

**Tisbury School Committee/Tisbury School Building Committee  
Tisbury Board of Selectmen/Tisbury Planning Board/  
Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee  
5:00PM, Monday, April 30, 2018  
Tisbury School Gym**

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- TSBC Members Present:** Chair Colleen McAndrews, Ian Aitchison, Wiet Bacheller by phone, Harold Chapdelaine, Catherine Coogan, John Custer, Matt D'Andrea, Sean DeBettencourt, Cheryl Doble, Jay Grande, Jeff Kristal, Melinda Loberg, Reade Milne, Erika Mulvey, Sean Mulvey, Dan Seidman, Richie Smith, Amy Tierney,
- TSC Members Present:** Chair Amy Houghton, Colleen McAndrews, Janet Packer,
- Board of Selectmen Present:** Acting Chair Melinda Loberg, Tristan Israel, Jim Rogers,
- Planning Bd. Members Present:** Chair Ben Robinson, Dawn Bellante-Holland, Cheryl Doble, Elaine Miller, Dan Seidman,
- FinCom Members Present:** Chair Jeff Kristal, Pamela Brock, Nancy Gilfoy, Jynell Kristal, Mary Ellen Larsen, Laura Rose,
- Others Present:** **About 75 people in the audience including:**  
Daedalus – Richard Marks,  
Turowski2 – Peter Turowski, Libby Turowski,  
Recorder Marni Lipke
- Town Officials:** Treasurer – Jonathon Snyder, Clerk's Office - Joanna Jernegan,
- School Staff:** Amy Custer, Leah Dorr, Meredith Goldthwaite, Natalie Krauthammer, Mollee Lewis, Maria Metters, Melissa Ogden, Nicole Shirley, Kara Webster,
- Residents:** Christine Agin, Dennis Agin, Noah Alexander, Alecia Barnes, John Barnes, Cate Bernard, Laura Bernard, Anne Caldwell, Jeffrey Canha, Theresa Berryman-Childs, Duncan Cooper, Sandra Demel, Frank Doble, Gary Eckhart, Anna Edey, Kate Foley, Barbara Fortes, Fala Freeman, Peter Goodale, Cheri Harrington, Ann Hollister, Marilyn Hopkins, Mark Jardin, Katherine Kavanaugh, Paul Lares, Marie Laursen, Emily Levett, Madeleine Maccaferri, Holly McKenzie, Len Morris, Anthony Peak, Katherine Scott, Mike Shepard, Sarah Shepard, Vasha Silva, Emily Solarazza, Henry Stephenson, John Suudman, Michael Watts, Mary Yancey,
- Press:** MVTV – Evgeny Mishchenko, Vineyard Gazette – Julia Wells,  
\* Late Arrivals or early departures.

The Tisbury School Building Committee (TSBC), Tisbury School Committee (TSC), Tisbury Board of Selectmen (BOS) (reconvening), Tisbury Planning Board, and Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom) meetings were called to order at 5:02PM. TSBC member Ms. Wiet Bacheller joined the meeting by phone and consequently all votes would be roll call. (*Recorder's note: discussions are summarized and re-grouped for clarity and brevity.*)

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• PRIN. CUSTER AFFIRMED THAT WORK OUTLINED ON THE FOLLOWING INVOICES HAD BEEN PERFORMED:

- DAEDALUS PROJECTS MARCH 31, 2018 INVOICE #180328 AT \$14,000; AND
- TUROWSKI TWO ARCHITECTS FEBRUARY 9, 2018 INVOICE #16-14-11 AT \$74,149.09

#### I. Approval of the Minutes of 3/26/2018

• ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MR. HAROLD CHAPDELAIN AND SECONDED BY MR. IAN AITCHISON THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 26, 2018 TISBURY SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE MEETING WERE APPROVED: 16 AYES, 0 NAYS, ABSTENTIONS AS ABSENT: MS. MELINDA LOBERG—AYE, MS. CHERYL DOBLE—AYE, MR. DAN SEIDMAN—AYE, MR. JAY GRANDE—(ABSTAIN), MS. COLLEEN MCANDREWS—AYE, MR. AITCHISON—(ABSTAIN), MS. READE MILNE—AYE, MR. CHAPDELAIN—ABSTAIN, MS. AMY TIERNEY—AYE, MS. CATHERINE COOGAN—(ABSTAIN), MR. SEAN MULVEY—AYE, MS. ERIKA MULVEY—AYE, MR. SEAN DEBETTENCOURT—AYE, MR. JOHN CUSTER—AYE, MR. JEFF KRISTAL—AYE, MS. WIET BACHELLER—AYE.

