

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD  
3:00PM, Monday, February 9, 2026  
Chilmark School and By Zoom Cloud Conference**

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**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 Services – Hope MacLeod,  
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Kate Squire, Mary Boyd,  
WTS SAC: Robin Moriarty WTS SAC  
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 at 3:07PM.  
*(Recorder's note: Discussions are summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.)*

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

**A. Including But Not Limited to December 15, 2025, January 28, 2026**

**Executive Sessions Approved but Not Release May 28, 2025 and October 20, 2025**

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

- *DECEMBER 15, 2025, AND*

- *JANUARY 28, 2026,*

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

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

- *MAY 28, 2025, AND*

- *OCTOBER 20, 2025,*

*ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION: JESSICA MASON—AYE, MARSHA SHUFRIN—ABSTAIN, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*

**District** (Agenda item #III)

**A. Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah (WTGHA) Policies and Procedures**

(See document on file, & 1/28/26 Minutes)

The approved Policies and Procedures could be revised until June 30, 2026 without effecting the Impact Aid application. The UIRSC requested UIRSD Principals Donna Lowell-Bettencourt and Kate Squire work with Tribal Education leader Brad Lopes and present any changes to the UIRSC.

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**B. Up Island Regional School District (UIRSD) Representation re: Towns or At Large**

Previous conversations had raised the issue of UIRSD representation. Although members were elected by Town or at-large representatives (see Minutes 5/28/25 p.6 # VIII, & 6/23/25 p.2-5 #XI) their charge was to represent and act in the best interest of the UIRSD as a whole, as laid out in the Up-Island Regional School District of Martha's Vineyard Regional Agreement Section IV Paragraph B.

*Representatives have a duty to represent the best interest of the whole District and not just that of their member town. Representatives are empowered to establish the "educational vision" or "strategic plan" for the District, to establish the general goals and policies of the District, ...*

**C. Chilmark School Lease**

(See Minutes: 9/18/00 p.4, & 6/25/01 p.4 #VIII b, & 7/16/01 p.4 #VIII B, & 5/20/02 p.5, & 6/20/02 p.4 #IX A, & 9/16/02 p.4 #IX A, & 10/21/02 p.3 #VII A & 6/19/06 p.3 #VI, 1& 0/24/06 p.2, & 4/9/18 p.3, & 10/15/18 p.4 #V B, & 11/19/18 p.3 # V B, & 4/13/23 p.5, & throughout the 2023-4 Preschool discussions, & 2/7/25 Minutes p.3 #, & 9/16/25 p.6 #VIII B.)

- The UIRSD Regional Agreement stated that once initial capital debt for the West Tisbury School or Chilmark School building's was paid off, the property was to be transferred to the UIRSD or there must be a lease agreement where the UIRSD was responsible for the care and maintenance of the facilities. The initial debt for the Chilmark School was paid off 6 years ago.
- Business Administrator Mark Friedman reported the Town of Chilmark had again been contacted and the UIRSD/Town of West Tisbury lease re-sent. Chair Robert Lionette retained a long paper trail of UIRSD/Town discussions and requests.
- The UIRSD considered that, if there was no progress in the next couple meetings, Counsel be consulted before the end of the fiscal year about taking possession of the facility.

**D. Chilmark School Bell Tower Bid – Award Contract – Vote** (See document on file.)

The Request For Proposal (RFP) received one bid which was \$1,113 over the estimate. The bidder was a local contractor who had done good work for the District. The project would start in June 2026, placing funding in Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27). Chilmark School Principal Kate Squire was willing to find the overage in the Chilmark site budget.

- Here and at the end of the meeting the UIRSD discussed the matter with some consternation.
  - The bid eliminated the built-in contingency and the UIRSD was reluctant to proceed on the project without some reserves to cover possible change-orders.
  - The UIRSD requested Tappé Architects and Owners Project Manager (OPM) CHA explain why the estimate was essentially \$40,000 off, despite "Island factor" inclusion.
  - Although the FY26 General Budget Contingency Line was depleted, Excess & Deficiency (E & D) was available. It had been certified at \$476,693 with \$365,346 committed to offset the FY27 budget.
- ROBERT LIONETTE MOVED TO ACCEPT THE BID AND ALLOCATE \$1,133 FROM THE CHILMARK SITE MAINTENANCE LINES TO THIS PROJECT; JESSICA MASON SECONDED;
- AND ADDITIONALLY THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE WOULD LOOK TO BE ABLE TO ENCUMBER \$10-13,000 OF THE COST FROM THE FISCAL

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YEAR 2027 CHILMARK SITE BUDGET OR EXCESS AND DEFICIENCY;  
JESSICA MASON WITHDREW HER SECOND.

