

GREATER FALL RIVER VOCATIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
251 STONEHAVEN ROAD, FALL RIVER, MA
DISTRICT OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM
APRIL 12, 2023

The regular meeting of the Greater Fall River Vocational School District Committee was called to order at 5:36 p.m. by Chairman Paul Jennings, with the following persons in attendance: Fr. Jay Mello of Fall River, Donald DiBiasio of Somerset, Jeffrey Begin of Swansea, Rajiv Nehra of Fall River and Joan Menard of Fall River.

Also in attendance were: Brian Bentley, Interim Superintendent/Director, Andrew Rebello, Assistant Superintendent/Principal, Paul Kitchen, Director of Finance, Gregory Brilhante, Legal Counsel and Helena Neves, Executive Secretary.

Mr. Jennings called for the roll call.

Mr. Jennings made the following announcement: In accordance with Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 30A, Section 20(f), any member of the public may make an audio or video recording of this public meeting. A member of the public who wishes to record a meeting must first notify the chair and must comply with reasonable requirements regarding audio or video equipment established by the chair so as not to interfere with the meeting. Mr. Matos provided notification of intent to record.

Mr. Jennings led the Pledge of Allegiance.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Dr. Nehra and voted unanimously to dispense with the reading of the March 9, 2023 minutes and approved them, as recorded.

Ryan Nadeau provided the student report which included an update on current happenings such as clubs, sports and student events.

There was no Citizen Input. Attorney Brilhante provided notification that the citizen input language currently used on the agenda meets all the requirements and does not need to be changed.

Mr. DiBiasio stated that the contract for Suffolk Construction has not been finalized and is hoping to have it ready for the next meeting. Attorney Brilhante stated that a decision has been made to use an owner controlled insurance program (OCIP) as this may produce \$1.1 million dollars in savings. Having one insurance company overseeing the entire project may offer additional savings. Mr. Alix stated that pursuing the OCIP option has delayed the contract but it is expected to be finalized soon. Mr. Alix further stated that between the premium savings and Suffolk Construction not having to carry as much general liability will provide significant savings. Sub-contractors will be asked to submit their bids with alternate prices as to what the insurance cost would be.

Dr. Nehra asked if it's a common practice where one entity carries the insurance for all parts involved. Mr. Alix stated that it is a common practice for a big project.

Attorney Brilhante suggested to have Mr. Daly from Hub International speak as to why OCIP was recommended. Mr. Daly stated that the goal was to extract costs that would otherwise be in each of the trades line items in the budget. In a project that exceeds \$200 million dollars a policy that covers general liability and workers compensation is usually used. Aside from the significant savings, it provides a lot of coverage, certainty and gives direct access to the policy and more control.

Mr. DiBiasio acknowledged and thanked everyone that has been involved in preparing the contract.

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Mr. Bentley deferred to Mr. Hill for the special recognition. Mr. Hill, former School Committee member and current Diman Bengal Foundation member stated that Mr. Jennings is being recognized as the longest serving school committee member and gave a brief speech on Mr. Jennings' 21 years of service and commitment to the students, staff and the Diman community. Mr. Hetzler, former School Committee Chairman, also made a brief speech and congratulated Mr. Jennings. Mr. Bentley presented Mr. Jennings with a gift which was built by the students in Carpentry. Mr. DiBiasio presented the 2023 Distinguished Graduate Award to Mr. Jennings and thanked him for all the support given throughout the years. Mr. Brewer, Westport Selectman, congratulated Mr. Jennings on his reelection and thanked him for all he has done. Ms. Montleon, former Superintendent-Director, congratulated Mr. Jennings on the recognition. Senator Michael Rodrigues congratulated Mr. Jennings and presented him with a Massachusetts State Senate citation in recognition of the 21 years of service to the Diman School Committee. Mr. Jennings acknowledged and thanked everyone for the recognition.

Mr. DiBiasio deferred to Mr. Alix for the MSBA project update. Mr. Alix stated that a RFP for materials testing has been released and published on the Goods and Services bulletin. A request for qualifications for electrical filed sub-trades has also been released.

Mr. DiBiasio stated that now that the MSBA project is in the next stage, Colliers and Kaestle Boos have requested to resign from the Oversight Committee. Mr. Alix stated that the resignation is needed in order to not create a conflict of interest as both Colliers and KBA are now advising the committee and shouldn't casting votes. Attorney Brillhante agreed that the resignation is appropriate.

It was moved by Fr. Jay, seconded by Mr. DiBiasio and voted unanimously to accept the resignation by Colliers and Kaestle Boos from the Oversight Committee.

Attorney Brillhante stated that District representatives met with Mayor Coogan and several members of the permitting team to discuss the MSBA Project. They have given several things that they would like to discuss in terms of moving the project forward. Attorney Brillhante further stated that the Oversight Committee will be meeting to discuss the concerns.

