

GREATER FALL RIVER VOCATIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
251 STONEHAVEN ROAD, FALL RIVER, MA  
DISTRICT OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM  
NOVEMBER 13, 2025

The regular meeting of the Greater Fall River Vocational School District Committee was called to order at 5:32 p.m. by Chairman Paul Jennings, with the following persons in attendance, Richard Manuels Jr. of Fall River, Joan Menard of Fall River, Donald DiBiasio of Somerset and Jeffrey Begin of Swansea.

Absent: William Flanagan of Fall River

Also in attendance were: Brian Bentley, Superintendent/Director, Leslie Weckesser, Assistant Superintendent-Principal, Linda Griffin, Director of Guidance and Admissions, Eric Benoit, Director of Technology, Attorney Gregory Brillhante, Kurt Chouinard, Precision Machining & Engineering Instructor, Gregory Joynt, Kaestle Boos, and Helena Neves, Executive Secretary.

Remote attendance: Decio Matos, Jennifer DeMariano & Rick Medeiros

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 Ms. Menard, and voted unanimously to approve the October 9, 2025 minutes, as submitted.

There was no Citizen Input.

Mr. Bentley deferred to Mrs. Weckesser for the FY25-28 School Improvement Plan. Mrs. Weckesser stated that small focus groups met to discuss the School Improvement Plan. The following four objectives were developed: Building a Culture of High Expectations for Staff & Students, Strengthening Guidance, Career Planning, and Student Support Services, Cultivating Positive School Culture and Strengthening Communication and Boosting Family and Community Engagement. The plan provides a clear roadmap for all stakeholders.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard, and voted unanimously to approve the FY25-28 School Improvement Plan, as submitted.

Agenda item 2.1 Unfinished Business, b) District Curriculum Accommodation Plan was not discussed as it is not finalized.

Mr. DiBiasio deferred to Mr. Joynt for the MSBA School Building update. The project is on time and on budget. Interior finishes as being applied in sequence one. Mechanical systems are nearly complete. The majority of rooftop equipment is on. Large openings such as overhead doors are temporarily being closed to allow for interior work during the winter. The first course of asphalt pavement has gone on all the way around the back of the building. The frame is up for the maintenance storage building and construction will start in the next couple weeks. The current contractors parking lot will be the temporary parking for staff as demolition starts next summer.

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Mr. DiBiasio stated that the student parking lot will be redone which includes new lighting and is expected to be finished for the beginning of the school year. There are thirty four parking spaces in the back of the building that will be used as handicap spaces and for some of the shops. The District Office area will have 8-9 parking spaces. Mr. DiBiasio further stated that permanent power is expected to be on in the first week of December.

Mr. Joynt provided a summary of Prime Contract Change Order (PCCO) No. 011 which includes a couple of change orders that reflect updates due to the purchase of equipment. Mr. Joynt stated that the District has done a great job acquiring grant funds to purchase equipment that makes Diman one of the best equipped schools with the most well managed investments of current technical equipment in the state.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard, and voted unanimously to reaffirm PCCO No. 011 for a total amount of \$1,402,909.88.

Mr. Bentley deferred to Mr. Joynt for a summary of the Technology Purchase Orders. Mr. Joynt stated that the three purchase orders reflect a majority of the equipment for technology. The purchases include network switches, wireless access points, audio visual equipment and the telephone system.

- Hub Tech proposal is for network switches, servers, wireless access points, and some computers. It also includes the services to support and install in the new building. The proposal is for a total of \$1,268,401.09.
- Harbor IT proposal is for the telephone system which includes all handheld devices, installation and management software. The proposal is for a total of \$92,728.55.
- ProAV Systems proposal is for audio visual systems equipment and services. It includes new touch panel screens as well as taking the existing the flat panel displays, that were purchased within the last 3 years, and move and install them in the new building. The proposal is for a total of \$498,282.86.