- The choice was to accept the bid or put it out to rebid, a process the UIRSC had tried before and found to result in long delays and increased prices, for example the long Chilmark School heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC) project. A second bid would take 4-6 weeks and considerable staff time. Further if not completed this summer, the next work window would be February 2027, when it would start to impinge on other capital projects.

- The bid was deemed to be very high for what looked like a straight forward project. Prin. Squire explained that it required a special crane to remove the bell, mandated fencing and an August 8, 2026 hard stop finish. Alex Salop preferred to consult some builders that he knew for other project estimates.

- The project did not require Mass. Div. Of Capital Asset Management (DCAM) certification.

- The project had been advertised for several weeks in the local press and on the State website, and at least 2 contractors had site visits.

• *ALEX SALOP MOVED TO GO FORWARD WITH THE BELL TOWER PROJECT AND ALLOCATE \$1,133 FROM THE CHILMARK SITE MAINTENANCE LINES AND FINDING AN ADDITIONAL \$5,000 FROM THE FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET; JESSICA MASON SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 1 NAY, 0 ABSTENTIONS: JESSICA MASON—AYE, MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANter—NAY, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*

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

**A. Fiscal Year 2027 Impact Aid Application and Policies and Procedures –**

**Discussion (See above p.1 #III A.)**

**B. Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) Excess and Deficiency (E & D) Certification (information only) (See above p.2 #III D, & documents on file.)**

**C. Up Island Regional School District (UIRSD) Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) Budget –  
Recertification – Vote**

Now that E & D was certified this Version incorporated the offset, updated capital project expenses and was correctly assessed by the Regional formula. It could be re-certified again when health insurance rates were set.

• *ALEX SALOP MOVED TO REVISIT AND RESCIND THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET CERTIFIED ON DECEMBER 15, 2025; SKIPPER MANter SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, JESSICA MASON—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANter—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*

• *ALEX SALOP MOVED TO RECERTIFY THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET VERSION #5 AS PRESENTED FOR A TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET OF \$19,634,118.19 OR 10.49% INCREASE, AND A TOTAL ASSESSED BUDGET OF \$19,157,798.74 OR 9.57% INCREASE; MARSHA SHUFRIN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 1 NAY, 0 ABSTENTIONS: JESSICA MASON—AYE, MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANter—NAY, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*

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\* The Chair thanked Jessica Mason for her extra time and she left the meeting at 3:47PM.

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

**B. Donna Lowell-Bettencourt – West Tisbury School (WTS)** (See documents on file.)

### 4. West Tisbury School (WTS) School Improvement Plan (SIP)

• Goal 3 – Strengthen Middle School Science Instruction through Exploration and Alignment with high Engagement and Phenomena-Based Instruction through OpenSciEd Units.

WTS School Advisory Council (SAC) member Robin Moriarty had served for 7 years on the Center for Science Education Development Center which explored curriculums nationally. She was very enthusiastic about this new middle school Open SciEd science curriculum as an engaging and rigorous presentation of the scientific method, starting with one of 6 curious phenomenon, encouraging teachers and students to investigate with a lot of labs. The curriculum fit into the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) standards and had been successfully adopted by a number of school systems nationally. Staff was also excited about it. Professional Development (PD) and review by other Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) for a regional curriculum would take about a year. • Goal 1 – Strengthen and Deepen Family and Community Engagement

This goal was proceeding well (see 5/28/25 Minutes p.1 #III B2), and would be further expanded with parent information on such things as Covid learning losses, Alpha-gal issues, how to engage in student learning and promoting student/parent/school teams. The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) surveyed families and found digital wellness and cell phone bans to be a major interest.

• Goal 2 – Strengthen Core Instruction and Targeted Supports to Ensure Students Meet or Exceed Grade-Level Standards.

The focus was to strengthen reading skills for all the tiers in the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). Elective blocks, Summer Boost program and other enrichment was an important tool. English Language Learners (ELL) curriculums were making excellent progress that WTS wished to continue in reading, writing, speaking, and listening levels.

- There was a discussion on expanding the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) Inter-Reading curriculum. WTS was not currently looking at middle school English/Language Arts E/LA curriculums. Extending the kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade reading curriculums into middle schools was a subject of the All Island School Committee (AISC).

• The UIRSC commended the SIP as very complete and the administration for doing a wonderful job.

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE WEST TISBURY SCHOOL 2025-2027 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN; ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*

### 1. Principal's Report

The boys and girls basketball teams won the MVPS championship but however fun winning was, what was most exciting was that every player played on the floor to great cheers. Positive

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feedback, emails and the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) News noted the program inclusiveness which brought out the best in all students.

- Commendations and thanks went to all the coaches and WTS Asst. Prin. Mary Boyd who was in charge of scheduling the MVPS games.

### 2. Donations

A matching grant was received in recognition of extensive volunteer work by Erin Leighton.