#### II. Town Meeting Ballot Results

- 1,013 residents voted and the School vote failed 546 for, to 567 against.
- As this was a Town project TSBC Chair Colleen McAndrews had called this meeting of stakeholder Town Boards and Committees to discuss the results of the April 24th ballot, whatever its result. Because the vote failed Ms. McAndrews was hoping to come to a consensus on the next steps going forward.

#### III. Owner's Project Manager (OPM) Report (See documents on file.)

##### A. Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) – Failed Vote

- The Town had 10 business days starting at the failed vote on April 24th (deadline Tuesday, May 8th) to report to the MSBA on the reasons for the vote and a plan to go forward. There were three options:
  - call for a revote within 120 days of Annual Town Meeting (ATM), i.e. June 10th—with the required 35 days official notice;
  - request a two to three month extension to discuss and consider the next steps;
  - withdraw the project from the MSBA.
- The MSBA would only accept the current project, a new school, on the same site, at the same cost, although there was some MSBA agreement for slight modifications for savings (not more than ~ \$500,000).
- If the project was withdrawn, the earliest possible re-application date would be April 2019 with awards/acceptance announced in January 2020.
- Since 2004 only 15 of the 600 MSBA projects had failed votes, of which only 4 were re-admitted into the process.
- The \$825,000 Feasibility Study (with \$337,000 MSBA reimbursement) was not over-budget but no funds remained. \$625,000 had already been billed and \$210,000 reimbursed.

- Later in the meeting it was explained that the Town would have to pay for all further studies. Bond Counsel was being consulted as to whether the \$337,000 reimbursed by the MSBA could be utilized.

#### IV. Next Steps

- Chair McAndrews explained the TSBC and Boards would comment first before asking for public input. She requested that remarks be kept to 2 to 3 minutes, address the three options, that people not call each other out, and for the audience to please refrain from reaction/applause.
- Selectman Tristan Israel, commented that:
  - the Selectmen had not discussed the issue;
  - he personally voted no for financial reasons (and throughout the meeting emphasized the cost as his major consideration from the beginning);
  - would have reluctantly supported the project if it passed;
  - might be open to a broader discussion of all alternatives but not to pressure on the Selectmen or if people were entrenched in their opinions.
  - He strongly advocated for more citizen involvement and participation in government.
- Acting BOS Chair and TSBC member, Ms. Loberg wished to understand what was learned from the vote and gather information on going forward.
- Mr. Jim Rogers was new to the process. He would have a hard time going against vote of community at the polls.
- TSC Chair Amy Houghton considered that:
  - as the project passed at ATM and failed at the ballot that it was tied;
  - lamented that a sense of community had been lost;
  - agreed that further conversation would only be useful if it was an effort to come together, but the additional time would allow a more thorough explanation of base renovation option.
- Later in the meeting Ms. Janet Packer praised the TSBC transparent process but was forcefully critical of the hidden agendas of other Boards—for example Selectmen did not say they would only accept a project in the same building for a set amount.
- FinCom Chair Jeff Kristal saw ATM differently, as a declaration that taxes were too high and reiterated various FinCom suggestions to increase Town revenues, such as selling Town property and returning it to the tax rolls. He was open to working on a consensus to move forward on the debt.
- Planning Board and TSBC member Mr. Seidman suggested that:
  - an ATM secret ballot would have come out differently;
  - if the school passed there would be no request for a revote;
  - there was nothing different the TSBC could do.
- Planning Board member Ms. Elaine Miller asked Mr. Israel to give hard numbers on an alternate plan, worried about the 5.5% annual inflation for building projects and was disappointed in Town leadership withdrawal of support so close to the votes.
- Later in the meeting Chair Ben Robinson stated that:
  - he was not surprised at the vote due to previous surveys;
  - the project was driven by the Education Plan—to which he had no access;
  - there was a possibility of a \$17,000,000 base renovation and small expansion compromise that would be MSBA reimbursable at \$6,000,000;

