

GREATER FALL RIVER VOCATIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
251 STONEHAVEN ROAD, FALL RIVER, MA
DISTRICT OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM
NOVEMBER 16, 2023

The regular meeting of the Greater Fall River Vocational School District Committee was called to order at 5:01 p.m. by Chairman Paul Jennings, with the following persons in attendance, Donald DiBiasio of Somerset, Jeffrey Begin of Swansea, Fr. Jay Mello of Fall River and Joan Menard of Fall River.

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

Remote attendance: Jeffrey Cabral (6:43pm), Decio Matos, Stacy Matos, Debbie Pacheco (6:15pm) and Maria Torres.

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. Jennings led the Pledge of Allegiance.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin and voted unanimously to dispense with the reading of the October 12, 2023 minutes and approved them, as recorded.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin and voted to dispense with the reading of the October 25, 2023 minutes and approved them, as recorded. Fr. Jay abstained.

Mr. Rebello provided the student report which included updates on school events, extracurricular clubs and sports. Homecoming was well attended. Fall sports were very successful. The Thanksgiving Day football game will be held in at New Bedford Vocational High School.

There was no Citizen Input.

Attorney Brilhante stated the reasons to go into executive session.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard, and voted unanimously on a roll call at 5:04 p.m. to enter into Executive Session with Mr. Jennings, Mr. DiBiasio, Fr. Jay, Ms. Menard, and Dr. Nehra voting yes. Dr. Nehra joined Executive Session at 5:20 pm.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Dr. Nehra and voted unanimously on a roll call at 5:50 p.m. to rise into Open Session with Mr. Jennings, Mr. DiBiasio, Fr. Jay, Ms. Menard, Mr. Begin, and Dr. Nehra voting yes.

Attorney Brilhante left the meeting at 5:50 pm.

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Mr. Matos provided notification of intent to record.

Mr. DiBiasio provided the MSBA Project update. The foundation permit has been issued but the site plan has not been approved. City officials have requested additional information which has been provided. Mr. Daniel Aguiar, Director of Engineering & Planning has reviewed it and passed it along to Mr. Paul Ferland, Administrator Community Utilities. Ms. Menard asked what the issue is and why the permit has not been issued. Mr. DiBiasio stated that city officials have requested an additional analysis on a culvert that is not on Diman's property which is causing a delay.

There was further discussion on why city officials requested additional information, the timeline of when the information was submitted, when a response is expected, who is responsible for the culvert, what work is being done while the site plan is not approved and how the delay will impact the project's schedule and at what cost.

Mr. DiBiasio informed Members that if there's no progress on the site plan review, he will be calling for a meeting of the Oversight Committee and invite city officials.

Mr. Kitchen provided a summary of the Bond Anticipatory Note Interest Payment. The first borrowing for the project was for \$25 million dollars which has a maturity date of December 1, 2023. The interest payment on the bond totaling \$1,081,250 is due on November 24, 2023. Mr. Kitchen stated that the interest amount is included in the sending communities' assessments. Mr. Kitchen further stated that two assessment payments have been received but will be floating about \$500,000.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin and voted unanimously to approve the Bond Anticipatory Note Interest Payment of \$1,081,250.

Mr. Kitchen provided a summary of the Resale of Bond Anticipatory Note (BAN). He stated that the resale was needed in order to carry the funds borrowed. Mr. Kitchen met with Colliers and Unibank to determine the options for the next borrowing. Colliers is recommending, based on the available cash flow and construction schedule, to hold off on the next borrowing as the current balance of funds will carry the project until September 2024. A decision will be made in September on the next borrowing options (BAN vs Bond). There were six financial institutions that submitted bids for the BAN and it is recommended to sell it to JP Morgan as the lowest qualified bidder.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Dr. Nehra and voted unanimously to approve the Resale of the Bond Anticipatory Note to JP Morgan as the lowest qualified bidder.