Mr. Joynt stated that all three vendors are on the state contract and the District is familiar with them. The technology original budget amount included in the MSBA project was for \$1.8 million dollars. The District has received additional funding that allowed to increase the technology line item. Mr. Joynt further stated that two of the proposals include contingencies of \$25,000 each. One is for printers so that we can make sure we get the right printers for the right spots and to make sure that we get everything working in the building. The second contingency is for ProAV systems for \$25,000 which allows to account for cable length requirements for remote displays in classrooms or shops, if needed. Any unused funds will be returned to the project.

Mr. DiBiasio stated that the School Building Committee questioned the communication into classrooms if there's an internet outage. Mr. Joynt stated that the new telephone system includes physical phones within the building. The voice over IP system does have a number of features that are not available with a copper-based system. The intercom system, which is not internet based, will always work. Mrs. Weckesser stated that the new telephone system offers staff the availability to download an application onto their cell phone that they can use as a communication method.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard, and voted unanimously to reaffirm the Technology Purchase Orders, as submitted.

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Mr. Bentley provided an overview of the MSBA project expenditures. Invoices from Colliers, KBA and Suffolk reflect the billing for the month of October for the project.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin, and voted unanimously to approve the following MSBA Project expenditures: Colliers Invoice #0001110867 dated 10/31/2025 for the amount of \$159,926.44, and KBA invoice #20006.01-40 dated 10/29/2025 for the amount of \$129,476.48 and Suffolk Construction application no. 25 dated 10/31/2025 for the amount of \$8,871,298.31.

Mr. Bentley stated that the Suffolk Application #24 voted on at last month's meeting was approved for the wrong amount. The correct amount is \$10,118,584.94.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard, and voted unanimously to reaffirm Suffolk Application #24 dated 9/30/2025 for the total amount of \$10,118,584.94.

Agenda item 3.1.r. Admissions Sub-Committee Report was taken out of order.

Mr. Jennings deferred to Ms. Griffin for an update on the Admissions Policy. Ms. Griffin stated that the Admissions Policy was submitted for review and approval by DESE. DESE has since returned it with comments and recommendations. The recommendations include adding language on attraction, enrollment and retention information and embedded it within the policy. The timeline chart was also revised to include dates for sending school counselors to upload attendance and discipline information, an appeal by date and a lottery date. The appeal process has also been revised. An applicant may appeal the number of entries into the lottery from mid-February to March 1<sup>st</sup>. Appeals are not available after the lottery takes place. Mr. Jennings stated that the Admissions Policy Sub-Committee is recommending that the revised policy be approved.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin, and voted unanimously to approve the Admissions Policy, as submitted.

Agenda item 3.1.s Housebuilding Program Update was taken out of order.

Ms. DeMariano stated that the floor system is complete with subfloor decking all in place. All the east and west facing exterior walls have been built and are standing. Students are currently working on the north and south facing walls and they are hoping to have those up within the next couple of weeks. The Drafting Department had to redraw the basement layouts due to the location of the bathroom not being feasible for the best placement for the furnace. The plumbing work is all in place and awaiting inspection. The roof trusses are being delivered the first week of December. There was a change in the roof truss design to eliminate a bump-out. Metal Fabrication is currently preparing the furnace unit and pre-assembling some of the ductwork. Most of the plumbing fixtures have been selected and are in the process of being reviewed to make sure they're on the Massachusetts approved plumbing product list. Mr. Cabral is working out the details with the homeowner on the bathroom vanities to be built in the cabinet-making shop. The homeowner requested that pantry and laundry room cabinets, which were not in our original plans, be built. The request was declined due to not having the time.

Mr. DiBiasio expressed concern about the sophomores not building the kitchen cabinets. Ms. DeMariano stated that the sophomores will be building two different bathroom vanities. They are also working on other community projects.

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Ms. DeMariano provided a summary of the community projects. The students are hard at work on several projects in Fall River, Somerset and Westport. The work for Durfee High School and the Diman Alumni has been completed. The repair work for a Fall River Police department car has also been completed.

Mr. Begin asked if there has been any communication regarding any possible projects in Swansea. Ms. DeMariano stated that a small project for the Swansea Police Association was just completed. There has not been in contact regarding other projects. Mr. Begin stated that he will reach out to the Swansea Town Administrator.