- a revote would not be fair, as the project should not be done on a slim majority,
- and regretted the current situation.
- Ms. Dawn Bellante-Holland suggested an on-line survey for better Town-wide participation to understand the vote and the revote option. She asked about maintenance costs and cost savings. Mr. Kristal responded that there was deferred maintenance due to a shoestring operating mentality, the Tisbury Facilities Director was being consulted and that the School building was under-insured. Ms. McAndrews added that Prin. Custer projected an additional custodian for the new school but that some new schools had substantial maintenance savings. Later in the meeting Prin. Custer reported he had information and documentation on school maintenance over the past several years.
  - TSBC members commented as follows.
- Ms. Mulvey emphasized the transparent nature of the TSBC, that over the course of the thorough process all options were considered. She noted many TSBC members' willingness to compromise (regardless of personal opinion) on a number of important points to move forward in choosing the best option for the least money and wished those members who later opposed the project had done the same.
- Superintendent Matt D'Andrea as a non-voting member proposed requesting a 2 to 3 month extension, to examine the vote and the claims that it could be done less expensively and to consider how to move forward. However, he agreed with Ms. Mulvey in doubts about turning down \$14,000,000 and ending up with less school for more money.
- Ms. Doble cited the substantial approval at the ATM, well over the required 2/3 majority, and the slim margin at the ballot. Although there were heavy financial considerations in the ballot vote there were also a number of other issues and she was hesitant about proceeding on a project where the Town was so divided. She felt that any further conversation which would have to be limited to the current project and might require possibly another committee to re-examine situation. She was uncomfortable leaving the project without some consideration of where the Town was headed.
- Principal Custer emphasized the MSBA expertise and robust process that did not cut corners on school facilities, and the difficulties of rejecting their process at the last minute. He suggested taking a couple months to examine situation.
- Mr. Chapdelaine brought up the philosophical question of "cradle to grave" or choosing what services to fund. He noted the transparent nature of the TSBC, which he had joined as a strong proponent for renovation. However after learning the building met neither Massachusetts Historical designation nor 100 yr. Martha's Vineyard Commission (MVC) threshold and touring the facility, he felt that claims that the project could be done for less were unsubstantiated. Renovation was typically costly due to unknown obstacles, and construction inflation from a delayed project was also a serious problem. Rejecting the current project was to gamble with taxpayer money. The claim for a lesser project was \$7,000,000 less which was \$25 less on an average tax bill. Later in the meeting he said was in favor of a revote as an absolute, rather than a request.
- Ms. Coogan agreed with many of the TSBC statements. She felt that the Project finally had the Town's attention (this was the largest audience of any previous meeting) and that the process should be extended to allow the voters to learn more about the project.

- Assistant Supt. Richie Smith, as a non-voting TSBC member, had great praise for Prin. Custer and emphasized that everyone cared deeply for the children. He believed in the power of the democratic process and implored people to put politics and egos aside, change their behavior and work collectively.
- Mr. Aitchison praised the excellent project and cost estimation by reputable companies. He understood the difficulties of the price and proposed a value-engineering workshop to brainstorm cost saving ideas without negativity, as a powerful tool to better the project. He had conducted 20 such workshops.
- Ms. Milne found the contention with other Town boards particularly difficult. She felt a 2 to 3 month extension to work together and find a solution to satisfy the most people a good first step.
- Ms. McAndrews had received almost 100 calls from disappointed frustrated citizens who asked what they could do and she had asked them to come to tonight's meeting. Feedback on the no votes was mostly about the cost issue.
  - Throughout the meeting, Mr. Israel:
    - repeated his opposition to the cost from the start;
    - reiterated his doubts about an extension if people remained entrenched; and
    - expected this meeting to be among the Boards.

Chair McAndrews then took public comment.

