UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
5:30PM, Monday, May 18, 2026
Chilmark School and by Zoom Cloud Conference

Present: Chair – Robert Lionette, Skipper J. Manter, Jessica Mason*, Alex Salop, Marsha Shufrin,

Others: Supt.'s Shared Services Office: Superintendent Richard Smith, Incoming Superintendent Jaime Curley, Business Administrator Mark Friedman, Student Support Director – Hope MacLeod, Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Kate Squire, Mary Boyd, Towns: WT: FinCom – Greg Orcutt, Aff. Housing – Jefrey DuBard, WTGH(A) Education Manager – Brad Lopes, 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 5:31PM.
(Recorder's note: Discussions are summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.)

• Chair Robert Lionette expressed his appreciation to the Administration for the Agenda. Throughout the meeting he apologized for his oversights due to over-scheduling struggles and respectfully asked his colleagues for assistance with UIRSC tasks.

Approval of Minutes (Agenda Item #II)

A. Including But Not Limited to April 13, 2026

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE APRIL 13, 2026 MINUTES: ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*

Update from Brad Lopes, Education Manager, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) (WTGH(A)) (Agenda Item #III)

WTGH(A) Education Manager Brad Lopes grounded the meeting in seasonality, wishing he was still with Tribal students planting sun-beans, sunflowers and squash in the Stillpoint Garden.

• He thanked UIRSD Principals for his welcoming visits to all the UIRSD students in preparation for the WTGH(A) flag raising ceremony (see below: Meeting/Events, & Minutes: 10/20/25 p.1 # III A & B, & 3/16/26 p.3 #III A). He especially enjoyed the kindergarteners who asked him the best questions. The Ceremony would include the Black Brook singers and a speech from Tribal Council Chair Kevin Devine.

• On the May 27th Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) Professional Development (PD) day there would be a workshop on Civics and Wampanoag Sovereignty and he looked forward to longer term PD with MVPS staff.

• The Education Department was applying for a $150,000 Tower Foundation grant for traditional cultural youth education focusing on substance abuse similar to the White Bison program.

- Federal changes made the WTGH(A) ineligible for many grants (see 4/13/26 Minutes p.2).

• The Summer Turtle program was struggling for counselors (part of an Islandwide shortage), and so could only offer half-days (parents needing full day attendance would be accommodated through a grant). The Department was talking to the Chilmark Community Center and Sassafras on collaboration and was working to improve its reputation.

- West Tisbury School (WTS) Principal Donna Lowell-Bettencourt offered Tribal students mornings in the WTS Summer Boost Program and a venue for Tribal youth basketball players.

• Brad Lopes would meet with the UIRSD Principals on analyzing and rebuilding the WTGH(A) Policies and Procedures (see 1/28/26 Minutes p.1 #II).

District (Agenda Item #IV)

A. Affordable Housing – Jefrey DuBard

* During this discussion Jessica Mason entered the meeting at 5:53PM.

• West Tisbury Affordable Housing Committee representative Jefrey DuBard reported the Committee had done the initial due diligence/visioning to propose teacher/school employee housing (at 100% Average Median Income—AMI) restricted in perpetuity on the 2.17 acre Halcyon Way lot which was gifted to the Town of West Tisbury on condition it be used for educational purposes. As advised by Counsel the Committee requested UIRSC initial feedback.

- If the UIRSC favored the project the Town/Committee would develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) for interested developers. Funding would come from various sources such as Community Preservation Act/Committee (CPA/CPC).

- The Committee would collaborate with the UIRSC to develop a conceptual plan. The lot could accommodate 14 bedrooms in a combination of studios and 1 and 2 bedroom units in 2 or 3 buildings. After more formal UIRSC approval, plans would be presented to the West Tisbury Select Board (WTSB) and eventually to Town Meeting.

- Lot custody and care would be transferred to the WT Affordable Housing Committee, who would also fund the civil engineer for the specs and RFP.

- Lack of interest was not expected but vacancies could revert to West Tisbury municipal staff.

• The UIRSC raised the following issues.

- As Town owned and controlled land did the UIRSC have any jurisdiction? Counsel advice was for collaboration however ultimate authority rested with WT Town Meeting.

- Counsel advised the restriction was lawful. Educational project precedents included Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) land sharing with the YMCA, Ice Arena, and Martha's Vineyard Community Services (MVCS). Public housing employment restrictions were legal but race, religion or familial status restrictions were not.

