

**West Tisbury Finance Committee Meeting
At the Howes House
February 11, 2020**

In Attendance: Greg Orcutt, Doug Ruskin, Gary Montrowl, Clark Rattet and Jane Dreeben

Also present: Janice Haynes, Bruce Stone, Skipper Manter (as UIRSD Rep), Kent Healy, Jen Rand, Robert Lionette (UIRSD), Matt D'Andrea (Superintendent), Richie Smith (Assistant Superintendent), Donna Lowell-Bettencourt (WT School Principal), Susan Stevens (Chilmark Head of School) and Sarah Dingley (MVRHS Principal)

Greg Orcutt called the meeting to order at 5:01 pm

Presentation on MVRHS and UIRSD Budgets:

UIRSD Budget:

Superintendent Matt D'Andrea began with the UIRSD and distributed hand-outs explaining the breakdown of the FY21 budget changes.

WT School Principal Donna Lowell-Bettencourt went on to explain the increase in the staff budget line(s) was in part due to increased enrollment in the Middle School grades from both Chilmark School and the Charter School. There was also a needed increase in staff for ELL (English Language Learners) Translation which is a State mandated service. Numbers are also up in the IEP (Individualized Education Program) about 22% of kids. This program is also mandated by the State. After School programming is also up.

Other budget increases include the second year of a 3 year technology upgrade and building insurance. She explained that regarding the building insurance, they had found that the Town had been charging the school less than it should have been for their portion for many years and that has now been corrected.

There were questions about the MGL Chapter 70 bill and if there was any indication of how much money the island schools might see. Matt said that the state is still working on formulas but it looks as tho very little will be coming to us. It is a 7 year implementation plan, but they just don't know yet.

Susan Stevens Chilmark Head of School spoke about Chilmark school budget increases. She said it was mostly staff.

- School Nurse increased hours
- Reading teacher increased hours
- Custodial

There was also an increase in Professional Development expenses

Matt summed up to say that it all came to a 2.4% total increase to the UIRSD Budget.

Greg asked if they would also speak about the warrant articles since they were there. Donna gave some explanation of the roof article, the Resource Officer funding, the Chilmark windows and the Special Ed. Stabilization fund. Doug expressed concerns about the article for the Resource Officer, but Gary wanted more time to review the information. Greg asked Matt to return at a future meeting to address their questions and he agreed.

MVRHS Budget:

Matt started by pointing out the \$500,000. Contingency Fund line that was added to the budget. He explained that it came about because of the E&D issues from last year and the request from the Towns to find another way to deal with emergency situations without them having to call a STM. They came up with that number by looking at what they have needed in the past and came up with an average. When a situation comes up, the School Committee must have a vote to spend the moneys and must send a letter to all of the towns explaining where the money is being spent. Skipper said that he feels the new budget line removes the ‘checks and balances and is a bad way of doing it.

Sarah Dingley, MVRHS Principal took over explaining the budget lines and where some of the changes had been made. She explained how they had broken down some of the Maintenance lines into ‘Preventative’, ‘Corrective’ and ‘Capital Projects’ to better track needs. Greg said that he wants to come back to the grounds and buildings Capital Projects discussion again at a future date. She also answered various questions about specific lines.

Doug brought up concerns about the High School’s 5 year plan for maintenance. He wondered if some of the systems could even last that long? H made a request of ‘the Powers that Be’ within the school system to please update the 4-year old Tappé Architects plan ASAP and make a presentation to the towns. He said that they have done an admirable job at ‘keeping things rolling’ so far, but it’s time to be very transparent and get it fixed. He also stated that the school’s responsibility is to define their needs clearly and make a compelling presentation to the towns; that the towns need to see a specific plan with a budget, but that it’s the towns’ responsibility to deal with funding formula concerns and find the money to do what they deem necessary.

Matt thanked them and said that he agrees. He just doesn’t know how to fix the problem at this point what with the one town that is digging in its heels. Doug responded that the School needs to state its needs; it’s up to the Towns to decide how it is funded.

Other Business:

Minutes:

Greg asked to approve the Minutes of February 4th. Not everyone had had a chance to read them yet so it was postponed until next meeting, February 13th.

Finance Committee Annual report:

Doug had written a draft and sent out but the whole committee had not had time to read it and it was discovered that the wrong version had been sent. Jen said that it was ok with her if it got approved at the next meeting, February 13th.

Jen also talked about the Warrant copies that the committee had already received. She warned that there were articles being removed so the numbers would change, but she should have final copies for the next meeting.

OPEB:

Doug brought it up to discussion and asked Bruce for some explanation as to how it is accounted for in the budget. There was much discussion about how it is broken down and paid out.

Correspondence: None.

The next meeting is Thursday February 13, 5 pm at the Howes House and will address Budget Review for the Building Department, Board of Health and Parks & Rec. Department.

With no further items to discuss, Clark made the motion to adjourn. Doug seconded.

Motion passed 5 – 0

Meeting adjourned at 7:01 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Haynes
Administrative Assistant
2/13/20

Approved with amendments 2/24/20