Mr. Bentley reported on personnel appointments, resignations, retirements, and Advisory Board appointments. Advisory Board reappointments will be presented after the April Advisory Board meeting.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard, and voted unanimously to appoint *Mykensie Baker, Medical Assisting, Daniel Barbosa, Advanced Manufacturing, Ana Clara Almeida Freitas, Programming and Web Development, David Medeiros, Plumbing and Armand Watts Jr., Automotive Technology* to the identified Advisory Boards for a term of three years.

Agenda item 3.1.c Discussion of Individual Employment Agreement was addressed after executive session.

Mr. Bentley began the discussion on the accountant position salary range. The vacancy was advertised without a salary range on the posting. Applications have been received and interviews will be scheduled. The Wage Transparency Act went into effect on October 29<sup>th</sup> which requires that a salary range be included on job postings. Mr. Bentley requested to advertise the position again with the salary range listed. Attorney Brillhante asked if the vacancy was advertised prior to October 29<sup>th</sup>, if so, there's no need to advertise again. Attorney Brillhante suggested going through the interview process for the current applicants. If a qualified applicant is not chosen, then advertise the position with a salary range. The salary can be negotiated in executive session once a candidate has been determined. No further action was taken on this agenda item.

Mr. Bentley reported on the student travel requests

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to approve the student travel request submitted by Meredith Guilbeault, Culinary Arts Instructor for students to tour Roger Williams University in Bristol, RI, as a possible cooperative education placement, on November 21, 2025 from 8:00 am to 12:30 pm.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to approve student travel request submitted the SkillsUSA Advisors for students to attend the SkillsUSA FSLC Conference being held in Marlboro, MA, from November 23, 2025 to November 24, 2025.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to approve the student travel requests submitted by Mr. Allender for students to tour NEIT in Greenwich, RI on December 2, 2025 and December 11, 2025 from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to approve the student travel request submitted by Mr. Sweet for students to study the Gilded Age Architecture in Newport, RI on December 16, 2025 from 8:30 am to 2:15 pm.

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It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to approve the student travel requests submitted by Mr. Machado for students to participate in the DECA District 8 Competition being held in Hyannis, MA on January 8, 2026 and January 9, 2026 and the DECA State Conference being held in Boston, MA from March 12, 2026 through March 14, 2026.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to approve the student travel request submitted by Mr. Salsinha for students to tour the Local 51 Pipefitters Union in Riverside, RI on January 16, 2026 from 8:30 am to 2:00 pm.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to approve the student travel request submitted by the Sophomore Class Advisors for students to participate in the class field trip to Lake Compounce in Bristol, CT on May 27, 2026 from 8:00 am to 6:30 pm.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to approve the student travel request submitted by the Junior Class Advisors for students to participate in the class field trip to Six Flags in Agawam, MA on May 27, 2026 from 8:00 am to 6:30 pm.

Mr. Bentley provided a summary of the request to establish the Diman Food Science Course. The course has been successfully offered in the past.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to approve the Diman Food Science Course, as submitted.

Mr. Bentley provided a summary of the request to establish the Christian Club. The proposal to start a non-denomination club for students was submitted by Christofer Lopez and Victoria Castro. The purpose of the club is to provide a welcoming space where students can explore Christian values, build positive character and connect through faith in a respectful, non-denominational environment. Mr. DiBiasio asked Attorney Brillhante if this is something the can legally take place in a public school. Attorney Brillhante stated that the proposal did not raise any concerns. The club advisors will not be compensated as the club is not in the DTA contract.

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

Mr. Bentley deferred to Mrs. Weckesser for a discussion on the Vocational Programs and Department Name Changes. Mrs. Weckesser stated that the current vocational program names are the same as the CIP code assigned by the state. The program names were an agenda item at the Fall Advisory Board meeting where it was discussed with the members. The proposed names aligns the programs with the new frameworks changes that came across the state in the last two years. *Precision Machining & Engineering ( old Advanced Manufacturing), Business Management & Finance (old Business Technology), Mechanical, Architectural, and Additive Manufacturing Engineering. (old Drafting), Metal Fabrication and Welding (old Metal Fabrication and Joining Technologies).*

Mrs. Weckesser further stated that the IT Department is requesting to change their name to Technology Services. The new name is a little more up-to-date of the services provided to students and staff, as well as connecting them to all the resources available.