- There was general debate on voter turnout and results and whether this was an accurate view of Town opinion;
  - 35% of registered voters turned out;
  - 1/6th of Town registered voters voted against the project;
  - the 21 vote difference was 2% of the turnout;
  - 35% was considered a good voter turnout.
- Parent Ms. Emily Solarazza described difficulties in accessing the necessary information for a responsible vote. She felt people came in late with misleading information and old issues such as regionalization. People told her they chose not to vote due to confusing information. Also the ballot question wording was unclear.
- Parent and Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) member Ms. Ann Caldwell felt there was confusion on the need to vote at the ballot as well as Town Meeting and asked why the polls were not open at 8AM. She was amazed at the lack of perspective in Island voters, when there were schools around the country using closets as classrooms.
- Mr. Peter Goodale voted yes. He felt publicity could have been better before the vote, more press coverage, a larger campaign, a list of the current building's deficiencies, etc.
- Ms. Vasha Silva voted no and was in favor of a survey to find out what the Town wanted and to have hard numbers on what a renovation would cost.
- Ms. Holly McKenzie thanked the TSBC for putting in so much time and effort. She was in favor of not walking away from the project, taking the time to put out a survey. She asked for a small presentation on renovation. She also suggested ballot voting on weekends (if not too prohibitively expensive) to better accommodate busy citizens.
- Parent Mr. Glenn Morris who was involved in planning the previous addition, thanked the TSBC for the exhaustive amount of work. He felt the worthy opposition raised serious environmental issues. References to the project costing \$158,000 per student (i.e. \$47,000,000 divided by 285) would be more accurate if spread over 50 year building lifespan at \$28 per student. He was in favor of additional time and a survey. He noted the Educational Plan did drive the cost and further that the project had

unacknowledged community-wide benefits and that due to lack of space, Tisbury was not currently fulfilling its share of Islandwide educational programs.

- Ms. Cate Bernard was also for more time to consider, because of the slim margin. She acknowledged some relief at not having to pay the tax increase but knew children were still in a failing building. She thought people went to Islander's Talk instead of the Project website.

- Mr. Paul Laris would be interested in 2 to 3 months to re-evaluate if there was an agreement to do a thorough renovation/extension study. He considered there'd been no repairs to the current building for 10 years as a means to promote a new building. He understood it was often said that it cost more to preserve and conserve but he found this principal to be a building industry promotion.

- Ms. Catherine Scott had not heard anything new. She felt there was disrespect for voters and that mindreading on why people voted was silly. Her sense was that many people did not like the plan and that was the way the system worked. She liked Mr. Laris' idea and suggested the Town take the \$337,000 MSBA reimbursement for a proper local assessment of the building.

- Fifth generation resident and former student Mr. Jeffrey Canha voted no. He pointed to the beams over the gym as an example of the excellent construction of this 1938 building. He had gone to this School and couldn't wait to get out of it. He was for the option of dropping the current project, viewing and coming to terms on how to educate children, and cleaning up the current building.

- Mr. John Suedman stated re-votes were part of the democratic process (e.g. Tisbury vote on beer and wine). He considered it was reasonable to take time to consider whether to drop it or re-vote.

- Mr. Tony Peak was angry and insulted at those who questioned the democratic process and at the emotional shaming involved, citing the Town's generous support of education over the years. He considered that it was nobody's business why people voted no, that the TSBC was over-weighted with education people, that the Tisbury aesthetic was not designated by the MVC or the Mass Historical Commission and he strongly urged the people to give credence to regional options.

- Mr. Eric "Noah" Alexander agreed that 21 votes was not enough to decide on such a big project and was in favor of talking through compromises, such as senior citizens on fixed incomes paying less for the project, taking furniture from the old school, etc. He felt he had learned to vote no and that the Town leader action not to build a new school belied the assertion that it was a financially healthy town.

- Parent Ms. Kate Foley was strongly in favor of a revote. She pointed out that the children paid the price for Town divisiveness. She warned of the possibility of a public health lawsuit with the building in its current condition.

- Mr. Doug Cooper proposed listening to FinCom recommendations to sell assets and using the free cash to make the school affordable.

- Mr. Mike Watts voted yes, and was angry that Town leadership was now saying it was too expensive, noting they didn't seem to believe the work and cost estimates of the experts they hired for \$850,000. There would be substantial costs to building a regionalized middle school, plus the Town would still have to renovate the current school. Unless the leadership met the number that everyone had in their mind as reasonable, the process was a waste of time.

