

**UP-ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD
Monday, January 2, 2008
Chilmark Library Conference Room, 12:00 N**

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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, Diane Gandy
Chilmark Selectmen Office: Warren Doty, Rigs Parker,
Frank Fenner, Tim Carroll.
WTSAC/PTO: Heather Rodrigues, Chantale Legaré
Community: Elaine Barnett, Cynthia Bermudes,
Jeff Burgoyne, Nicole Cabot, Tom Engley,
Frank LoRusso, Frank Karen McDonald, Tina Miller,
Michele Ortlip, Josh Sommers, Martha Stackpole,
Peggy Stone,
Recorder: Marni Lipke

Fiscal Year 2009 Budget

The meeting was called to order.

Chair Marshall Segall wished everyone a Happy New Year. He welcomed help with his new role as chair.

- The Up-Island Regional School Committee (UIRSC) had reached an impasse on the proposed Fiscal Year 2009 (FY09) Budget (see 12/20/07 Minutes p.2-4) which required a 2/3 majority and so would have to pass by a 4 to 1 margin.
- Chair Segall noted that according to Mass. Association of School Committees (MASC):
 - All school committee members must behave in the interest of the Up Island schools and students, suppressing any individual predilections, and
 - members must abide by previously voted measures even in a second vote. Thus the passage of the Supt. Of budget by the All Island School Committee (AISC) could legally be considered a binding vote. Roxanne Ackerman objected to a lack of Public Hearing on the Supt. Share Programs Office Budget.
- Dan Cabot voiced reservations on the Facilities Manager position as not well thought out in terms of commensurate local administrative staff reductions, but he was willing to compromise in the interest of regional cooperation. He would also be willing to consider the position in another year although noting that in this case the UIRSD budget would increase since the position had been utilized in budget cuts at the West Tisbury School (WTS) (see 11/13/07 Minutes p. 2).

- Supt. Jim Weiss spoke in support of the Facilities Manager position noting the inordinate amount of time spent on facilities by both administrations and school committees as well as a lack of appropriate expertise. However he acknowledged objections from the two regional districts and if voted they voted it down he would probably withdraw the position entirely – although it might also be possible to use the position for those districts voting in favor. The decision was now with the UIRSC.
- Both West Tisbury School Principal Michael Halt and Chilmark Principal Diane Gandy advocated strongly for an Islandwide Facilities Manager citing School Advisory Council (SAC) support, particularly as it would allow them to focus on the true meaning of education and students and.
- Skip Manter had not changed his opinion on the position needing support staff, etc. and further that he doubted the position could be properly filled. He noted for the record that his niece was employed at the West Tisbury School.
- Roxanne Ackerman also had not changed her position stating that:
 - the Schools could find talent within themselves with some regional cooperation,
 - she agreed with Skip Manter,
 - the facilities manager would not be available to the UIRSD,
 - the schools did not need an Asst. Supt. for Curriculum.
- Susan Parker suggested a multi-year task order with a general engineering company on a non-paid retainer, where engineering for each project would be included in the cost of the project.

There was then a discussion on the Special Education (SpEd) programs. Supt. Weiss stated unequivocally that this program was not open to compromise and was much needed across the Island not only for educational reasons but for six figure financial savings as well. Four students were projected for Academic Year 2008-09 (AY 08-09). The programs were described (see AISC 10/18/07 Minutes p.1-2 and AISC 11/8/07 Minutes p. 2-3).

