UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
5:30PM, Monday, June 15, 2026
West Tisbury School and by Zoom Cloud Conference

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

Others: Chilmark parent – Keith Fenner, Recorder Marni Lipke,
Supt.'s Shared Services Office: Superintendent Richard Smith,
Business Administrator Mark Friedman,
Student Support Director – Hope MacLeod,
Principals: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Kate Squire, Mary Boyd,
Towns: WT Aff. Housing – Jefrey DuBard,
Chilmark FinCom – Linda Coutinho,
WTGH(A) Education Manager – Brad Lopes,

*Late arrivals or early departures of UIRSC Members

Call to Order and Chair Comments (Agenda Item #I)

The Up-Island Regional School Committee (UIRSC) meeting was called to order at 5:34PM.

Chair Robert Lionette commented on a number of recent events.

• He thanked Administration, staff and students for a most effective and authentic West Tisbury School graduation, encompassing many UIRSC supported initiatives: art, poetry, land acknowledgement, inclusion of Portuguese and Spanish populations, 4 musical groups.

• Recently Mr. Lionette met with and was impressed by the listening skills, enthusiasm and investment of the UIRSD School Advisory Councils (SACs) and Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs) working with community members to define their goals. He asked, who are the UIRSC? —an organization that can tend to be arrogant and self-righteous and suggested 4 goals/ responsibilities:

- hiring, overseeing and firing the Superintendent,
- overseeing collective bargaining contract negotiations every 3 years,
- taking responsibility for all UIRSD related budgets, and
- drafting, updating and approving all policies.

• In keeping with Open Meeting Law (OML) it was important to reinstate the Public Comment item at the beginning of UIRSC agendas. Topics brought up in Public Comment could not be addressed because they were not published on that meeting's agenda, but they could be placed on the next meeting's agenda for discussion as appropriate.

- A Hillary Noyes-Keene letter on the Chilmark School change from multi-age classes (see 5/18/26 Minutes p.4 #V A 1) was read into the record (see documents on file, & below: #II). The matter had been presented to the Chilmark Select Board (CSB) and Principal Kate Squire was planning a listening session for 10:30AM, Tuesday, June 23rd (see below Meetings/Events). The Chair would respond to the letter.

• There had been public accusations that the UIRSC had violated OML. Partially due to Skipper Manter's vigilance, the UIRSC was adamant about honoring OML and public transparency, with no "back-door" meetings, and all meetings properly posted. Member volunteers met at least once a month and much more often during budget season.
- The shift from multi-age classes was a pedagogical decision made by administration and staff.

• This is the final meeting that Robert Lionette would be chairing with Superintendent Richard Smith. It was an impressive mark of respect that although they often disagreed it was never an impediment to their discussions and relations.

Public Comment (Agenda Item #II)

• Chilmark parent Keith Fenner reported he had a good talk with Prin. Squire after an uncomfortable CSB meeting, where many parents were upset about not only the change from multi-age classes but their feeling that they had no voice in the decision.
- The multiplication of Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) regulation and restrictions made teaching increasingly difficult. He understood her difficult position between teachers and community.
- Multi-age was one of the major factors that made Chilmark a special school and some parents chose it for that reason. Several UIRSC members' children had thrived in multi-age classrooms. Learning a lesson and then teaching it to a younger student was a satisfying process. Multi-age classes did not hinder or complicate transitions to other schools.
- The change also raised fears that it was a step towards merging or eliminating the School.
• Linda Coutinho acknowledged the UIRSC OML practice but suggested that a preliminary meeting or announcement would have been helpful for a community oriented school where the parents and staff had fought to retain multi-age classes for many years.
• Marsha Shufrin supported Prin. Squire's position with a different perspective. She chose the Chilmark School for her children as a community public school with a private school education where her 2 sons felt at home. However, some aspects of multi-age learning had failed them academically.
- Historically the multi-age classes had been a matter of necessity because there were only 2 classrooms in the old school building—although each child had separate education plans.
• The UIRSC observed the tension and challenge of a Town that expected participatory democracy and decisions. Supt. Smith offered to continue the conversation with those concerned.

Approval of Minutes (Agenda Item #III)

A. Including But Not Limited to May 18 and May 28, 2026

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MAY 18, 2026 AND MAY 28, 2026 MINUTES: ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, ABSTENTIONS AS ABSENT: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, JESSICA MASON—AYE.*

District (Agenda Item #IV)

A. Brad Lopes – Report Out on Collaborative Planning Meeting with Principals and Monthly Share (See 5/18/26 Minutes p.1- #III.)

