

Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee
6:30PM, Wednesday, February 7, 2024
by Zoom Cloud Conference

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Present: Chair Nancy Gilfoy, Louise Clough, Ruth Konigsberg, Alex Meleney, Rachel Orr, Dan Seidman,
Others: Susan Kantrowitz, Recorder – Marni Lipke,
Schools: Supt. Richie Smith, Business Administrator Mark Friedman, Student Support Director Hope MacLeod, MVRHS Prin. Sara Dingley, Financial Dir. Suzanne Cioffi, Coordinator of Career Pathway & Special Projects Sam Hart, Tis. Sch. Prin. John Custer, Asst. Prin. Melissa Ogden, TSC – Chair Amy Houghton, Jen Cutrer, Michael Watts,

* TFC members late arrivals or early departures.

Call Meeting to Order

- The Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom or TFC) was called to order at 6:31PM.
- The Tisbury School Committee (TSC) was called to order at 6:37PM.
(*Recorder's note: Discussions are summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.*)

Review of Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) School Budgets

Tisbury School (See documents on file.)

The FinCom was excited to see the Tisbury School project progress (on time/on budget): window and HVAC installation, concrete poured, utilities on site, 2nd and 3rd floors interiors moving through sheet-rocking and ceiling insulation.

- The Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) School Budget was on new ground in projecting costs for the September 2024 move into the new building.
 - Electricity and other utilities were unknown.
 - Maintenance should be covered by the facility one-year warranty.
 - A fourth custodian was needed to cover the expanded square footage.
 - The architect, construction manager, and Owners Project Manager (OPM) strongly recommended a skilled facilities manager with engineering skills to properly operate and maintain the state-of-the-art building systems.
- The FinCom asked about sharing the facilities manager with the Town, or with other Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) through the Superintendent's Shared Services (Central) Office. After ongoing conversations the TSC deemed it prudent to put the position in the School budget.
 - The Town had not included the School in the responsibilities of the current part-time Tisbury Facilities Manager whose workload was unclear.
 - The skill set required for the School might be beyond current Town needs.

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- The School Facilities Manager workload was not yet determined, but the TSC was mindful of sharing the position as other MVPS facilities were upgraded.
- Thanks went to Rachel Orr for finding the Facilities Manager salary was duplicated in the School Budget.
- The FinCom asked about the temporary school modulars (see 10/25/23 Minutes p.2-4). Due to a change in State regulations and to School Project landscaping timing, it was determined that the cost of retaining, moving and rebuilding the modulars out-weighed the benefits. The lease would be extended from April to June 2024—an extension through August was possible but not expected. Tisbury summer school would likely be in an alternate venue.
- The School budget increase also covered an expanded high needs population (see also below: Superintendent Shared Services), some for the Central Office assessment but also for:
 - a support teacher position—previously Elementary and Secondary School Relief (ESSER) III grant funded.
- High needs students were defined as:
 - requiring academic intervention;
 - Special Education (SpEd) aka on Individual Education Plans (IEPs);
 - English Language Learners/English as a Second Language (ELL/ESL);
 - economically and/or socially disadvantaged.
- The Tisbury School was looking forward to hosting it's first Shared Services Project Headway class in the new facility (see below: p.3).
- The FinCom noted the Chapter 70 Student Opportunity Act (SOA) revenue increases (~ \$289,000 in FY23, \$629,000 in FY24) to offset the costs of high needs education. State budget cuts projected FY25 SOA increase to be only ~ \$11,000, however as increases were cumulative Tisbury Ch. 70 funds had risen ~ \$930,000 in 3 years. Ch. 70 revenue went directly to the Town for taxpayer relief, however the Schools (Superintendent and/or School Principal) were required to account to the State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) on SOA spending—continuing and/or expanding current programs and adding new ones.
- The FinCom and the TSC exchanged thanks.
- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. JEN CUTRER AND SECONDED MR. MICHAEL WATTS BY THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING UNANIMOUSLY ADJOURNED AT 7:16PM: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MS. CUTRER—AYE, MR. WATTS—AYE, MS. AMY HOUGHTON—AYE.**

Superintendent's Shared Services (See documents on file.)

The MVRHS Capital Formula Task Force agreement included a request to keep MVPS FY24 budget increases below 2.5%, which Superintendent Richie Smith

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achieved through a series of Central Office cuts (see 1/25/23 Minutes p.2-3).

- The \$9,332,034 FY25 Budget showed a \$1,183,368 increase, the FY24 cuts had not been restored; instead the increase covered a State-wide jump in high needs enrollment, especially in very early education—(and despite a general MVPS population dip).

- Public schools were responsible for mandated services to educating intensely high needs identified students from 2.9 to 22 years old. Addressing high needs at a young age often decreased student need as they moved through school.

- Shared Services Programs (Project Headway—age 2.9 to 5 yrs., Bridge and Compass—kindergarten thru 8th grades) consolidated intensely challenged students into Islandwide MVPS classrooms of 15 students each (7 challenged, 8 peer models) so separate local schools need not expend extraordinary legally mandated costs for a small number of students.