Mr. Kitchen provided a summary of the Permit the Issuance of State Qualified Bonds. Mr. Kitchen stated that Unibank is recommending a State Qualified Bond as an option for the next borrowing. The District is eligible for a municipal bond but has to apply to the Massachusetts Municipal Finance Oversight Board.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously that the appropriate officials of the District are authorized to file an application with The Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Municipal Finance Oversight Board to qualify under Chapter 44A of the General Laws and all bonds or notes of the District authorized to pay costs of the new high school project as of the date of adoption of this vote; and in connection

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therewith, to provided such information and execute such documents as the Municipal Finance Oversight Board of The Commonwealth of Massachusetts may require.

Mr. Kitchen read a brief excerpt of the Suffolk amendment language. The amendment takes all the approved RTA's, change orders, general conditions and requirements and incorporates them into Suffolk's contract.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Dr. Nehra and voted unanimously to approve the Suffolk Contract Amendment 002 and iGMP002.

Mr. Kitchen provided an overview of the MSBA project expenditures. Invoices from Colliers, KBA and Suffolk reflect monthly billing for the project. Mr. Kitchen also requested approval for an open purchase order for Yankee Engineering and Testing Inc. for a total amount of \$235,750. Yankee Engineering was awarded the bid for materials testing and will issue invoices as work is performed.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to approve the following MSBA Project expenditures: Colliers invoice #0000897345 dated 10/31/2023 for the amount of \$105,357.97, KBA invoice #20006.01-16 dated 10/31/2023 for the amount of \$1,154,601.80, Suffolk Construction invoice #009 dated 10/30/2023 for the amount of \$50,000.00 and an open purchase order for Yankee Engineering in the amount of \$235,750.00.

Mr. Bentley reported on appointments, advisory board appointments, and retirements.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin and voted unanimously to appoint the following individuals to the Advisory Board of the identified programs for a term of three years: Michael Carvalho, Auto Collision, Marc Gamache, Auto Collision, Jordan Guarino, Building and Property Maintenance, and Antonio Pais, Carpentry and Cabinet Making.

Mr. Bentley reported on the use of facilities requests by the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin and voted unanimously to approve the request by the Jehovah's Witnesses of Fall River to use the auditorium on Sunday, March 24, 2024 from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm for their annual religious observance. The total use of facilities fee is \$705.39.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin and voted unanimously to approve the request submitted by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) to use the District Office Conference Room for a public hearing on Thursday, December 14, 2023 from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. to waive all use of facilities fees.

Mr. Bentley reported that the Fall Advisory Reports were included in the packets and if members have any questions to reach out to him. Mr. DiBiasio stated that this year's reports included a lot of detail and are the best reports he has seen. Mr. Begin asked why there are no students from the Culinary Arts Program participating

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in cooperative education. Mr. Bentley stated that he will have a discussion with the Cooperative Education Coordinator. Mr. Jennings asked that Mr. Bentley report back with an update at the December meeting.

Mr. Bentley provided an overview of the proposal to establish a co-operative swim team with Bishop Stang.

It was moved by Fr. Jay, seconded by Mr. Begin and voted unanimously to approve the Co-op Swim Team as presented and to subsidize the cost.

Mr. Bentley reported on the out of state student travel requests.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Fr. Jay and voted unanimously to approve the student travel request by the DECA Club to attend the Celtics game at TD Garden in Boston on December 12, 2023 from 2:30 pm to 11:30 pm.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin and voted unanimously to approve the out of stated student travel request by the Drafting Program to Newport, RI on November 29, 2023 to learn more about Gilded Age Architecture.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin and voted unanimously to approve the overnight student travel by SkillsUSA to attend the Fall Leadership Conference in Marlboro, MA on November 19th and 20th.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin and voted unanimously to approve the out of state student travel request by the Class of 2024 Advisors for the class prom on May 3, 2024 in Middletown, RI.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin and voted unanimously to appointment Ms. Amy Imbeau as the Administrative Assistant to the Assistant Superintendent-Principal and approve the contract terms as agreed upon.

Mr. Kitchen provided a summary of the monthly financial report. The negative balance in the extraordinary maintenance line will be supported once free cash is certified. The negative balances in the athletic lines will be addressed at the next meeting.