Brad Lopes, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) (WTGH(A)) Education Manager had been planting corn with the students.

• He thanked Principals Kate Squire, Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, and MVPS Business Administrator Mark Friedman, for their time, thought and energy around the May 29th meeting on Impact Aid—Federal aid to alleviate missing taxes from students living on federal/tribal land (see Minutes: 9/20/04 p.3, & 9/19/05 p3, & 11/28/05 p.1). Three WTGH(A) students were attending the Charter School and so not defined as UIRSD students, which dropped the UIRSD below the minimum percentage and made it ineligible for Impact Aid.

- However the matter could be appealed on the grounds of a 1987 Special Legislation that defined the land as "the Island of Martha's Vineyard". Impact Aid had not been fully funded since the 1960s so there was a movement to lobby Congress.
- This was a Tribal Council matter and they were not working directly with the Town of Aquinnah although Brad Lopes would contact each Select Board member.
- Mark Friedman thanked Brad Lopes for his assistance with the Impact Aid application which generated about $20,000 a year when granted—which fell far short of covering actual per-student costs. The 2026 application was submitted February 26th and was followed by a number of conversations with Federal staff. He was fully prepared to appeal.
- Enrollment could be averaged over 3 years to smooth out steep spikes and dips.
- The meeting also generated ideas on system alignment for in and/or after school programs.

• Summer programs had been paused as Mr. Lopes had decided the Education Department was in need of heavy restructuring to increase the focus on direct services to Tribal children, whether through curriculum support, language classes, clubs, etc. The Department was in conversation with Sassafras and the Chilmark Community Center (CCC) about this summer.

• A Civics Professional Learning Community (PLC), located at but not associated with Tufts University, was working on curriculum consultation/support, data alignment, Title 6 application alignment, and increasing Wamapanoag teachers in schools. The group provided opportunities for responsive feedback and ways to move through disputes. Mr. Lopes was in conversations with MVPS Curriculum Coordinator Sara Dingledy.

• The Department applied for a State Tribal Education Partnership grant from Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE); the grant had been very successful for the Mashpee Wampanoag.

• This Saturday was Graduation Celebration that honored grandfathers/sons (anyone from elders to children) from all over the Island.

D. Workforce Housing – Update and Discussion

(See 5/18/26 Minutes p.2-3 #IV A & below: Meetings/Events.)

West Tisbury Affordable Housing Committee member Jefrey DuBard reported UIRSC feedback on the Halcyon Way proposal to the Housing Committee. They asked if the UIRSC had voted.

- The UIRSC discussed motion language, briefly repeating the discussion of housing for West Tisbury municipal staff as the original dedication to educational uses had expired after 30 years.

• *ALEX SALOP MOVED TO SUPPORT THE CONSTRUCTION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING ON HALCYON WAY PER THE EFFORTS OF JEFREY DUBARD AND THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE; JESSICA MASON AND MARSHA SHUFRIN SECONDED: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, ABSTENTIONS AS ABSENT: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, JESSICA MASON—AYE.*

C. Up Island Regional School District (UIRSD) Clerk (Secretary) Replacement – Vote

This was a required position (although not mentioned in the UIRSD Regional Agreement) mostly involving bonding and the election process. It was not to be confused with the UIRSC recorder who took minutes. Traditionally it was filled by the MVPS Superintendent. The UIRSC asked if the Central Office Administrative Support Professional (ASP) Kristen Lepine would be interested in filling the role.

B. Chilmark School Lease Discussion (See Minutes: 2/9/26 p.2 #C, & 5/18/26 p.3 #B.)

Although Chair Lionette had not received a response, the UIRSC and the School lease were on the CSB agenda for tomorrow's meeting. The UIRSC reviewed previous discussions at length.

- several submissions of the West Tisbury School lease to the CSB;
- requests to the CSB to identify any obstacles or issues, such as access and summer use;
- Town disregard for decades of requests for discussion of lease/formalization of current practice;
- liability exposure, addendums, etc.,
- cooperative relations with the Town and the Chilmark Preschool.

> MGL Chapter 70 Section 71: For the purpose of promoting the usefulness of public school property the school committee of any town may conduct such educational and recreational activities in or upon school property under its control, and, subject to such regulations as it may establish, and, consistently and without interference with the use of the premises for school purposes, shall allow the use thereof by individuals and associations for such educational, recreational, social, civic, philanthropic and like purposes as it deems for the interest of the community.