- Shared Services Programs were housed in and served all MVPS but were enrolled, staffed (including administrative costs) and funded through the Central Office.

- Peer model students paid \$150-\$275/month tuition which funded Shared Services materials and furniture.

- Student Support Director Hope MacLeod outlined the Programs and services which also included MVPS-wide: Occupational and Physical Therapists, Psychologists, Speech/ Language and Special Education Teachers.

- Individual Shared Service student costs were carefully monitored, but very few qualified for the \$51,000 State Circuit Breaker threshold. Any Circuit Breaker funds would come to the local school rather than the Central Office.

- The FY25 Central Office budget included contractual obligations—Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs), steps, insurance increases, benefits and Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB).

- The following increases were in Shared Service Programs:

- 4 new Education Support Professionals (ESPs—teachers assistants) to staff an additional Project Headway class;

- another 4 new ESPs for Project Headway students graduating into Bridge or Compass programs;

- 0.4 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) expansion of a Speech Teacher;

- (Additional Shared Service enrollment increases were expected for FY26.)

- Other increases covered a number of essentials.

- The previous Assistant Supt of Curriculum and Instruction (ASCI) position salary was now used to fund;

- a 4 day a week Assistant Supt; and

- a stipend to start a Human Resources position to oversee/consolidate hiring and licensing/certification for all MVPS staff—possible future growth into a full position;

- a small contingency reserve for unforeseen expenses.

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- Grant income would cover a 0.2 FTE Grant Coordinator expansion to full time to manage grant revenue growth.
- 0.6 FTE social worker/therapist salary would hopefully be grant funded.
- 0.5 FTE of an Administrative Support Professional (ASP) was needed to support the ELL population rise—with the remaining 0.5 FTE grant funded.
- A stipend covered Islandwide elementary/middle school students extra music.
- Information Technology (IT) funds would pay for different software.
- The Central Office budget was allocated by each district's general student population. The October 1, 2023 census showed that most MVPS districts decreased while Tisbury remained stable, so that Tisbury's share went up. The Central Office portion of the Tisbury School FY25 budget rose ~ \$304,000 or 3.73% of the School Budget increase.
- As a many district entity, MVPS allocated assessments by many different formulas and student counts, for example:
 - MVPS students present in a school building;
 - Central Office allocation by Town resident students in the MVPS system even if attending other schools through Shared Service classes or School Choice;
 - DESE foundation enrollment – all resident students that a Town might be or become responsible for, including those in residential, charter, home or private schools.

Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS)

(See documents on file.)

The MVRHS FY25 Operating Budget increased 5.5%, but the Assessed Budget only increased 3.28% due to:

- SOA Ch. 70 revenue (see above: Tisbury School p.2) for such things as 75 new Level 1 ELL students (i.e. no English) entering since 2021; and
- Title One and Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) grant increases. High State and Federal grant revenues depended on intense data excavation and reporting; thanks went to the excellent administrative and financial staff.
- SOA funded new positions were outlined:
 - bilingual school adjustment counselor,
 - a new science teacher; Level 1 ELL students took biology twice, once while learning English and again with heavier content focus—doubling the number of biology sections;
 - a new teacher possibly to spread out population and reduce the concentration of high needs students per classroom;
 - Partial English/Language Arts (E/LA) and ESL teachers that were previously grant funded;

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- Computer Science and Business positions previously reduced from lack of interest, now expanded to fill rising demand;
- 2 new ESP positions—0.5 FTE covered by a grant.
- Other increases included:
 - more athletic funding: stipends, supplies, etc.;
 - transportation capital costs to lease/purchase new MVPS vehicles;
 - fixed (benefits, insurance, etc.) and contractual costs.
- The FinCom asked about MCAS scores and participation. Participation levels were a statistical anomaly around original versus make-up testing, as well as ELL student entry and repositioning. Scores were expected to improve as students acclimated. Administration was more concerned about absenteeism.
- Although Brazilian students became bilingual it was harder to get English speaking students to learn Portuguese. Bilingual schooling should start in elementary schools before being adopted by a high school.
- Building maintenance was a balance of what had to be done and what could be postponed to prevent duplication or replacement with the upcoming project.
- Thanks went to Tisbury representatives on the MVRHS Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Facilities Subcommittee, which was making good progress on the Feasibility study.
- The FinCom strongly requested financial ‘guardrails’ be included in the visioning phase of the feasibility study. Tisbury Representative Michael Watts assured them of ongoing budgeting conversations around what would be nice versus must-haves.
- The FinCom appreciated the low FY25 increase and thanked the MVRHS representatives.

Vote to Sign Letter of Support for Embarkation Bill

(See documents on file & Minutes: 10/13/22, & 1/17/24 p.5.)

Hopefully all Massachusetts port town select boards and FinComs would sign.

