

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD  
1:30PM, Monday, December 1, 2025  
West Tisbury School**

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Present: Chair – Robert Lionette, Skipper J. Manter, Jessica Mason, Alex Salop,  
Others: Supt.'s Shared Services Office: Business Administrator Mark Friedman,  
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Kate Squire, Mary Boyd,  
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.)

**Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) Budget – Discussion** (Agenda Item #II)

(See 11/17/25 documents on file & 10/28/25 Minutes.)

The following changes brought the FY27 budget from 8.1% to 9.4% over FY26.

- Rural Aid projects were still being planned.
- Version #3 showed the **Chilmark School site** moving from 6.2% to 7.7% due to:
  - Island Grown Initiative (IGI) actual spending,
  - transportation costs (rather than parents) for field trips to conform to new policy,
  - Network Security anticipated annual audit costs, (penetration testing and upgrades);
  - \$5,000 for polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) water testing—but not filter installation or maintenance;
  - Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning (HVAC) maintenance (previously un-budgeted);
  - estimated health insurance increase 15%,
  - estimated 3% increase in student insurance (lower than West Tisbury School – WTS due to smaller population); and 5% building insurance. UIRSC asked that Chilmark be contacted about this low increase.
- The **West Tisbury School (WTS) site** had only one change, a 1 day a week permanent substitute nurse. Despite a pay increase, all Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) were struggling with the national nursing shortage. Lack of substitute nurses meant School nurses were burning out from:
  - student care, medications, screenings, etc.;
  - requirements to accompany some students on field trips (needing a fill-in at school);
  - sense of obligation to come in despite personal or family illness;
  - increased monitoring and reporting requirements.A shared position in the Superintendent's Shared Services (or Central) Office proved untenable, so schools were acting on their own. The Chilmark School had a smaller population and several staff trained to give medications. The UIRSC requested best practice recommendations.
- Network security was already in the WTS budget.
- Contractual separation costs were briefly reviewed: longevity, unused sick time at \$30/day up to 200 days (\$6,000), \$2,000 bonus for announcing retirements before October 1<sup>st</sup> which allowed for better planning and budgeting.

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The **Districtwide site** had 2 changes:

- Information Technology (IT) security contracts; and
- Dukes County Retirement System assessment—for management and non-union staff. It was noted that pension liability pay-down was expected in 2031.
- Transportation was not expected to increase much unless more drivers could be hired.
- The UIRSC revisited the annual \$50,000 **Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB)** increase (see Minutes: 10/28/14 p.3, & 11/12/19 p.3 #II, & 11/23/20 p.1, & 12/8/20 p.1 #III, & 12/7/21 p.3, & 11/14/22 p.1-2, & 12/7/22 p.1-2, & 9/18/23 p.2, & 10/28/24 p.1 #II A, & 12/5/24 p.2).
- WT Finance Committee (FinCom) Chair Greg Orcutt was comfortable with foregoing this year, but not indefinitely. Chilmark FinCom Chair Linda Coutinho felt the increase should continue.
- There was satisfaction that the UIRSD had come as far as it had, but concern over the steadily increasing taxpayer burden.
- The liability was 60% funded and since 2020 the UIRSD had exceeded the Actuarially Determined Employer Contribution (ADEC), which included 30 year liability pay-down. UIRSD payments consisted of:
  - pay-as-you-go for all retirees (would be eliminated at 100% liability pay-down),
  - \$8,000/yr. for each new hire to the Dukes County OPEB Trust;
  - \$800,000 in the operating budget—plus \$50,000 for FY27 also to the Trust;
  - interest and returns from Trust investments.
- The Town FinComs should be notified of any pause in the \$50,000 increase policy.
- Retirements were expected to increase substantially.
- Last year the increase was voted from Excess and Deficiency (E & D)—estimated at \$476,000 with \$134,000 committed—including the \$50,000 OPEB offset. However continuation of this practice would eventually exceed E & D, i.e. \$50,000 for FY26, plus another \$50,000 for FY27 for a total of \$100,000, plus another \$50,000 for FY28 for a total of \$150,000, etc.
- IT WAS THE CONSENSUS OF THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO RETAIN THE \$50,000 OPEB INCREASE IN THE FY27 OPERATING BUDGET, AND LEAVE THE \$134,000 EXCESS AND DEFICIENCY OFFSET, LEAVING THE OPEB CONTRIBUTION STABLE.

The **5 Year Capital Plan** (see 11/17/25 Minutes p.4 #D & documents on file) was updated. Some projects were blank because no estimates were available, others were blank because timing was not yet settled/determined.

- WTS outdoor decks and audit compliance could be eliminated for FY27. The walk-in fridge would be paid with Revolving Lunch funds. Cyber-security was not yet determined.
- Chilmark School door upgrade/American Disabilities Act (ADA) access were top FY27 priorities (see 11/17/25 Minutes p.2 #IV A1). The Network Closet was a secondary priority—possibly for FY28. The roof replacement might be pushed out to FY29 as a 2-year project, design/engineering and then construction.
- Funding for the total of \$318,892 including \$80,000 for the WTS Space Needs Study (see 10/20/25 Minutes p.6-7 #V D) could be:
  - the FY27 Operating Budget—requiring completion or signed contract within the fiscal year;

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- E & D offset voted with the Budget at Annual Town Meetings,
  - Rural Aid Grant—which had to be spent by June 30, 2026,
  - warrant articles, or
  - borrowing, requiring lengthy protocol no matter how large or small the amount.
- Chair Robert Lionette had reviewed the budget line-by-line and found no Full Time Equivalent (FTE)/staff increases with the exception of the substitute nurse and very little soft costs—except IGI (see 10/28/25 Minutes p.2). The budget was what the UIRSD owned or inherited, buildings, and an education model the UIRSC supported. Any larger conversation should take place in January/February 2026 for the FY28 budget.

**Adjournment**

(Agenda Item #XI)

- *ALEX SALOP MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 2:35PM; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ALEX SALOP—AYE, JESSICA MASON—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*

**Meetings/Events**

- **UIRSC/Public Hearing – 5:00PM. Monday, December 15, 2025 – Aquinnah Cult. Center**

**Documents on File:**

- Agenda 12/1/25
- UIRSD 5 Year Capital Plan, Draft – 11/17/25 (15 p.)

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