- Roxanne Ackerman considered this model might not be acceptable to some parents and that she had reservations about some programs created and funded by the central office.
 - Dan Cabot stated he was absolutely in support of the programs and was not at all likely to vote against them even if the meeting ran till midnight.
 - Skip Manter also had reservations but was willing to give on this point.
 - Roxanne Ackerman conceded that she had made her point. However she also objected to the administrative salary increases which were at the discretion of the Superintendent.
- **ROXANNE ACKERMAN MOVED TO INCREASE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT FISCAL YEAR 2009 BUDGET BY \$21,249.06 WITH THE INTENT NOT TO FUND THE FACILITIES MANAGER IN THE SUPT. BUDGET AND TO MAINTAIN THE PART TIME WEST TISBURY INDUSTRIAL ARTS POSITION; SKIP MANTER SECONDED.**

- Although giving a brief nod to top-heavy administration, public comment supported the position of the Facilities Manager citing:
 - economy of scale in regards to the cost of licensing educators for facilities oversight,
 - national and international municipal, school and business practice,
 - the support of Edgartown, Oak Bluffs and Tisbury,
 - the real estate value of the schools,
 - the benefits of un-fragmented building oversight,
 - the need for principals to focus on educational issues.
 - The UIRSC also discussed, examples of projects needing expertise, the assurance of the Superintendent to only hire an appropriately skilled person, and old and new talent.
- MOTION WITHDRAWN.

• *SKIP MANTER MOVED TO REDUCE THE PART A SUPERINTENDENTS SHARED SERVICES OFFICE OF THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT FISCAL YEAR 2009 BUDGET BY \$19,333.05 WITH THE INTENT OF ELIMINATING THE POSITIONS OF FACILITIES MANAGER: MARSHALL SEGALL SECONDED; MOTION FAILED: 2 AYES – ROXANNE ACKERMAN, SKIP MANTER; 3 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

The UIRSD FY09 Budget was discussed in general.

- Despite a 3% salary raise on 85% of budget the bottom line was up only 1.6% due to staff reduction, transportation savings, etc.
- Contingency plans for the failure to approve or hire a Facilities Manager might include, Excess and Deficiency (E & D), budget residuals, or voting a raised next budget.
- In consideration of Roxanne Ackerman's protest, capping of administrative salaries was debated.
 - Teachers worked 180 days per year – administrators worked 261 days per year.
 - Asst. Principals earned the same as top step teachers. The Asst. Superintendent earned less than her previous salary as a teacher.
 - For two years administrators had received less than the standard Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) raises (lower than Town or teacher raises) and no merit raises.
 - The Superintendent Office administrators were among the lowest paid in the State.
 - Schools were teams of teachers, students and administrators which should not be pitted against each other.
- Supt. Weiss would send out a requested overview of the Supt. Shared Programs Office for the public.
- *SKIP MANTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT FISCAL YEAR 2009 BUDGET AS PROPOSED BOTH THE ASSESSMENT (THROUGH THE REGIONAL FORMULA) AND THE BOTTOM LINE AT \$7,823,254.99; SUSAN PARKER SECONDED; MOTION FAILED 3 AYES, 2 NAYS – ROXANNE ACKERMAN, SKIP MANTER, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

A recess was called from 1:41 to 1:51PM.

The UIRSC tried again to pass a budget that was now overdue it's traditional December 31st deadline.

- Roxanne Ackerman suggested the budget be put forward as voted 3 to 2 disregarding the law which had not previously been an issue. She also asked to see a good proposal from the central office and stated she would not change her vote at this meeting.
- Dan Cabot suggested sending the proposed budget to the Towns with reservations.
- Skip Manter proposed cutting the proposed budget by \$1,000,000.
- The public expressed some confusion over why the UIRSC was objecting to a cost cutting budget.
- ROXANNE ACKERMAN MOVED TO ADJOURN; THERE WAS NO SECOND.
- Chilmark Selectman Warren Doty citing 10 years as a school committee member and work as a Selectmen advocated for consensus.
- The two thirds law was raised in a call by a citizen to then Chair Susan Parker.
- Chilmark Selectmen Riggs Parker citing his experience as a parent of MV Public Schools children, and his work as a Selectman endorsed the idea of consensus, and considering the excellent work of the schools in educating students urged the objectors to put a concrete motion on the table.
- Chair Marshall Segall reiterated the primary responsibility of the UIRSC to the children and advocated individuals all giving a little towards compromise.
- Dan Cabot was willing to cut \$50,000 from the bottom line as politically but not educationally sound, but was not willing to cut \$800,000 or \$1,000,000.
- Susan Parker expressed frustration that after 5 budget meetings and 3 regular meetings Skip Manter was only now working on a proposal.
- Roxanne Ackerman again expressed concern over increased administration increments and decreasing enrollment.
- Supt Weiss again emphasized that with the exception of 4 administrators and 5 secretaries the bulk of the Supt. Shared Programs office increment went to teachers and service staff under contracts as negotiated, and working for and in the local schools. He asserted a \$50,000,000 operation needed staff to run it.
- A verbal addendum was proposed to codify Ms. Ackerman's concerns. The Strategic Planning Committee was debated in terms of
 - whether such issues and plans were actually implemented, and
 - Roxanne Ackerman's sense that she had not been included.
- SAC political authority and recommendations were discussed.
- It was noted several times that this vote was not about money but about philosophy.
- ROXANNE ACKERMAN MOVED TO ADJOURN; THERE WAS NO SECOND.