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It was moved by Mr. Manuels, seconded by Mr. Begin and voted unanimously to approve the Vocational Programs and Department Name Changes, as presented.

Mr. Bentley deferred to Mrs. Weckesser for the Fall Advisory Board reports. Mrs. Weckesser stated that she has met with the department heads to take an accurate account of the data collected in the last couple of years. Department heads were asked to come up with two things that are working and two things that need improvement. This year is a busy year for the vocational shops. They have to complete an inventory and prepare for the move to the new building. Ms. DeMariano has applied for a high quality teaching grant to help pay teachers beyond the school day to get some of the work that needs to be done. Mrs. Weckesser further stated that the department heads and the senior teachers are working with Mr. Marciszyn and co-op employers to make sure that there is a seamless process of advising us on the curriculum based upon what they're seeing in the industry. The intent is to have all the vocational programs align with NEOSH.

Mr. Bentley stated that Mrs. Weckesser is also taking a hard look at academics and the scheduling process and how to get more of what we're doing from our teachers. Mrs. Weckesser stated that although MCAS are no longer a graduation requirement, concerns are being raised as to what the replacement may be. The competency determination and graduation requirement policies will be presented for review and approval in December.

Mr. Bentley stated that a change to the school calendar is needed to accommodate the building tour for middle school students as part of the admissions process. The half day of professional development on December 10, 2025 will be cancelled and replaced with March 4, 2026.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to approve the 25/26 School Calendar Change, as presented.

Mr. Bentley deferred to Mrs. Weckesser for the 26/27 Student Schedule Change. Mrs. Weckesser stated that she would like to propose a change to the student schedule. The current schedule divides students into A/B week cycles that creates an unbalanced schedule which at times can cause the need for a week change. The goal is to maximize the resources by scheduling students in academic classes first and then adding the vocational component. Mr. Jennings expressed concern regarding the change due to the juniors and seniors being out on co-op. Mrs. Weckesser stated that there will be conditions in place and a discussion with the co-op employers can be had ahead of time.

Ms. Menard left the meeting at 7:06 pm.

Mr. Manuels asked how would the change look like. Mrs. Weckesser stated that students would be scheduled based on academic needs. Mr. Bentley stated that currently it feels like students are being scheduled by teacher. The offerings of academic courses are inequitable at times because a class may only be offered on either an A week or B week.

Ms. Menard returned to the meeting at 7:10 pm.

Mr. Manuels asked if students will remain on the same week throughout the four years. Mrs. Weckesser stated that they wouldn't. Most of other vocational schools shuffle their students every single year. Mr. Jennings asked that a presentation detailing the changes be prepared and brought back at the December meeting.

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Mr. Bentley provided a summary of the Partnership with Bristol Community College (BCC) – HVAC. The proposal is for an HVAC program to be offered by BCC and held at Diman. It will be an adult vocational education program that is fully funded by BCC. The program is expected to start in January and it will run on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays from 3:30 pm to 6:00 pm., and from 8:00 am to 11:00 am on Saturdays. Mr. Jennings asked for clarification on the MOU’s end date of March 2028. Mr. Bentley stated that the end date is correct. The hope is to expand the program to other vocational programs such as plumbing, culinary arts and automotive. Mr. DiBiasio asked who is providing the liability insurance. Attorney Brillhante stated that liability insurance falls under BCC’s purview. Attorney Brillhante stated that typically there’s a custodial fee associated with the use of facilities by an outside organization. Mr. Bentley recommended waiving the fee.

There was further discussion on the BCC proposal including adding language stating that Diman instructors will be given preference for the instructor positions. Mr. Bentley will get clarification from BCC and request a revised proposal. The proposal was tabled to the December meeting.