- Could the lot meet other educational purposes? Although at the time of donation, housing was not an issue, it was currently a critical need in keeping with the spirit of the gift.

- This was a West Tisbury rather than a UIRSD project. Mr. DuBard suggested housing be restricted to UIRSD employees who worked in the WTS building. Skipper Manter proposed it be 2/3 school and 1/3 WT municipal employee housing.

- Mr. DuBard advocated for smaller projects in healthy locations than the recently approved large housing development that was counter to Martha’s Vineyard rural culture.

• ALEX SALOP WOULD BE THE UIRSC/PROJECT LIAISON. Jefrey DuBard thanked the UIRSC for the feedback and the UIRSC looked forward to further updates.

B. Chilmark School Lease – Direction to Consult Counsel – Discussion and Possible Vote (See 2/9/26 Minutes p.2 #C.)

The UIRSD Regional Agreement stipulated that after the final payment of initial capital bonds, Towns could release the land or present the UIRSD with a lease.

"The Up-Island Regional School District is hereby authorized to accept ownership of and liability for all the premises and buildings presently known as the Chilmark and West Tisbury Schools except where a Regional District member town retains indebtedness on such premises and buildings. In that case, a lease shall be negotiated for the term established by M.G.L. chapter 71, section 16q. Those premises and buildings that are now or will be owned by the Up-Island Regional School District are exempt from the following lease agreements."

Despite constant communications from Business Administrator Mark Friedman, Chilmark had made it emphatically clear that it would neither lease nor release the Chilmark School facility.

- The UIRSC was disinclined to enter into taxpayer-funded legal disputes between 2 public bodies and expressed puzzlement that an owner would not want a legal document with a tenant especially regarding liability issues.
- Members were interested in the opinions of each Chilmark Select Board member.
- The lack of lease was a consistent auditor comment.
- <u>The UIRSC requested the WTS lease be re-sent to the Town and that the UIRSC request an item on the next Chilmark Select Board (CSB) meeting agenda</u>.

C. Advertise for School Committee Members – Vote

• As the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings were posted and UIRSC members were guests, it was unnecessary to repost as UIRSC meetings (see Minutes: 3/16/26 p. 1 #III, 4/13/26 p.2 #IV A, & below: Meetings/Events). Meetings showed authentic interest and conversations with people already engaged with the schools.

• It was suggested the advertisement be posted not only in the press but in Town post offices.

• <u>Alex Salop volunteered to re-draft the advertisement, to be submitted pending UIRSC approval at a short meeting before the next All Island School Committee (AISC) meeting</u>.

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO PLACE AN ADVERTISEMENT IN THE NEWSPAPERS, SIMILAR TO THE PREVIOUS ELECTIONS, WITH THE APPROPRIATE DATES SUCH AS NOMINATION PAPERS DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION TO TOWN CLERKS AT 5:00PM, TUESDAY, JULY 24, 2026, AND FURTHER SUBMISSION TO THE CLERK OF ELECTIONS; ROBERT LIONETTE SECONDED: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, JESSICA MASON—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*

Principal's Reports (Agenda Item #V)

A. Kate Squire – Chilmark School

1. Principal's Report (See documents on file.)

• Chilmark School Principal Kate Squire reported a School busy with end of the school year events: Kindergarten (K) parent orientation (12-14 students projected so far), 4th/5th grade All

Island Band Concert participation at the Performing Arts Center (PAC), completion of Math and Science MCAS testing, WTGH(A) flag raising, traditional Memorial Day Walk to the Sea.

• The Chilmark Water Operator recommended a more expensive 4 filter system so the polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) filters/installation proposal was updated (see Minutes: 10/20/25 p.2 #IV A 2, & 2/9/26 p.4 #A2). Approval was needed to proceed with permitting.

- Installation would require a plumber. Water testing costs would double. Prin. Squire expected to able to find the additional ~ $1,000 expenditure in the site budget Long Term Maintenance Line—current bottled water costs would be eliminated. As the District was tax-exempt the proposal would be reduced accordingly.

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE PFAS FOUR FILTER SYSTEM PROPOSAL; ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, JESSICA MASON—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*

• Every Chilmark School lead teacher advised Prin. Squire that State regulated curricula and regional instruction packages made multi-age teaching increasingly untenable. Consequently, after many staff and family conversations Prin. Squire proposed to break with School tradition and separate all grades. Multi-age activities such as community meetings and outing programs would continue. The change would not involve any additional classrooms or staff hires.