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- On being pressed Roxanne Ackerman suggested the following possibilities:
 - Curriculum and Instruction should not be an Assistant Superintendent.
 - The Facilities Manager could be one of the assistant principals.
 - The extra business staff hired during software implementation had never been cut back, and perhaps someone from the High School could fill the position.
 - The Office itself could be relocated to the High School or the old Edgartown School.
 - The Supt. Shared Programs Office needed to be restructured.
- Chair Marshall Segall returned to the issue of Ms. Ackerman feeling left out and Ms. Ackerman emphasized she was looking for the Supt. Office to be more efficient.
- Skip Manter stressed he was more concerned with how the budget was spent than how much the budget was and wished to drop the per pupil cost.
- The UIRSC had worked on this budget at five meetings from October through December to come up with the current Draft #4.
- *SUSAN PARKER MOVED TO APPROVE THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT FISCAL YEAR 2009 BUDGET BY REMOVING THE FACILITIES MANAGER FROM SUPT SHARED PROGRAMS OFFICE BUDGET (\$19,333) AND ADDING A PART TIME INDUSTRIAL ARTS TEACHER TO THE WEST TISBURY SITE BUDGET (\$21,249.06); DAN CABOT SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES (MARSHALL SEGALL AND DAN CABOT RELUCTANTLY IN ORDER TO HAVE A UIRSD BUDGET ONLY); 1 NAY – SKIP MANTER, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*
- The UIRSD FY09 Proposed Budget was now up 1.9% with a 3.9% assessment rise – part of which was the State Audit mandated \$45,000 increase in building debt.
- *DAN CABOT MOVED TO APPROVE THE UP ISLAND REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT FISCAL YEAR 2009 BUDGET AS PROPOSED BOTH THE ASSESSMENT (THROUGH THE REGIONAL FORMULA) AND THE BOTTOM LINE AT \$8,351,135.05; SUSAN PARKER SECONDED; MOTION FAILED 3 AYES, 2 NAYS – ROXANNE ACKERMAN, SKIP MANTER, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*
- In view of the failed motion there was a request from the public to rescind the vote eliminating the Facilities Manager.
- The next meeting was scheduled for January 22, 2008 at 5:00 at the West Tisbury School.
- Prin. Diane Gandy requested that the meeting not run too late.
- In summation although members had shown some ability to compromise it was pointed out that they had clearly demonstrated that there would never be an Islandwide regional school district.

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- DAN CABOT MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 3:09PM; ROXANNE ACKERMAN SECONDED.
 - It was noted that the entire West Tisbury SAC had been present to support the Budget.
 - Teacher Mary Boyd was congratulated on the birth of a daughter, the first new Martha's Vineyard resident of 2008.
 - The Chilmark Selectmen expressed their pleasure in hosting the UIRSC and urged the members not to give up.
- MOTION PASSED BY CONSENSUS.

Documents on File:

Sign-in Sheet 1/2/08

Expenditure Report General Fund – FY 2005-2006 (11 p.) 5/15/06