Mr. Bentley reported on the use of facilities request. The use of facilities request for BCC was tabled.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard, and voted unanimously to approve the request by the Volleyball Coach to use the gymnasium on November 25, 2025 from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm for the 5th Annual Volleyball Alumni Game and to waive all use of facilities fees.

Mr. Bentley deferred to Ms. DeMariano for an overview of the request to surplus 3 lathes with the means of disposition as “trade in”. Ms. DeMariano stated that the proposal is to trade in the lathes and upgrade them. Mr. Chouinard has requested a quote for the three new units which came in about \$7,000 higher due tariffs. He was able to work with the company to get trade-in values for the older lathes. The trade-in values of the 3 lathes came in at about \$35,000 in total, which superseded the cost of the tariffs to get the new lathes. Two of the lathes are being paid for through the Perkins grant. The funding source for the third lather has been identified by Ms. Petrasso.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Manuels, and voted unanimously to approve the Surplus of Equipment with the Means of Disposition as “Trade In”, as submitted.

Mr. Bentley provided a summary of the monthly financial report.

Ms. Bentley provided an overview of the expenditures in excess of \$10,000. Mr. DiBiasio asked what the BCC expenditure is for. Mrs. Weckesser stated that it’s for dual enrollment courses. Mr. Jennings questioned the Walecka & Sons expenditure. Mr. Bentley stated that the expenditure was to pick up equipment and bring it to their storage facility. There was further discussion on the monthly fee being charged by Walecka & Sons. Mr. Bentley will request clarification on the charges and email it to the members.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mrs. Menard, and voted unanimously to approve the expenditures in excess of \$10,000, as submitted.

Mr. Bentley stated that Policy #JFABG – Admission of Staff Children was updated to include the language recommended at last month’s meeting.

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It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Manuels, and voted unanimously to approve the Policy #JFABG – Admission of Staff Children, as submitted.

Mr. Begin provided the LPN Sub-Committee report. Mr. Begin stated that as the lease for the current location is coming up, a discussion has taken place with Bristol Community College as a possible location. BCC has space in a functional area of the campus that can be used for the LPN Program. The space will need minimal build-out to be able accommodate what is needed. Lisa Young, Program Director has visited BCC and agrees that the space would work. Mr. Begin further stated that he has discussed the program’s finances with Ms. Petrasso and feels pretty secure stating that the program is solid financially and moving forward in a full-time capacity.

It was moved by Mr. Begin, seconded by Ms. Menard, and voted unanimously to pursue the relocation of the LPN Program to Bristol Community College subject to successful contract negotiation regarding the lease terms.

Mr. Bentley provided the Superintendent-Director’s report which included an update on student enrollment, admissions, cooperative education and the LPN Program.

The next meeting will be December 11, 2025 at 5:30 PM.

Attorney Brilhante stated the reasons to go into executive session.

It was moved by Ms. Menard, seconded by Mr. Begin, and voted on a roll call at 7:55 pm to enter into Executive Session with Mr. Jennings, Mr. Begin, Mr. DiBiasio, Mr. Manuels and Ms. Menard voting yes.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted on a roll call at 8:18 p.m. to rise into Open Session with Mr. Jennings, Mr. Begin, Mr. DiBiasio, Mr. Manuels and Ms. Menard and voting yes.

Agenda item 3.1.c Discussion of Individual Employment Agreement

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to approve the two year contract with Myles Medeiros, Administrative Assistant to the Assistant Superintendent-Principal, as negotiated.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Helena S. Neves*

Helena S. Neves, Executive Secretary

**Materials Included:**

October 9, 2025 Minutes  
FY26-28 School Improvement Plan  
Prime Contract Change Order No. 011  
MSBA Project Technology Purchase Orders  
MSBA Project Expenditures  
Fall Advisory Board Reports  
Surplus of Equipment  
Monthly Financial Report

Student Activity Agency Accounts Report  
Expenditure Report  
Community Projects List  
Community Work Request Form  
Policies: JF - Admissions / JFABG – Admission of Staff Children  
Superintendent-Director Report