- Mr. Derrick Fairchild-Coppoletti spoke on the moral question of ability to revote (e.g. the national vote on slavery). He beseeched the leadership to go back to the charter of the TSBC which included representatives from every relevant Town board (BOS, FinCom, Planning, etc.). It was not the body politic's purview to realistically assess the information presented and considered over the course of the TSBC process. He felt the leadership had brought dissension, disinformation and dis-service to the community. He hoped the Town would get more time with the right information and unity.
- Teacher and parent Ms. Leah Dorr strongly supported more time and another vote. She decried the current social media conditions that snowballed speculation into fact. For example her son was excited by the democratic process and chose on his own to urge people to vote but after someone speculated on social media, it turned into a lament about how awful the School was to manipulate children politically. She also stated that the Education Plan was not the sole reason for the TSBC decisions.

The Boards then discussed the three options.

- The Selectmen would meet on Thursday, May 3, 2018.
- Any revote had to be authorized by the Board of Selectmen.
- What was envisioned in a revote?
- Would Town leadership come forward with a valid alternative?
- If the Town refused State money and moved on its own who would take the initiative?
- Was the Town willing to have the larger conversation, even if the MSBA withdrew?
- The Town could complete the value engineering workshop on the current project and in the course of construction come in under-budget within the education program.
- It was reasonable to take time to consider before walking away from so much work.
- A 2-3 month delay was possible but there were also many communities ready to take the \$14,000,000 allotted to Tisbury.
- There was worry that the conversation would not be open but simply pressure on the Selectmen to change their mind.
- There was a set timeframe so the debate would not extend indefinitely.
- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MR. SEIDMAN AND SECONDED BY MR. DEBETTENCOURT THE TISBURY SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE REQUESTED THE MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL BUILDING AUTHORITY TO ALLOW TISBURY OPTION #2 AN EXTENSION OF TWO TO THREE MONTHS; MOTION PASSED: 14 AYES, 2 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MS. DOBLE—AYE, MR. SEIDMAN—AYE, MS. LOBERG—NAYE, MR. GRANDE—NAY, MS. MCANDREWS—AYE, MR. AITCHISON—AYE, MS. MILNE—AYE, MR. CHAPDELAIN—AYE, MS. TIERNEY—AYE, MS. COOGAN—AYE, MR. MULVEY—AYE, MS. MULVEY—AYE, MR. DEBETTENCOURT—AYE, MR. CUSTER—AYE, MR. KRISTAL—AYE, MS. BACHELLER—AYE.**
- **ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MS. PACKER AND SECONDED BY MS. MCANDREWS THE TISBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY REQUESTED THE MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL BUILDING AUTHORITY TO ALLOW TISBURY OPTION #2 AN EXTENSION OF TWO TO THREE MONTHS; 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

Adjournment

- ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY MR. CHAPDELAIN AND SECONDED BY MR. DEBETTENCOURT THE TISBURY SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE MEETING UNANIMOUSLY ADJOURNED AT 7:46PM: 18 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: MS. DOBLE—AYE, MR. SEIDMAN—AYE, MS. LOBERG—AYE, MR. GRANDE—AYE, MS. MCANDREWS—AYE, MR. AITCHISON—AYE, MS. MILNE—AYE, MR. CHAPDELAIN—AYE, MS. TIERNEY—AYE, MS. COOGAN—AYE, MR. MULVEY—AYE, MS. MULVEY—AYE, MR. DEBETTENCOURT—AYE, MR. CUSTER—AYE, MR. KRISTAL—AYE, MS. WIET BACHELLER—AYE.
- THE TISBURY SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE ADJOURNED AT 7:46PM.
- *The Tisbury Board of Selectmen adjourned.*
- The Tisbury Planning Board adjourned.
- The Tisbury Finance Committee continued its session.

**Appendix A: Meetings/Events:**

- Tis. BOS –Thursday, May 3, 2018 at Town Hall KCT
- MVRHSC - 5:00PM, Monday, May 7, 2018 at the MVRHS LCR
- **TSC – 8:30AM, Tuesday, May 8, 2018 at the Tisbury School**
- AISC - 5:00PM, Wednesday, May 23, 2018 at the MVRHS LCR

**Appendix B: Actions** - None

**Appendix C: Documents on File:**

- Agenda 4/30/18
- Sign In Sheet (4 p.) 4/30/18
- MSBA Failed Vote...Next Steps:

Minutes respectfully submitted by Office On Call/Marni Lipke.

*Minutes approved by the TSC 5/8/18*