• *LOUISE CLOUGH MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE CHAIR TO SIGN THE EMBARKATION BILL LETTER TO THE STATE LEGISLATURE; RACHEL ORR SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: RACHEL ORR—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE, DAN SEIDMAN—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.*

Approve Minutes 12/13/23, 1/10/24, 1/17/24

- *ALEX MELENEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING MINUTES:*
 - *DECEMBER 13, 2023*
 - *JANUARY 10, 2024,*
 - *JANUARY 17, 2024 AS AMENDED,*

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LOUISE CLOUGH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, ABSTENTIONS AS ABSENT: RACHEL ORR—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE, DAN SEIDMAN—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.

Committee Report

- The Climate Committee would meet with the Tisbury School Committee (TSC) on the School solar installation (see Minutes: 1/10/24 p.5, & 1/17/24 p.5).
- The Tisbury Select Board (TSB) in Executive Session and Town Administrator Jay Grande discussed proposed departmental union position changes as premature re: not a collective bargaining year, and an incomplete union classification/compensation study (see documents on file).
- The new Town Accountant was located in the Town Administrator's old office.

Future Meetings (See below: Meetings/Events.)

Department budgets were not expected before February 20th so there was no reason to meet next week.

Items Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair – None

Adjournment

- *ALEX MELENEY MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:39PM; LOUISE CLOUGH AND RACHEL ORR SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: RACHEL ORR—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE, DAN SEIDMAN—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.*

Appendix A: Meetings/Events

- **TFC – 6:30PM, Wednesday, February 21, 2024 – Zoom**
- **Special/Annual Town Meeting – 7:00PM, Tuesday, May 28, 2024 – PAC**

Appendix B: Actions

Hope MacL – send Shared Services student census for FY24 & FY25

Mark F. – confirm MSBA bonding restrictions.

Mark F./TSC – reduce School Budget re: duplicated Facilities Manager salary.

Sara D. – email MVRHS presentation.

Future Agendas

- Minutes: 1/24/24, 2/7/24
- Embarkation Revisions and Votes
- Votes on Previously Reviewed Articles or Budgets
(list specific votes)
Other Previously Reviewed Articles or Budgets

continued

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Appendix B: Actions (cont.)

Budget Season Notes

- No new positions in FY25
- FY25 salaries/budgets will be higher due to classification raises.
- Request data on how much each Department turned back in FY23.
- Request projects for grant funding.
- Request capital projects

Budget Season Notes

- attach budget/narrative modules to agendas.
- request/demand foundational information, levy, free cash estimates, etc.
- include Dept. fee revenues (offsetting expenses) in budget interview;
- ask departments to project all needs 5 years out i.e. like a capital plan but on other factors—staffing, program changes, etc.

\$100,000 FY24 Reserve Fund spending tally – Balance: \$29,650.25

- 10/4/23 – Ambulance - \$43,000 – monitor/defibrillators
- 11/29/23 – Select Board - \$6,518 – salary step 2 & on-call stipend
- 11/29/23 – DPW - \$20,831.75 (\$10,000) – Police Dept. generator rent

Appendix C: Documents on File

- Agenda 2/7/24
- Tisbury School FY'25 Budget Analysis, Version #3.1, January 9, 2024
- Tisbury School Budget for 2024/2025, Version #3.1 – January 9, 2024 (6 p.)
- Gilfoy cover email re: Updated County Programs information 1/17/24
- Martha's Vineyard Regional High School District, FY25 Certified Budget, January 8, 2024 (6 p.)
- Martha's Vineyard – FY25 Assessment to Member Towns (2 p.) 1/8/24
- MVRHS, FY25 Budget Highlights, January 23, 2024 (3 p.)
- MVRHS Budget 2025, Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (5 p.)
- Chat
- Sam Hart (2/7/24, 8:08 PM) Line 396: Bus/vehicle cap purchase, \$309,579.00
- MVYPS, FY25 680 Shared Services Budget, Budget Highlights Version #3 F 12/7/23
- Superintendent's Shared Services Budget, FY 25 Proposed Budget Listed by School District Version #3 A.I.S.C. December 7, 2023 (3 p.)
- Martha's Vineyard Public Schools, Superintendent's Office and Shared Service Programs, FY'25 Budget Version #3 F, A.I.S.C. December 7, 2023
- Gilfoy/Friedman emails re: Shared Services Student Census 2/8/24
- Superintendent's Shared Services Budget, FY 25 Proposed Budget Listed by School District Version #3 A.I.S.C. December 7, 2023 (3 p.)
- FY25 Supt/Shared Services Budget – New Formula Calculations (Including Compass and Bridge Programs

continued>

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Appendix C: Documents on File (cont.)

- FY24 Supt/Shared Services Budget – New Formula Calculations (Including Compass and Bridge Programs
- Gilfoy cover email re: Agenda for Meeting 2/7/24 and Materials 2/2/24
- January __, 2024, letter to Senator Susan Moran, Representative Mark Cusack,
- Gilfoy/Grande emails re: Proposed New and Upgraded Positions for Fiscal Year 2025 1/26/24
- Gilfoy/Grande emails re: Fiscal Year 2025 Budgets and Warrant Articles (2 p.) 2/2/24

Nancy Gilfoy – Chair

Date

Minutes approved 3/20/24