

GREATER FALL RIVER VOCATIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
251 STONEHAVEN ROAD, FALL RIVER, MA  
DISTRICT OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM  
NOVEMBER 7, 2024

The regular meeting of the Greater Fall River Vocational School District Committee was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chairman Paul Jennings, with the following persons in attendance, Richard Manuels Jr. of Fall River, Joan Menard of Fall River, and Donald DiBiasio of Somerset and Jeffrey Begin of Swansea.

Absent: Rajiv Nehra of Fall River

Also in attendance were: Brian Bentley, Superintendent/Director, Leslie Weckesser, Assistant Superintendent-Principal, Gregory Brilhante, Legal Counsel, Abigail “Ace” Wittkamper, Student Representative, and Helena Neves, Executive Secretary

Remote attendance: Paul Kitchen, Director of Finance and Operations.

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 Ms. Menard and voted to dispense with the reading of the October 10, 2024 and October 18, 2024 minutes and approved them, as recorded.

Ms. Wittkamper provided the student report. The student report included topics such as current events, updated on sports and extracurricular club. The Diman Math Team participated in the WPI Annual Invitational Meet. Gabriel Frost was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to Worcester Polytechnic Institute for his excellence during the individual round of the competition. Ms. Wittkamper relayed the concerns of her peers on issues such as crowded lunches, the cost of items offered for fundraisers and also the ticket cost for Homecoming. Ms. Wittkamper stated that school lunches recently have felt significantly less nutritious and diverse. Students have commented that they do not feel full after being served the meal. Ms. Wittkamper, through word of mouth, collected meal ideas from her peers. Some of the suggestions were: popcorn chicken bowl, general Tso’s chicken, Italian sandwich, buffalo chicken dip, soup & sandwich combo, chow mein, sloppy joe, chicken bacon cheddar and beef chili. Ms. Wittkamper will work with Mr. Bentley and Mrs. Weckesser to develop a survey and gather more information from students. Mr. Bentley thanked Ms. Wittkamper for representing her peers and voicing their concerns.

There was no Citizen Input.

Mr. DiBiasio provided the MSBA project update. The project is going well and construction is moving right along. They’re also working on the sewage and the electrical hookups. A Community Outreach meeting is scheduled for November 20, 2024 at 5:30 in the Room 251 Restaurant.

Mrs. Weckesser and Ms. Wittkamper left the meeting at 5:46 PM.

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Mr. Kitchen provided an overview of the MSBA project expenditures. Invoices from Colliers, KBA, and Suffolk reflect monthly billing for the project. Invoices for Locke Lord, Moody's, Unibank and Yankee Engineering were also included.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to approve the following MSBA Project expenditures: Colliers invoice #0000987655 dated 9/30/2024 for the amount of \$131,208.04, KBA invoice #20006.01-28 dated 10/28/2024 for the amount of \$162,467.00, Locke Lord invoice #1881354 for the amount of \$42,500.00, Moody's Investors Service Inc. invoice #P0475321 for the amount of \$11,000.00, Suffolk Construction application no. 13 dated 10/31/2024 for the amount of \$5,017,207.21, Unibank Fiscal Advisory Services invoice #9681 for the amount of \$35,037.50 and Yankee Engineering invoice #33000 for the amount of \$14,920.00.

Mr. Bentley reported on personnel appointments, resignations, retirements and Advisory Board appointments.

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: Seth Elie, Automotive Collision, Corey Gaspar, Programming and Web Development, Andrew Rodrigues, Electronics and Andrew Wittkamper, Electronics.

Agenda item 3.1.c – Individual Employment Agreement, Gregory Brilhante will be addressed after executive session.

Mr. Bentley reported on the student travel requests.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Manuels and voted unanimously to approve the overnight student travel request submitted by the SkillsUSA Advisors for students to participate in the SkillsUSA Fall Leadership Conference being held on November 24th and November 25th in Marlborough, MA.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to approve the out of state student travel request submitted by the Drafting Program Instructors for students to learn about the gilded age architecture in Newport, RI on December 19, 2024 from 8:30 am to 2:15 pm.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to approve the afterhours student travel request submitted by Dental Assisting Program Instructors for students to attend the Dental Conference being held at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center in Boston, MA on January 30, 2025 from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to approve the out of state student travel request submitted by the Ski Club Advisors for students to attend a field trip to Pat's Peak Ski Area in Henniker, NH on March 8, 2025 from 5:30 am to 7:00 pm.