Fr. Jay asked who the point person between the project and the city is. Mr. DiBiasio stated that the Superintendent-Director and the Chairman of the School Committee have been the contacts for the project. Attorney Brillhante stated that a point person should be designated and suggested addressing this at the next Oversight Committee meeting. Mr. DiBiasio stated that a contact will be designated and their contact information will be provided to representatives of the four sending communities.

Mr. DiBiasio stated that a meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 14, 2023 with Mayor Coogan and his administration to discuss their concerns. Representatives from the District, Colliers, KBA and Suffolk will be in attendance. Attorney Brillhante stated that the purpose of the meeting is to address concerns with permitting and communication with the appropriate agencies. Fr. Jay asked if the agenda can be shared with School Committee Members. Mr. Bentley will email agenda.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Fr. Jay and voted unanimously to approve the monthly MSBA project expenditures as submitted.

Mr. Bentley reported on personnel.

Attorney Brillhante left the meeting at 6:16 PM and returned at 6:17 PM.

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It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin and voted unanimously to appoint the following applicants as Advisory Board Members of the identified programs for a term of three years. **Louis Almeida – Advanced Manufacturing, Sonia Dumoulin - Advanced Manufacturing, Ryan Laurianno – Advanced Manufacturing, Cooper Mercer – Automotive Technology, Joseph Moniz – Automotive Technology, Travis Araujo – Carpentry, Paul Botelho – Carpentry, Tanya Pereira – Carpentry, Madison Pereira – Carpentry, Evan Smith – Electronics, Lizabeth Shaker – Medical Assisting and Joseph Pereira Jr. – Programming and Web Development.**

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Dr. Nehra and voted unanimously to approve the revised BPA National Conference student travel request as presented.

Mr. Bentley deferred to Mr. Rebello on the admission of 11th grade students proposal. Mr. Rebello stated that the intent of the proposal is to increase enrollment and offer an opportunity to 11th grade students to transfer to Diman. Mr. Rebello further stated that he has met with the Vocational Department Heads and the proposal was well received. As part of the proposal junior year transfers would follow the junior academic schedule and the sophomore shop schedule. There will be prerequisites that will need to be met and there will be certain shops that won't be available. Mr. Jennings asked if the proposal would trigger a change to the admissions policy. Mr. Rebello stated that the current admissions policy includes general language that states 9th, 10th, and 11th grade transfers are accepted. The policy does not need to be revised.

It was moved by Mr. Begin, seconded by Fr. Jay and voted unanimously to approve the 11th Grade Admissions proposal as presented.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Dr. Nehra and voted unanimously to approve the request by the Diman Soccer Team to use the gymnasium on Saturday, May 13, 2023 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for their annual Cornhole Tournament Fundraiser and to waive all use of facilities fees.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio , seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to approve the request by Stay Bizzle Inc. to use the gymnasium on Saturday, June 10, 2023 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for Bizzle Fest Community 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament and to waive the facilities fee of \$400. Custodial and Security fees totaling \$306.48 will be charged.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Fr. Jay and voted unanimously to accept all the donations as submitted. Bristol County District Attorney's, Perfect Smiles Dentistry, St. Anne's Hospital, Spaulding Brick Company of Wilmington, MA, Ray Machado, Graphic Communications Department Head, and Ralco Electric.

Mr. Bentley left the meeting at 6:31 PM.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Fr. Jay to award Patterson Dental of 1031 Mendota Heights Rd., Saint Paul, MN as the responsible and responsive bidder for the dental equipment for the Dental Assisting Department within the Greater Fall River Vocational School District at Six Hundred and Four Thousand Four Hundred Seventy One Dollars (\$604, 471.00) to be paid from the Skills Capital Grant.

Mr. Bentley returned to the meeting at 6:33 PM.

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Mr. Kitchen provided the monthly financial report. There are a couple of accounts that are in the negative but will rectify with the transfers that are being requested.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to approve all expenditures as submitted.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to approve all transfers as submitted.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Fr. Jay and voted unanimously to approve the request by the Art Club to establish a Student Activity Account so the funds may be collected and used for field trips, organize fundraisers and an art show.

Mr. Kitchen provided an overview of the FY'22 End of Year Financial Report. This was an audit of the federal awards program. The recommendation is to place on file as there were no findings.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin and voted unanimously to approve the surplus of miscellaneous equipment as presented.

Mr. Bentley provided an update on the admissions and acceptances. A total of 697 applications were received for the 23/24 school year and 365 applicants have been sent accepted notifications. Placement exams will take place next week and follow ups will be done by Guidance staff for no shows. Fr. Jay asked when the next round of acceptances will go out. Mr. Bentley stated that in the first week of May, the guidance office will have a better idea on acceptances. Mr. Bentley further stated that there are 25 applicants from the initial round that have not responded.

