

GREATER FALL RIVER VOCATIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF SICK BANK SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING
251 STONEHAVEN ROAD, FALL RIVER, MA
DISTRICT OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM
MAY 17, 2023

In attendance: Joan Menard of Fall River, Rajiv Nehra of Fall River and Fr. Jay Mello of Fall River

Also in attendance: Brian Bentley, Interim Superintendent-Director, Andrew Rebello, Assistant Superintendent-Principal, Gregory Brilhante, Legal Counsel, Mitchell Sweet, DTA President, Helena Neves, Executive Secretary

Remote attendance: Linda Silvia, Decio Matos, Stacey Matos

The meeting began with a roll call at 5:24 pm

It was moved by Fr. Jay, seconded by Ms. Menard to dispense with the reading of the April 11, 2023 minutes and approve them as recorded.

2 in favor/ 0 opposed/1 abstention. Motion Carries

Dr. Nehra reported on the request by an employee to access sick bank time.

- Ms. Jessica Tavares has requested to access 5 sick days from the sick leave bank. Ms. Tavares has submitted the required medical documentation and the association signed and approved this request.

It was moved by Fr. Jay, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to approve the request by Ms. Tavares for sick bank time as submitted.

Attorney Brilhante informed members that Diman Teachers Association (DTA) submitted two additional sick bank requests. The requests were not received in time and with proper notice. Attorney Brilhante stated that if the members wish to act on the requests, there is a provision that if the request is deemed as an emergency and not anticipated within 48 hours of posting it can be acted upon.

Attorney Brilhante stated that Mr. Sweet, DTA President has requested to speak on behalf of the two employees.

Mr. Sweet addressed members and explained that the two additional requests were received yesterday and today. One individual (Ms. Monica Camara) is in dire need of sick time and if not approved it would cause her to go without as of tomorrow. Mr. Sweet stated that this particular individual has provided the required doctor's note and is requesting 10 days. She is a fairly new employee and due child care and COVID has exhausted her sick time.

Attorney Brilhante stated that there is an issue with the sick bank request submitted by Ms. Linda Silvia as the District has received conflicting doctor's notes. One of the notes states that she's capable to return to work without any restrictions and a second note states something totally different.

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Mr. Bentley stated that for each sick day deposited into the sick bank, employees get five sick bank days. Ms. Camara deposited one sick day last year and can access five sick bank days. The additional five days are being requested to be front loaded due to a calculation error. Mr. Bentley explained that due to staff turn over the sick bank deposit was not done properly and a corrective action plan has been put in place for next year. Mr. Sweet stated that due to the error Ms. Camara does not have the correct amount of sick bank days. Mr. Sweet further stated that next year two sick days will be deducted from Ms. Camara's sick days and will be deposited into her sick bank. One sick day will be for next school year and the other is to cover the five days being requested this year. Ms. Camara will only have access to five sick bank days next year if she uses the five days requested today.

Fr. Jay expressed concern that the medical note provided is for two separate medical reasons. Mr. Bentley stated that the language in the contract pertaining to sick bank requests only states a medical note. Ms. Camara's note meets those requirements. Dr. Nehra expressed concern that the request is for anticipatory time in case it's needed.

Attorney Brilhante stated that the second request does not meet the requirements of the emergency provision. Ms. Silvia provided conflicting doctor's notes that require clarification. Mr. Bentley agreed that further clarification is needed.

Dr. Nehra again expressed concern pertaining to the request for anticipatory time off. Fr. Jay asked if this request for anticipatory time is different to the current practice. Attorney Brilhante stated that the sick bank was originally intended to be used for serious illnesses, such as cancer, and if the employee needed additional time for treatment the sick bank would provide the additional time. Mr. Sweet stated that anticipatory time requests have been approved in the past.

It was moved by Fr. Jay, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to approve the request by Ms. Monica Camara for sick bank time as submitted, to table the request by Ms. Linda Silvia to the June meeting and to make the recommendation to the School Committee for acceptance.

It was moved by Fr. Jay seconded by Ms. Menard, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 5:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Helena S. Neves
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