Mr. Bentley stated that a request was received from the Meredith Rose, Key Club Advisor, asking that a co-advisor be appointed due to the number of students who have joined the club. Currently there are over 50 students who are involved in activities at school and community events.

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It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to approve a co-advisor for the Key Club per DTA contract.

Mr. Bentley stated that the Fall Advisory Reports were included in the packets and asked if there were any questions. Mr. DiBiasio stated that the reports were very well done.

Mr. Bentley stated that the 23/24 End of Year Report was emailed due to its size. The report provides information on what took place at Diman over the last school year.

Mr. Kitchen provided an overview of the request to award the bid for a Morbielli X200 CNC Milling Center and a Piranha Hydraulic Shear. The recommendation was to award Akins Machinery of 9 Delta Drive, Unit F, Londonberry, NH 03053 as the lowest responsible and responsive bidder for the Morbielli X200 CNC Milling Center for the Carpentry and Cabinet Making Department at a cost of Two Hundred Two Thousand Six Hundred and Six Dollars (\$202,606.00) and award Mid Atlantic Machinery, 6332 Flank Drive, Harrisburg, PA 17112 as the responsible and responsive bidder for the Piranha Hydraulic Shear 3/8-08 with rear sheet, 48" back gauge travel and 10' squaring arms for the Metal Fabrication Department at a cost of One Hundred Twenty Three Thousand Nine Hundred (\$123,900.00).

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to award the bids as presented.

Mr. Kitchen provided an overview the surplus equipment list.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to approve the surplus equipment as submitted.

Mr. Kitchen provided a summary of the monthly financial report. The extraordinary maintenance line's negative balance will be funded once the carryover funds are certified and received.

Mr. Kitchen provided an overview of the expenditures in excess of \$10,000. Mr. Kitchen stated that an additional mini bus was purchased bringing the total to three. Two buses will be used for athletics and the other will be for carpentry. Capital Skills grant funds are used to purchase equipment that can be brought into the new building.

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

Mr. Jennings provided the Admissions Sub-Committee report. The Sub-Committee decided not to make any changes to the admissions policy. Mr. Bentley stated that this will give the District the opportunity to meet with the counselors from the four sending schools. Mrs. Griffin, Director of Guidance and Admissions will be meeting with them to address any concerns and provide information on the admissions process, specifically the recommendation portion of the application. Mrs. Griffin's admissions data provided great insight on how variable recommendations given by guidance counselors are and how they can have a negative impact on an applicant's total point score.

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Mr. Bentley stated that Mrs. Griffin and her staff will be going out to the sending schools to meet with perspective students. As of today, 550 applications have been received for the class of 2029.

Mr. Jennings stated that the Admissions Sub-Committee's recommendation is to keep the admissions policy as is and not make any changes.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin and voted unanimously to keep the admissions policy as is and not make any changes.

Mr. DiBiasio provided the Housebuilding Sub-Committee update. The walls at the house in Swansea are up and they are working on the roof. The hope is to have the roof, windows and everything closed in before winter break to allow for inside work in January. The work on the community projects is moving along well. The Housebuilding Sub-Committee will meet in December.

Mr. Bentley provided the Superintendent-Director's report which included an update on student enrollment, admissions and co-operative education placements. Mr. Bentley welcomed Leslie Weckesser as the new Assistant Superintendent-Principal. Mr. Bentley informed everyone that the Topping Off Ceremony for the new building will be held on Wednesday, December 11, 2024 at 1:00 PM.

. The next regular meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for December 12, 2024.

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 6:25 p.m. to enter into Executive Session with Mr. Jennings, Mr. Begin, Mr. DiBiasio, Ms. Menard and Mr. Manuels voting yes.

It was moved by Ms. Menard, seconded by Mr. Begin and voted unanimously on a roll call at 6:47 p.m. to rise into Open Session with Mr. Jennings, Mr. Begin, Mr. DiBiasio, Ms. Menard and Mr. Manuels voting yes.

Agenda item 3.1.c – Individual Employment Agreement, Gregory Brilhante

It was moved by Ms. Menard, seconded by Mr. DiBiasio and voted unanimously to approve the legal counsel's contract as negotiated.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:48 p.m.

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

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**Materials Included:**

October 10, 2024 Minutes  
October 18, 2024 Minutes  
MSBA Project Expenditures  
Fall Advisory Board Reports  
23/24 End of Year Report  
Surplus of Equipment  
Monthly Financial Report  
Expenditure Report  
Student Activity Agency Accounts Report  
Admissions Data  
Community Projects  
Superintendent-Director Report