Mr. Bentley stated that he had a discussion with the Mrs. Miller, Director of Guidance on the possibility of increasing the number of acceptances to 385. The goal of the increase is to stem what happens in the transfers from sophomore to junior year and have more retention. Mr. Bentley stated that an enrollment increase can be substantiated in the shops but it will be a little tight in academics. Mr. DiBiasio expressed concern that the increase will affect students that want to get into the primary shops and be disappointed when they are not accepted into those shops. Mr. Bentley stated that students usually change their minds on their preferred shops once they go through exploratory.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Fr. Jay and voted unanimously to increase the enrollment from 365 to 385 students per the advice of the Superintendent-Director, Fall River with 8, Somerset with 4, Swansea with 4, and Westport with 4 more over the limit they have already.

Mr. Bentley deferred to Ms. Gehan for the LPN Program update.

Mr. Kitchen left the meeting at 6:56 PM

Ms. Gehan provided an overview of the LPN Program update. She stated that recruitment is ongoing. Ms. Gehan coordinated a commercial with NBC 10 to promote the LPN Program which is funded using grant funds. Currently, there are 26 students currently enrolled in the program. Ms. Gehan stated that she is working with the Department of Developmental Services to attain funding for students.

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Mr. Bentley stated that Ms. Gehan is doing a really great job with advertising, recruiting and running the program.

Mr. Kitchen returned to the meeting at 6:58 PM

Mr. DiBiasio deferred the Grievance Sub-Committee report to Attorney Brillhante. Attorney Brillhante stated that grievance SY2023-2 DTA: Silvia/February 8th meeting does not require a vote and there is no report as the grievance was settled. Attorney Brillhante stated that the Grievance Sub-Committee met and discussed Grievance SY2023-3 DTA; Silvia/School Nurse and it's their unanimous recommendation of two to zero to reject the grievance. Mr. Begin abstained because of his affiliation with the actual hiring process.

Mr. DiBiasio stated that the sub-committee heard from Ms. Silvia and her representatives. Mr. DiBiasio further stated that the hiring process was completed by the sub-committee which is relied upon for a recommendation and he feels their recommendation should not be overridden.

Mr. Begin stated that the sub-committee had an array of questions that all interviewees were asked. There were a total of eight applicants of which four were interviewed. All four candidates had good attributes and based on the interviews it was unanimously felt that the candidate hired was the best candidate for the position.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to deny the Grievance SY2023-3 – DTA: Silvia/ School Nurse.

Mr. DiBiasio deferred to Mrs. Torres for the Community Projects and the 22/23 Housebuilding project update.

Mrs. Torres stated that one of the largest and most proud community project was the playhouse for Rosemary's Wish Kids. The playhouse was showcased at the RI Home Show and it was presented to the recipient at the reveal event held at Bryant University. Plumbing is currently doing trenching at the Westport Cemetery.

Mrs. Torres stated that the 22/23 Housebuilding is just about finished and is expected to be completed by the first week of May. Plumbing is wrapping up some work and Carpentry is finishing up a small deck. Electricity has to switch out a plug and some touch up painting needs to be done.

Mr. DiBiasio stated that currently there isn't a viable project for the 23/24 Housebuilding Program. Advertising for the program will continue and the policy will be revised and presented to the Committee at the next meeting. Mrs. Torres stated that she met with representatives from BayCoast bank and is hoping they will have a qualified customer that will be interested in the program.

Ms. Menard left the meeting at 7:06 PM

Dr. Nehra provided the Sick Bank Sub-Committee report and stated that two DTA members requested to access the sick bank. Both staff members provided the appropriate medical documentation. Both requests have been approved by DTA and the Sub-Committee.

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It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Dr. Nehra and voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Sick Bank Sub-Committee and approve the two requests.

Mr. Rebello provided an overview of the Principal's report which included an update on current school events and happenings.

Mr. Bentley provided the Superintendent's report which included an update on Rosemary's Wish Kids, OVS State Vocational Recognition, Partners in Excellence Award and Day on the Hill.

The next meeting scheduled for Thursday, May 11, 2023 will need to be rescheduled due to a conflict.

Mr. Jennings stated that due to a conflict with Veterans Day, the MASC/MASS 2023 conference will begin on Tuesday, November 7, 2023 and run through Friday, November 10, 2023. The November 2023 School Committee meeting will change due to the conference.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:16 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Helena S. Neves
Helena S. Neves

Materials Included:

March 9, 2023 Minutes
AY24 Junior Transfer Proposal
Monthly Financial Report
Expenditure Report
Transfers Report
Student Activity Account Balances
FY'22 End of Year Financial Report
Surplus of Miscellaneous Equipment
Admissions/Acceptances Report
LPN Program Update
Community Projects List
Principal's Report
Superintendent's Report
MASC/MASS Conference Email