

GREATER FALL RIVER VOCATIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF LPN SUB-COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING
251 STONEHAVEN ROAD, FALL RIVER, MA
DISTRICT OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM
OCTOBER 10 2024

In attendance: Jeffrey Begin and Joan Menard.

Absent: Ryan Pacheco

Also in attendance: Brian Bentley, Superintendent-Director, Paul Kitchen, Director of Finance and Operations, Lori Brogan, LPN Program Director (remote), Gregory Brilhante, Legal Counsel and Helena Neves, Executive Secretary.

Remote attendance: Decio Matos, Liz Hyde, Crystal Santos, Cassie Medeiros, Stephen Alves, Caitlin Bird, Kimberly Harrison and Maria Torres.

The meeting began with a roll call at 4:36 PM.

It was moved by Ms. Menard, seconded by Mr. Begin and voted unanimously to dispense with the reading of the August 6, 2024 minutes and approve them as recorded.

Mr. Begin began the discussion of the LPN Program. Included in the packet was a list of questions that were brought up by Mrs. Brogan. Some of the questions were: will there be a full time, part-time or evening program for the 25/26 school year, are there any plans to close the entire program, if the program remains active, where will its location be, how many students will be admitted, what is the financial outlook of the program, etc.

Mrs. Brogan requested permission to address the subcommittee members to provide input on the program.

Mrs. Brogan stated that she has been at the LPN Program for nine years, of which the last three years have been as the Director. Mrs. Brogan further stated that she has heard from multiple community members and organizations expressing concerns about the future of the program. The program has been operating for sixty five years and it has a good reputation. Mrs. Brogan was approached by several organizations that expressed interest in either building a building to house the program or taking it over.

Mrs. Brogan stated that the program's retention rate has been questioned in the past. The student retention rate for the 23/24 school year was at 79.4% which is well above the 70% retention rate requirement for nursing programs.

Mrs. Brogan provided clarification on a comment regarding salaries that has been raised during past school committee meetings. Staff at the LPN Program are members of the Diman Teachers Association and their salaries are paid in accordance with the salary schedule agreed upon in the contract.

Mrs. Brogan stated that she has heard from other local programs about their attempt to create an evening program. The attempts failed due to the lack of interest and student enrollment. Mrs. Brogan stated that a full time day program may be more financially feasible and doable with the staff that is currently in place. She has not been able to answer questions by community organizations and to the individuals that have called. Recruiting of students has been on hold until a decision is made.

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Mr. Begin stated that the full time program was suspended due to the lack of staff and asked Mrs. Brogan how would a full time program be able to be supported with the current staff. Mrs. Brogan stated that the Board of Nursing requires a ratio of one instructor to ten students. The current instructors, administrative assistant and the director would be able to support thirty full time students if a part time program was not run simultaneously. Clinical adjunct faculty are also an option if more than thirty students are accepted into the program. Mr. Kitchen stated that Chapter 70 funding doesn't change if a student is full time vs part time. The tuition is what changes.

Mr. Begin stated that he would not like to see the program close. An evening program may be a possibility in the future. Mrs. Brogan stated the current faculty may not be interested in working in the evening program. Mr. Bentley stated that based on the input provided by Mrs. Brogan, a full time day program would be able to be supported by the current program staff. Mr. Kitchen stated that the seventeen part time students that are currently enrolled in the program will graduate in June of 2025. The full time day program, if approved, would go in effect in September 2025. There are two years left on the Davol Street lease.

Mr. Bentley made the recommendation to proceed with a full time day program, enroll thirty to thirty five students, and start in September of 2025 with the current staff at the Davol Street location. Mr. Begin agreed and stated that next year the district can start looking for a new location. Mr. Kitchen stated that request for bids can be sent out for a space the best fits the needs of the program.

Mr. Begin thanked Mrs. Brogan for the great work she and her staff have done.

Mr. Kitchen asked if any of the full time students that were released from this year's program expressed interest in returning. Mrs. Brogan stated that she knows of at least fifteen students who are very interested in returning. Mr. Bentley asked if those fifteen students would have to take the TEAS exam again. Mrs. Brogan stated that all students that were accepted for the current school year would not have to test again as the test results are good for one year. Mrs. Brogan stated that those students were refunded for the test fees.

Mr. Begin asked Mr. Kitchen if he feels confident that the Chapter 70 and tuition will cover the program's expenses. Mr. Kitchen stated that currently there is enough funding to cover the program. Getting a smaller location will be beneficial and offer some financial relief.

It was moved by Ms. Menard, seconded by Mr. Begin, and voted on roll call to adjourn the LPN Sub-Committee meeting at 4:59 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Helena Neves
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Materials:

August 6, 2024 minutes