

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD  
Thursday, October 16, 2008, 7:00 PM  
West Tisbury School**

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Present: Chair - Marshall Segall, Dan Cabot,  
Skipper J. Manter, Susan Parker  
Others: Superintendent's Office: Jim Weiss, Laurie Halt,  
Amy Tierney  
Principals: Michael Halt, Bob Lane, Diane Gandy  
Staff: Karl Nelson, Victoria Phillips,  
W. Tisb. FinCom – Al DeVito, Greg Orcutt,  
Recorder: Marni Lipke\*

\*Late arrivals or early departures

The meeting was called to order at 7:00.

**Discuss FY10 Budget for the Up Island Regional School District**

The first draft of the Up Island Regional School District (UIRSD) was reviewed. This software allowed for a variety of data sorting by category and subcategory. Predictable increases were noted – not including any capital projects and/or School Advisory Council (SAC) recommendations:

- Health insurance estimated at 10-12 %,
- Life Insurance – a very small rise,
- Contractual Cost of Living (COL) raises, steps and longevity,
- The 4% pool for administrative raises,
- Dukes County Retirement Board,
- Superintendent's budget,
- All UIRSD retirees (17 plus 2 more this year) were from the West Tisbury School (WTS). Retirees were not required to take Medicare and supplemental health insurance which would cut costs dramatically.
- Municipalities were likely to be required to dedicate moneys to this unfunded liability in the near future (see 11/13/06 Minutes p.3 #C).
- Fuel costs were also likely to rise.
- Decreases in the District portion of the budget included: debt, and a bus driver.
- UIRSC recorder was raising non-profit rates \$1.50 per hour to \$29.
- The UIRSC discussed the number, configuration and focus of paraprofessionals in the WTS. In keeping with a shift to focus paraprofessional work on Special Education (SpEd) or Individual Education Plans (IEP's) students, all were classified and in-house trained for SpEd, with the exception of the kindergarten and library paraprofessionals.

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- At the moment the WTS kindergarten enrollment for Academic Year 2009-2010 (AY09-10) was estimated at 18-25 – a more comprehensive estimate would be available after January 2009.
  - Changes in Full Time Equivalents (FTE) at the WTS were:
    - a teacher paid at 0.9 FTE but working full time had been corrected to a full FTE.
    - the 0.5 FTE Math Specialist hopefully would continue (see 1/22/08 Minutes p.4 #V B),
    - Spanish was reduced from 1.5 FTE's to 1 FTE.
  - The Chilmark site had not found a Spanish teacher but the position would remain open.
    - The English Language Learning (ELL) teacher had been reduced from 0.5 to 0.3 FTE.
    - The Technician position would rise from 0.2 FTE to 0.4 FTE in compensation for the shift of the District-wide technician to the WTS.
  - WT FinCom Chair Al DeVito brought up the issue of student teacher ratio for the UIRSD. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE formerly DOE) had developed a formula: Mass. State average - 1 teacher to 13.7 students,
    - WTS- 1 teacher to 8.7 students or
    - Edgartown School - 1 teacher to 9.2 students.
  - Administration and UIRSC credited the amazing MCAS scores, and the excellence of the Island education to the low student teacher ratio which seemed to be an enduring goal of the community.
  - Al DeVito then asked about the goals or plans which drove the FY10 budget.
    - Supt. Weiss had framed the budget season to the MV Public School (MVPS) Cabinet as a year of steep salary raises that might preclude any new programs with the main goal being to maintain the level of service. The Principals then spoke to their respective SAC.
    - The UIRSC had directed the Administration to maintain services and to examine leadership.
  - A number of issues were discussed.
    - Supt. Weiss noted that there was a nationwide struggle about the elementary level World Language Program which everyone agreed was important but which was suffering from a lack of licensed teachers.
    - Islandwide Student insurance (UIRSD share \$7,000) was the best in the nation and alternatives such as less coverage, higher deductibles, less sports, etc. were explored - the Island sustained about \$50–100,000 in claims per year. However issues of equality, fairness, lack of family insurance, etc. had resulted in continuing the status quo (8/29/05 MVRHSC Minutes p.4 # V).
    - Supt. Weiss, Dan Cabot and Principals Michael Halt and Diane Gandy would attend the next Board of Selectmen meeting.
    - The set aside for the bus purchase was included in this draft in case of further capital expenditures.