• It was suggested that the new Select Board members might be more focused on documenting Town practices so the Town might be more cooperative.

• In a related issue, the Chilmark Town Advisory Council (TSAC) requested use of the Chilmark School bathroom for the 2026 summer. Summer Camp training started June 25th before Camp start June 29th. There was a discussion on linking the two issues. Prin. Squire offered to draw up a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

• IT WAS THE CONSENSUS OF THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO DIRECT CHILMARK SCHOOL PRINCIPAL KATE SQUIRE TO DRAFT A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR USE OF THE CHILMARK SCHOOL BATHROOM FOR THE 2026 SUMMER CAMP SEASON.

Principal's Reports (Agenda Item #V)

A. Kate Squire – Chilmark School

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

Prin. Squire reported the busy end of the school year: Water Day, Special Concerts, student sung farewell to retiring Secretary Mary Ambulos, trip to Penikese Island, 5th grade step up day at the West Tisbury School (WTS), whale watch and a huge mural project on the outside wall.

- Alumna Claus Smith would be the speaker at the graduation.

• She had heard a lot of concern about the change from multi-age classes but emphasized that project-based and multi-age learning and events would continue.

2. Chilmark Town Affairs Council (CTAC) Summer Camp – Use of Chilmark School Bathroom – Discussion and Vote – See above #IV B.

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

1. Principal's Report

Prin. Donna Lowell-Bettencourt thanked Robert Lionette for his commendation of the graduation. A WTS alumna who was co-valedictorian at the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) graduation gave students advice on the transition to High School. Students wrote a rendition of the *Hamilton* (the musical) song to perform.

• Like the Chilmark School, the end of school year was a busy time for the WTS. Students couldn't wait and everyone was invited to June 23rd Games Day.

• Of the 22 WTS Spanish students, all tested into MVRHS Spanish 2 and 19 into Spanish Honors. The Spanish program was reconfigured to concentrate classes in the middle school (see Minutes: 11/14/13 p.2 & 11/18/13 p.4).

• Projected enrollment (see documents on file) was very healthy with a high Kindergarten (K) enrollment and students returning from the Charter School.

2. Donations

• ALEX SALOP MOVED TO ACCEPT WITH GRATITUDE
- $125 FROM BUNCH OF GRAPES BOOKSTORE TO PURCHASE BOOKS FOR THE WEST TISBURY SCHOOL LIBRARY, AND
- DONORS CHOOSE GIFT CARDS TO BE USED FOR WEST TISBURY SCHOOL CLASSROOM SUPPLIES;
SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, ABSTENTIONS AS ABSENT: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE, JESSICA MASON—AYE.

3. Retirement

After 30 years of service:

• ALEX SALOP MOVED TO ACKNOWLEDGE WITH GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION THE RETIREMENT OF SCIENCE AND MATH TEACHER KARL NELSON AS OF AUGUST 30, 2026; SKIPPER MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, JESSICA MASON—AYE, MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.

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

A. Budget Transfers (See documents on file.)

Over 80% of the transfers were contractual dealing with health insurance, longevity, etc.

• The major WTS site transfers that were not contractual were:

- $5,000 for WTS end-of-year undistributed supplies purchases to supplement the Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) budget;
- $24,000 in general maintenance—the usual flurry of end of year issues most schools tackled;
- $20,000 for classroom furniture from the State Contract. One classroom was budgeted however burgeoning enrollment indicated 2 rooms needed updating; for example the 57 eighth graders would require 4 sections. Skipper Manter asked how many were school choice students; 6 were school choice, 4 of them continued students from the WTS. Chair Robert Lionette reminded the

UIRSC of their decision to accept school choice students in aid and support of the Tisbury School health crisis (see Minutes: 8/26/19 #VI, & 9/16/19 p.1 #III A).

• Most Chilmark site transfers were contractual: substitutes, salaries, longevity, separation costs, health and building insurance. The non-contractual transfer was $5,500 to cover un-budgeted water testing and maintenance (see Minutes: 10/20/25 p.2 #IV A 2, & 5/18/26 p.4 #V A 1).

• The Districtwide site was the most difficult:

- this year's 8% increase in health insurance rates;
- final payment on the 10 yr. bond mostly covered by the Contingency Line (see Minutes: 3/21/16 p.1-2 #IV B, & 10/20/25 p.6 #V A);
- UIRSC recorder.

