed slight decreases due to the allocation formula. DESE allowed a wide variety of spending but preferred a focus on encouraging regionality. Unless the award were used for regional/general purposes the WTS/Chilmark split would be 82/18. The funds must be spent by June 2026. There was no prohibition against using it to lower FY26 assessments, however it was usually spent on capital items effectively lowering the FY27 budget. UIRSD Administration would consider a list for the next budget workshop.

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO ACCEPT \$119,587.48 IN RURAL SCHOOL AID GRANT FUNDS; JESSICA MASON SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

**D. Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) Budget Session**

(See documents on file.)

- Fulfilling one of his goals, Mark Friedman presented a first look at a 5 year capital needs plan with estimated costs where available. The space needs study and larger energy efficiency project (see 8/18/25 Minutes p.4 #IX) were included.
- As noted above some projects were suitable for Rural Aid funding.
  - The FY27 Budget Version #3 was distributed for review at the next Budget Workshop.
- Later in the meeting, there were brief discussions on:
  - objections to the high per-pupil cost;
  - the hard-working administration and staff;
  - the required funding to achieve comprehensive educational excellence;
  - requested consultation with the Town Finance Committees concerning the continuation of the annual \$50,000 increase to the Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) liability; Alex Salop—WT, Marsha Shufrin—Aquinnah, Robert Lionette—Chilmark.

**E. Warrant Article Request, Town Deadlines**

(See documents on file.)

West Tisbury – February 3, 2026,  
Chilmark December 31, 2025,  
Aquinnah April 10, 2026.

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD**  
**November 17, 2025**

**Page 5 of 6**

- Mr. Manter again requested the documents for DESE and Counsel opinion. It continued unclear whether capital spending had to be included in school budgets. Long practice, without DESE comment or objection continued to be by: warrant article, operating budget, Excess and Deficiency (E & D) or borrowing.

**Superintendent Update—Richard M. Smith, EdD, Superintendent**  
(Agenda Item #VI)

**A. Appendix A and A1**

Negotiations were likely to produce increases as follows:

- Appendix A covering staff stipends (e.g. Minnesingers leaders, sports coaches, etc.), consolidation of classes to A and B, eliminating C and D; many had not been raised in 15 years;
- bus drivers and bus monitors.

**Shared Services Update—Hope T. MacLeod, M.Ed, BCBA, Director Student Support Services** (See documents on file.) (Agenda Item #VII)

- Both Hope MacLeod and Mark Friedman were thanked for their faithful meeting attendance.
- There were no questions on the annual Snapshot (see 10/20/25 Minutes Documents on File).
- The current document gave links for Federal and State Special Education statistics and mandates on the long-term economic and social effects of such things as pre-schools, transitions, out-of-district (residential) placements, etc.

**Personnel** (Agenda Item #VIII)

**A. Resignation**

- *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE RESIGNATION OF WEST TISBURY SCHOOL EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL JACOB KERNEY AS OF NOVEMBER 21, 2025; JESSICA MASON SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

**Next Meeting Date (December 15<sup>th</sup> – in West Tisbury) Includes Public Hearing for Budget** (See below: Meetings/Events.) (Agenda Item #IX)

The UIRSC discussed the meeting schedule in relation to:

- the winter holidays,
- FY27 budget workshop(s),
- FY26 budget public hearing,
- the overdue meeting in Aquinnah, (and providing technology/hybrid equipment)
- the proliferation of meetings.

**Adjournment** (Agenda Item #XI)

- *ALEX SALOP MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 7:03PM; SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

**continued >**

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD**  
**November 17, 2025**

**Page 6 of 6**

Meetings/Events

- AISC – 5:30PM, Thursday, November 20, 2025 – MVRHS/Zoom
- UIRSC Budget Workshop – 1:30PM, Monday, November 24, 2025 – WTS
- UIRSC Budget Workshop – 1:30PM, Monday, December 1, 2025 – WTS
- UIRSC/Public Hearing – 5:00PM, Monday, December 15, 2025 – Aquinnah

**Documents on File:**

- Agenda (2 p.) 11/17/25
- Agreement of Lease (9 p.)
- Agreement of Lease (9 p.) (final/signed)
- All Expenditure Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (15 p.) 11/16/25
- Revenue Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2025-2026 11/16/25
- Combined Up-Island Pupil Enrollment Census – October 1, 2025 (4 p.)
- Rural School Aid Grant, Up Island District, FY26 Allocation \$119,587.48, (FY25 Allocation \$162,331.01)
- Up-Island Regional School District, FY26\* General Fund Budget, Version # 3, Proposed 11-17-25 (12 p.) (\*typo)
- UIRSD FY2027 Assessment – V#3 Proposed 11/17/25
- UIRSD, FY27 Budget Version #3 Proposed 11/17/2025, Changes from FY26 Budget (3 p.)
- UIRSD 5 Year Capital Plan, Draft – 11/17/25 (12 p.)
- The Impacts of Special Education Laws on Our Community (2 p.)

[https://mvyyps.zoom.us/rec/share/NyD5-Dm1LdP-D6FQ7nm\\_nV5DAaVRORcvB91QEds0a4VL8p--4xU6MJ9Q10XdFHfT.R1VQ0gIjCjAW-iaz?startTime=1763417176000](https://mvyyps.zoom.us/rec/share/NyD5-Dm1LdP-D6FQ7nm_nV5DAaVRORcvB91QEds0a4VL8p--4xU6MJ9Q10XdFHfT.R1VQ0gIjCjAW-iaz?startTime=1763417176000)  
Passcode: rd06C#CC

**Minutes approved as amended for typo 12/15/25**