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- Revenues from Mass. State were conservatively estimated as flat.
- Based on the October 1st census very rough assessments estimates were briefly reviewed.
- The UIRSC asked that the assessments be calculated by the Statutory as well as the Regional formula.

**Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 8:13PM.

**Documents on File:**

Agenda 10/16/08

Sign In Sheet 10/16/08

Combined Up Island Pupil Enrollment Census – October 1, 2008 (2 p.) 10/16/08

UIRSD FY10 Proposed Budget Draft #1 10/16/08 (5 p.)

UIRSD Employee List 2008-2009 For FY10 Budgeting Purposes Only – Draft #1  
10/16/08 (4 p.)

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD  
Monday, October 20, 2008  
West Tisbury School, 5:00 PM**

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Present: Chair - Marshall Segall, Roxanne Ackerman,  
Dan Cabot\*, Skipper J. Manter\*, Susan Parker  
Others: Superintendent's Office: Jim Weiss, Laurie Halt,  
Amy Tierney  
Principals: Michael Halt, Bob Lane, Diane Gandy  
Staff: Jackie Guzalac, Alicia Knight,  
Jack Regan, Jill Rosenkranz, Robin Smith,  
Chilmark SAC: Sharon Eber,  
Chilmark Selectmen: Warren Doty, Frank Fenwick  
Recorder: Marni Lipke\*

\*Late arrivals or early departures

**Call to Order** (Agenda item # I.)

The meeting was called to order.

**Minutes Read and Approved – August 18 & September 15** (Agenda item # II)

The minutes were still in summer backlog.

**Financial Report** (Agenda Item # IV)

**A. Expenditure Report** (See documents on file.)

**B. Foundation Reserve Aid** (See documents on file.)

The Up Island Regional School District (UIRSD) was awarded \$19,000 in Foundation reserve aid (Pothole money) for FY09 under Category F (districts with more state aid in FY02 than FY08), but not for Category D (rural district) – nor did the MVRHS receive any under Category A (the statutory formula).

**Principal's Report** (Agenda Item # V)

**A. Diane Gandy - Chilmark** (See documents on file.)

The School was still waiting to hear about insurance reimbursement for the storm damage. Otherwise the year was running smoothly and the UIRSC were referred to her monthly report.

**B. Michael Halt – West Tisbury** (See documents on file.)

Prin. Michael Halt invited all UIRSC members to spend an exciting hour or so in the school touring, and visiting classrooms. The UIRSC gratefully agreed to the offer discussing: individual or group tours, timing, and intrusiveness of visitors versus visitors as normal occurrences.

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- The Response to Intervention workshop was discussed as evaluating the effectiveness of instruction techniques to allow teachers to tailor their methods to each student. The program was also aimed at forestalling learning disabilities by diagnosing and remedying problems at an early age.
- The Math Club had become very popular with more participants than basketball.
- The West Tisbury School (WTS) 8th grade science MCAS score was the highest in Mass. State and the entire staff of both schools was highly commended for their contributions to the results

**C. Robert Lane – WTS Building and Ground Report** (See documents on file.)

- The WTS was making progress in energy savings including more efficient boilers.
- The roof was still in need of an engineering analysis.
- The high price of painting the outside trim was discussed in terms of the high costs of deferring needed maintenance.