• Total transfers were just under $393,000 or 1% of the operating budget.

• The UIRSC discussed general budgeting and Excess & Deficiency (E & D) issues.

- There would be some budget residual to replenish E & D however FY26 finances were short ~ $93,000 in unexpected Charter School revenues.
- There was a question of how to better project staff salaries to avoid large residuals from lower paid or unfilled positions, e.g. budgeting for x number of vacancies, like the MVRHS.
- The FY26 Budget included a lump sum for then ongoing union negotiations. The year also included many unforeseen longevity draws.
- Mark Friedman stressed the difficulties of three separate site budgets that precluded cross district transfers. This meant each site had to be sufficiently budgeted. Salary savings varied yearly, sometimes showing more in WTS other times more in the Chilmark School.
- Transportation continued under-budget due to the chronic shortage of drivers.

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE END-OF-FISCAL-YEAR 2026 BUDGET TRANSFERS AS PROPOSED: ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS; SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, JESSICA MASON—AYE, MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*

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

The year was winding up successfully. The Department gave its Basic Parent Rights presentation and discussed how to increase parent involvement. The UIRSC suggested a strong School Committee representative and requested an overview of various MVPS summer programs.

Superintendent Update – Richard M. Smith, Ed. D., Superintendent
(Agenda Item #VIII)

A. Non-Union Salary Adjustments for Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27)

It was Supt. Smith's practice to keep non-union salary adjustments within the context of union contracts, however in view of the overwhelming (84% majority) vote in support of the MVRHS $333,000,000 project he was breaking the practice to propose a 3.5% across the board increase despite much higher contractual increases for teachers. He considered the administrators deserved more, underscoring that there was no job like being an administrator and MVPS were

fortunate to have staff with not only the skills but the courage to fill their responsibilities.
- The UIRSC noted the budgeted lump sum and their oft-repeated request to tie increases to the Consumer Price Index.
- Skipper Manter in a reversal of his previous position proposed that administrators should get what union employees received. Supt. Smith reviewed the hard work to calibrate positions and shave down budgets particularly in the Superintendent Shared Services (or Central) Office. In retiring he would not miss the 14 different opinions on how to adjust non-union salaries.

• *JESSICA MASON MOVED TO APPROVE THE FISCAL YEAR 2027 NON-UNION SALARY ADJUSTMENTS AS PROPOSED: ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 1 NAY, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—NAY, ALEX SALOP—AYE, JESSICA MASON—AYE, MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*

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

There would be a brief June meeting to finalize the summer camp MOU. Marsha Shufrin would confirm the July UIRSC meeting in Aquinnah.

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

Adjournment (Agenda Item #XI)

• *SKIPPER MANTER MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 7:55PM; ALEX SALOP SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SKIPPER MANTER—AYE, ALEX SALOP—AYE, JESSICA MASON—AYE, MARSHA SHUFRIN—AYE, ROBERT LIONETTE—AYE.*

Meetings/Events

- Chilmark Select Board – 6:00PM, Tuesday, June 16, 2026 – Chilmark Town Hall
- WTGH(A) Graduation Celebration – 11:30AM – 3:30PM, Saturday, June 20, 2026
- Chilmark School Multi-Age Session – 10:30AM, Tuesday, June 23, 2026 – TBD Library?
- WT Affordable Housing – 6:00PM, Tuesday, June 30, 2026 – Zoom only
- **UIRSC – 9:00AM, Wednesday, June 24, 2026 – Zoom only**
- **UIRSC – 5:30PM, Monday, July 20 2026 – Aquinnah/Zoom**

Documents on File:

- Agenda & Revised Agenda (2 p. each) 6/15/26
- West Tisbury School, Class of 2026, Graduation Ceremony program 6/11/26
- Lionette/Noyse-Keene email re: UIRSC June 15 meeting 6/14-15/26
- WTS 2026-2027 Projected Enrollment
- All Expenditure Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (16 p.) 6/12/26
- Revenue Report – General Fund Fiscal Year 2024-2025 6/12/26
- UIRSD, FY26 Year End, Proposed Year-End Budget Transfers June 15, 2026 6/10/26
  UIRSD, FY26 Year End, Proposed Year-End Budget Transfers June 15, 2026 6/15/26
- Martha's Vineyard Public Schools, Office of Superintendent of Schools memo re: Management and Non-Union Salaries and Adjustments, 6/15/26

Minutes approved as amended 9/28/26