- This was a painful but thoughtful decision, that supported students rather than a pedagogical model. Parent and staff feedback had been positive. Many of the UIRSC members, their families and Prin. Squire herself were products of multi-age teaching but understood the necessity, time, effort and courage of the decision.

- The UIRSC asked that it be on the next meeting agenda.

• The Bell Tower project (see 2/9/26 Minutes p.2-3 #D) hard finish date was August 7th. Construction fences would be installed June 25th and the boom would arrive June 29th.

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

1. Principal's Report

WTS was also busy with end-of-year activities. The Student Council was creating opportunities to work with 1st graders. The Chilmark/WTS Wellness policies were being jointly updated and then submitted to the Wellness Committees. Students loved the annual Walk/Bike to School Day. K Parent orientation night (currently at 28 projected students) included a lot of WTS alumnae. Students participated in the All Island Band Concert at the PAC and there would be a WTS music concert (see below: Meetings/Events). Friday would be the usual Memorial Day Ceremony in the School gym. Brad Lopes was a big success with students. MCAS testing would finish shortly with 8th Grade Civics. Eighth graders were also transitioning to the MVRHS and taking their annual trip to the United Kingdom. Graduation started promptly so as not to impinge on following parties. (A WTS alumnae was a co-valedictorian speakers at the MVRHS graduation.)

- Island Music program had ended however the instrument company was still supplying string instruments to students.

- Hopefully the summer/fall gleaning program would continue with Island Grown Initiative.

- Prin. Lowell-Bettencourt would coordinate with Brad Lopes on identifying tribal students.

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

• End-of-Year transfers would be presented at the June meeting. Overall site budgets were expected to balance.
- The Superintendent's Shared Services Office would come in a little under budget,
- as would the WTS site budget due to hiring differentials.
- As usual economies of size made the Chilmark site a tight fit but it was in good shape.
- However, the Districtwide site had some un-budgeted increases: employee and retirement insurance, the last bond payment from the Contingency line, transportation a little under budget.
• Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) budgets were approved at the all three Annual Town Meetings.
- The Space Needs Study was approved by West Tisbury and Chilmark but was not on the Aquinnah warrant, delaying any action until the next Special or Annual Aquinnah Town Meeting.

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

• The Shared Service Coordinator left for another position, so Student Support Director Hope MacLeod had a wonderful, busy time visiting all MVPS and observing staff dedication and skill.
• The Department of Education (DOE) was wrapping up the Public School Monitoring (PSM) audit, self-assessment and evaluation. Ms. MacLeod's Department had been uploading documentation, interviews and family surveys before the May 26th DOE visit.

Superintendent Update – Richard M. Smith, Ed. D., Superintendent
(Agenda Item #VIII) – Tabled
A. Non-Union Salary Adjustments for Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) – Tabled

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

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

Robert Lionette found the Stamford, Dartmouth, Harvard 10 year Math report a fascinating read.

Adjournment (Agenda Item #XI)

• *ALEX SALOP MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 7:25PM; SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ALEX SALOP—AYE, MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, JESSICA MASON—AYE.*

Meetings/Events

• PTO Meeting – 8:30AM, Wednesday, May 20, 2026 – WTS Cafeteria
• WTGH(A) Flag Raising – 11:30AM, Wednesday, May 20, 2026 – Chilmark School
• WTGH(A) Flag Raising – 1:30PM, Wednesday, May 20, 2026 – WTS
• WTS Concert – 6:00PM, Thursday, May 21, 2026

continued >

Meetings/Events (cont.)

• UIRSC – 5:45PM, Thursday, May 28, 2026 – Zoom
• AISC – 5:30PM, Thursday, May 28, 2026 – MVRHS/Zoom
• Supt. Smith's Farewell – 5:30PM, Friday, May 29, 2026 – Nomans
• MVRHS Vote – 11:00AM – 7:00PM, Tuesday, June 2, 2026
• WTS Graduation – 5:30PM, Thursday, June 11, 2026 – Ag Hall
• UIRSC – 5:30PM, Monday, June 15, 2026 – WTS
• Chilmark School Graduation – 10:00AM, Thursday, June 18, 2026
• UIRSC – 5:30PM, Monday, July 20, 2026 – Aquinnah

Documents on File:
• Agenda (2 p.) 5/18/26
• Kate Squire letter re: Multi-Age issues (2 p.) 4/15/26
• Blake/Well-Tapped proposal (5 p.) 5/8/26
• (Affordable Housing Committee Presentation)

Minutes approved 6/15/26