**Superintendent's Report** (Agenda Item # V.)

**B. Internet Safety Program** (See documents on file.)

There will be an Internet Safety presentation for MV Public School (MVPS) Middle School students on Wednesday, November 5th with a presentation for parents in the evening. The Schools were appreciative of the sponsorship of the MV Times and Comcast.

**D. MOU with Cape and Islands District Attorney** (See documents on file.)

A round table with Police and the District Attorney's Office was being instigated to share relevant information with the schools in terms of police issues and information on specific cases that schools might find useful. The UIRSC discussed whether this allowed police further access to schools, as well as the implications of the Understanding and current policy.

- The UIRSC could limit their participation if they chose and requested they see the Memorandum of Understanding before finalization.

**C. SPED Program Plan Statement – Dan Seklecki** (See documents on file.)

On a three year cycle each school district was required to review and attest to the implementation of Mass. State Special Education regulations. (The MVPS received an excellent rating on their six year Compliance Review a year and half ago.) The UIRSC was in compliance and no money or action (other than the Chair's signature) was required.

**A. Enrollment/Census Report – October 1st** (See documents on file.)

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**Policy** (Agenda Item # VI.)

**A. Vehicle Use Policy – 2nd Reading** (See documents on file.)

The policy had been amended as requested at the MV Regional High School Committee (MVRHSC) meeting (see MVRHSC 10/6/08 Minutes p. 5 # IX), and was further refined here. The transportation staff had reviewed the policy.

*DAN CABOT MOVED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE SECOND READING OF THE AMENDED UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT VEHICLE USE POLICY; SKIP MANTER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED BY CONSENSUS.*

**Old / New / Other Business** (Agenda Item # VII.)

**A. Chilmark Leadership Discussion** (See documents on file.)

Prin. Diane Gandy's expected retirement at the end of this Academic Year coupled with a dip in enrollment presented an opportunity to explore the configuration of the UIRSC administration. The decision was the purview of the Superintendent who advocated strong leadership for the school and who was now engaged in gathering information and feed back from all the stakeholders including, the UIRSC, the Chilmark Selectmen, the School faculty, Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and School Advisory Council (SAC).

- Prin. Gandy described her duties as serving the school in every possible capacity from substitute teaching, to major maintenance issues including: cleaning toilets, false alarms in the middle of the night, staff oversight and the same number of reports/paperwork required of any other school principal. She stressed the lack of consistent custodial support as a major problem and noted the substantial facility duties during her unpaid summer months.

- Ms. Gandy supported the present configuration of a 10 month Head of School.

- Chilmark staff and parents spoke of the importance of having a strong and present leadership in the school at all times stressing the need for consistency.

- Like Prin. Gandy they also emphasized the all encompassing role of the Head of School citing such examples as: filling in for the School nurse (who was only there one day a week), overseeing student discipline, scheduling and overseeing various drills, and meeting / consulting with parents.

- A head teacher/head of school position would be challenging due to the complexity of teaching multi-age classrooms and it was noted that previous attempts had not worked well.

- The obvious delays and inconvenience of a remote principal (i.e. in West Tisbury) would disrupt the daily flow of the school and would be further compounded by the lack of adequate cell phone coverage.

- The constant talk of closing the School due to low enrollment was a strain on staff and morale; however the thriving pre-school was emphasized,.