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO ACCEPT WITH GRATITUDE \$2,500 FROM POINT B REALTY TO BE DEDICATED TO THE WEST TISBURY SCHOOL PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION; ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*

### 3. West Tisbury School (WTS) Out of State Travel

Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt would attend the April 16-18 Learning the Brain Conference using brain science to improve instruction intervention, memory, attention and emotional regulation.

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE OUT OF STATE TRAVEL FOR WEST TISBURY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL DONNA LOWELL-BETTENCOURT TO ATTEND THE LEARNING THE BRAIN CONFERENCE IN NEW YORK CITY APRIL 16-18, 2026; ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*

#### A. Kate Squire

##### 1. Principal's Report

- First semester progress report went home today. The staff and Prin. Squire worked to be aligned with State standards and use new indicators based on Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) assessing elements like self awareness: beginning, or it's evident, which helped parents understand student achievement reports.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> grade returned from their ski trip, one of the many impactful and foundational outing program components along with the Shenandoah trip and spring kayaking that were transformational for students in self-confidence and experience.
- Multi-age activities were also highly successful, as evidenced by Thursday skating when partnering students were exciting and supportive, whether riding the bus with an older student partner or a younger student partner teaching and proud of an older student's progress.
- A shout out went to Technologist Chris Mara who upgraded the Chilmark School website which was now more accessible and had added resources for parents and the community.

##### 2. Water Treatment Design Proposal (See 10/20/25 Minutes p.2 #IV A 2.)

Only one engineering firm (from Cape Cod) bid a proposal for polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) filters and installation, with a timeframe at least by the opening of the 2026-27 school year.

#### Superintendent Update—Richard M. Smith, Ed. D., Superintendent (Agenda Item #VI)

- The MVRHS Principal position was posted for 6 weeks and received 13 applicants. The Search Committee interviewed 7 on Zoom and then 4 in-person (2 from Massachusetts, 1 from Connecticut and 1 from Alaska), with the hope of recommending 2 finalists.

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- The Superintendent Search Committee recommended 3 finalists (1 from Plymouth, 1 from Old Rochester and 1 from East Bridgewater) to the AISC for in-person interviews. The candidates would visit for a day. There was a discussion on fitting in all MVPS schools and the educational community on such a tight schedule. UIRSC representative to the Search Committee would convey the UIRSC feedback to the Search Committee Chair.

**A. Shared Services Update** – See below: #VII

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

Student Support Director Hope MacLeod had been hosting mid-year progress/status meetings: with each program team particularly the Compass team to see how the shift was going; and all the MVPS Special Education teachers.

- A March self-assessment would be followed by a Dept. of Education (DOE) site visit focused on Special Education—3 years ago the DOE visit focused on Civil Rights. The cycle allowed for a year of self assessment/site visit, and a year or two to submit and implement a Corrective Action Plan.
- MVPS was also going through an ELL monitoring.

**Next Meeting Date** (See below: Meetings/Events.) (Agenda Item #VIII)

The March 16<sup>th</sup> meeting would be in Aquinnah. The April meeting was moved to avoid Spring break.

**Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair** – None (Agenda Item #IX)

**Adjournment** (Agenda Item #X)

Chair Robert Lionette invited members to attend the 5:00 Chilmark Finance Committee meeting at Town Hall.

- *ALEX SALOP MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 4:43PM; SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ALEX SALOP—AYE, MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE.*

Meetings/Events

- AISC – 5:30PM, Wednesday, February 12, 2026 – MVRHS/Zoom
- UIRSC – 5:30PM, Monday, March 16, 2026 – Aquinnah TBD
- UIRSC – 5:30, Monday, April 27, 2026 – WTS
- UIRSC – 5:30, Monday, May 18, 2026 – TBD
- MVRHS Vote – 11:00AM – 7:00PM June 2, 2026

**Documents on File:**

- Agenda (2 p.) 2/9/26
- Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) Policies and Procedures, Up Island Regional School District, 2026-2027 School Year (5 p.) 1/28/26
- Chilmark School, Bell Tower Project, Budget and Updated Estimate

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- West Tisbury School 2025-2027 School Improvement Plan (7 p.)
- West Tisbury School 2025-2027 School Improvement Plan Draft (7 p.)
- Friedman cover email re: UIRSD SC Meeting Materials – 2/09/26
- UIRSD FY2027 Assessment – V#5 Proposed 2/09/2026
- Excess and Deficiency Calculation, Fiscal Year 2026, 1/30/2026
- UIRSD, FY27 Budget Version #5 Proposed 2/09/2026 Changes from FY26 Budget (3 p.)
- Up-Island Regional School District, FY27 General Fund Budget, Version # 5, Proposed 2/09/2026 (12 p.)
- 5 Year Capital Plan, with Funding Source Suggestions, Draft #2 C – 12/15/25,

**Minutes approved 3/16/26**