Mr. Kitchen provided a summary of the expenditures in excess of \$10,000. Mr. Kitchen revised the total expenditure amount being requested for Gullco International to \$11,051.11 to account for freight charges. Mr. Kitchen stated that a 64ft genie lift is being purchased at a cost of \$153,475.00. The lift will be useful for the new building and it will also be used as an educational tool to help students become certified in using a boom lift.

Mr. Jennings asked for clarification on the Better Lesson Inc. expenditure. Mr. Rebello stated that this expenditure is related to staff professional development and geared towards mentoring. Professional development opportunities are limited this year due to the preparation for the NEASC visit and this program offers one-on-one coaching. Mr. DiBiasio asked why this was needed when the District has mentors. Mr. Rebello stated that coaching is teacher based and mentoring offers new teachers the strategies used at Diman. The program was offered to all teachers.

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It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin and voted unanimously to approve the expenditures as submitted including the revision to Gullco International for a new total of \$11,051.11.

Mr. Kitchen provided a summary of the TRAK Bed Mill bid award.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Dr. Nehra and voted unanimously to approve Southwestern Industries, Inc. DBA TRAK Machine Tools, 2615 Homestead Place, Rancho Dominguez, CA as the responsible and responsive bidder for the following: (4) TRAK DPMRX2 3 axis Bed mills for a total of \$188,952 for the Advanced Manufacturing Department within the Greater Fall River Vocational School District.

Fr. Jay left the meeting at 6:34 PM.

Mr. Bentley provided a summary of the LPN Program report. The program is doing well and there are 52 students currently enrolled. Mrs. Brogan and her staff are very active in continuing their recruiting efforts. Mr. Begin stated that he is pleased with the progress the program as made.

Fr. Jay returned to the meeting at 6:36 PM.

Mr. Kitchen left the meeting at 6:36 PM.

Mr. Jennings deferred to Mrs. Torres for the community projects update. Mrs. Torres stated they are waiting on a transfer switch to finish the electrical generator in Westport. Building and Property will finish the siding on the building once the electrical is done. Materials have been ordered for the Somerset project. The biggest in house project is the playhouse for the Rosemary's Wish Kids. The Wish Kid is a little girl and a contest has commenced between students for the best design. Mr. Jennings asked what the theme of the playhouse is. Mrs. Torres stated that theme is based around make up and artistry as the little girl is very much into both.

Mrs. Torres stated that Swansea voters rejected a proposal to build an over \$50 million dollar complex and requested permission to reach out to Swansea's Selectmen Board to see if there is any work that our students can perform. Mr. Jennings stated that it is okay for Mrs. Torres to reach out and asked that she provide an update to the Housebuilding Sub-Committee.

Mr. Kitchen returned to the meeting at 6:39 PM.

Mr. Rebello provided the Assistant Superintendent-Principal report which included an update on student achievement, current happenings and events.

Mr. Bentley provided the Superintendent-Director's report which included the flu clinic, student enrollment, groundbreaking ceremony, and the participation of a student from Metal Fabrication and Welding in the World Skills competition. Mr. Bentley expressed gratitude to everyone that was involved in planning and set up of the groundbreaking ceremony.

The next school committee meeting will be on December 14, 2023.

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Mr. Rebello informed members that the annual Open House is scheduled for December 3, 2023 from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM. Mr. DiBiasio asked why open house is only for two hours. He would like to see it be for a longer period of time to allow prospective students and parents time to explore all the shops and programs offered. Mr. Bentley stated that the open house timeframe is something that was part of collective bargaining with the teachers union and it's in the DTA contract.

Mr. Bentley informed members that a Demand to Bargain Letter was received from the Diman Teachers Association. A meeting was held this week to set the ground rules and three future meetings were scheduled.

It was moved by Ms. Menard, seconded by Fr. Jay and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:51 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Helena S. Neves
Helena S. Neves, Executive Secretary

Materials Included:

November 16, 2023 Minutes	LPN Program Update
MSBA Project Expenditures	Community Projects
Resale of Bond Anticipatory Note	Assistant Superintendent-Principal Report
Suffolk Contract Amendment 002 & iGMP002	Superintendent's Report
Fall Advisory Reports	DTA Demand to Bargain Letter
Monthly Financial Report	
Expenditure Report	