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- Selectmen Warren Doty and Frank Fenner again committed to the continuance of the Chilmark School.
- As with other Towns Chilmark was in the middle of budget season and Selectmen were considering the school accordingly, especially in regards to the current low enrollment.
- Due to economies of scale the Chilmark School per pupil cost was extraordinarily high.
- The Town worked on zero based budgeting and balanced the dual responsibilities to the School and the tax payers.
- The UIRSD acknowledged that the excellent Chilmark School performed extremely well. Various leadership configurations were put forward.
- The most prevalent suggestions involved relieving the position of the substantial facility maintenance and custodial duties possibly by sub-contracting it out, by shifting responsibility on to the Town, or by having a UIRSD facilities manager position. It was noted that the custodian was a union position that would have to be re-negotiated.
- A Principal at the West Tisbury School and an Assistant Principal at the Chilmark School was also discussed however the logistics of distance, duties and split time were unclear or problematic.
- As previously stated Skip Manter felt the UIRSD administration in its current configuration was top heavy.
- The UIRSD raised the issue of regional sharing and garnering input from the Administration and WTS PTO and SAC as well as those of the Chilmark School.
- Prin. Gandy went on record to thank the staff, Selectmen, and parents for taking the time to attend the meeting.
- Later in the meeting *SUSAN PARKER MOVED TO AFFIRM THAT THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE HAD NO INTENTION OF CLOSING THE CHILMARK SCHOOL; DAN CABOT SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS* although Mr. Manter noted he might change his opinion at budget time.

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**B. West Tisbury Lease Extension**

In the course of applying for the grant for the wind turbine, it was noted that the WTS lease had expired. The UIRSC discussed renegotiating the lease and the status (or lack) of the Chilmark School lease.

• *SKIP MANTER MOVED TO EXERCISE THE SECOND YEAR OPTION FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE WEST TISBURY SCHOOL LEASE AND TO AUTHORIZE THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL CHAIR TO SIGN THE EXTENSION ; ROXANNE ACKERMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION – MARSHAL SEGAL* due to absence during the discussion.

**C. Bus/Car Purchase**

In January and March of 2009 the UIRSD would receive six new 77 passenger, 2010 model buses, one of which would be wheelchair accessible (\$494,766); along with a Toyota Prius to be kept in Woods Hole/Falmouth (\$21,993).

- Seven old buses would be traded in for \$78,000.

• Supt. Weiss highly commended Business Administrator Amy Tierney for the years of hard work and challenges that have resulted in this excellent deal.

• *DAN CABOT MOVED TO DECLARE SURPLUS THE TWO UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MINIVANS AND TO AUTHORIZE THAT THEY BE MOVED OUT AS APPROPRIATE; SJM SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

• The UIRSC reviewed the funding of the purchase through dedication of Excess and Deficiency (E & D) funds as well as funding within previous budgets. Only \$58, 790 remained to be covered which could be funded from E & D, budget residuals, or the MVRHS bond. Chapter 71 reimbursements should rise due to increased depreciation. The possibility of a transportation stabilization fund was briefly noted.

**D. Meeting Schedule**

10/29/08 7:00PM AISC Meeting in the MVRHS.

11/3/08 5:00 PM UIRSC Auditors report at MVRHS.

11/13/08 7:00PM UIRSC Budget Workshop at Chilmark School.

11/17/08 UIRSC regular meeting in Aquinnah - time to be announced.

12/4/08 7:00PM UIRSC regular meeting at WTS.

12/15/08 UIRSC regular meeting – Public Hearing and Budget Certification  
– may be rescheduled.

**E. Audit Report** (See above meeting schedule for 11/3/08)

**F. Other**

• *SKIP MANTER MOVED TO ACCEPT WITH REGRET THE RESIGNATION OF JULIE HITCHING EFFECTIVE AT THE END OF THE 2008-2009 ACADEMIC YEAR; DAN CABOT SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

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**Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 7:42PM.

**Documents on File:**

Agenda 10/20/08

UIRSC Sign In Sheet 10/20/08

UIRSD School Committee Meeting October 20, 2008

Chilmark Leadership Discussion 10/20/08

W. Tisb. School Principal's Report (2 p.)

    W. Tisb. School Buildings & Grounds Report 10/20/08

Chilmark School Principal's Report (2 p.)10/20/08

    Chilmark Times

    Bell Tower Monthly Notes (2 p.) October, 2008

UIRSD Vehicle Use Policy (2 p.) 10/6/08

October 1, 2008 Enrollment Census MVPS K-12 (11 p. including title p.) 10/9/08