GREATER FALL RIVER VOCATIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
251 STONEHAVEN ROAD, FALL RIVER, MA
DISTRICT OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM
MAY 12, 2026

The regular meeting of the Greater Fall River Vocational School District Committee was called to order at 5:37 p.m. by Chairman Paul Jennings, with the following persons in attendance; William Flanagan of Fall River, Richard Manuels Jr. of Fall River, Joan Menard of Fall River, Donald DiBiasio of Somerset, Jeffrey Begin of Swansea and Paul Jennings of Westport.

Also, in attendance were: Brian Bentley, Superintendent-Director, Leslie Weckesser, Assistant Superintendent-Principal, Melissa Petrasso, Director of Finance, Chace Albernaz, Student Representative, Attorney Gregory Brilhante, and Helena Neves, Executive Secretary.

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 Mr. Manuels, and voted unanimously to approve the April 9, 2026 and April 14, 2026 minutes, as submitted.

Mr. Albernaz provided the student representative report. Diman students had outstanding success at DECA Nationals, with two students placing in the top 20 and Jailen Gomes earning 1st place in his event. At SkillsUSA States, over 100 students competed, with 46 earning medals, five receiving scholarships, and the student representative being elected as a State Officer. Math MCAS testing is scheduled for the week of May 18. Girls' softball and track have begun, with the softball team off to a strong start. Mr. Albernaz noted that there is a student petition circulating around requesting that students from other schools be allowed to attend homecoming. A proposed guest-pass system, similar to those used at other schools, would require approval forms and hold Diman students responsible for their guests. The petition reflects strong student interest and may warrant further consideration.

Mr. Bentley noted that while appreciates the advocating for student concerns, venue size and safety limitations make expanding attendance difficult. Mrs. Weckesser explained that event venues must be reserved a year in advance, and next year's location has already been secured. Allowing guests would create additional capacity challenges and raise equity concerns, as it would be difficult to determine which students could bring guests if space is limited. The committee acknowledged the student feedback and thanked those who spoke on behalf of their peers.

Mr. Jennings called for nominations to elect the Chairperson of the School Committee.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio to nominate Mr. Paul Jennings as the Chairman of the School Committee, seconded by Mr. Manuels and voted unanimously to elect Mr. Jennings as the Chairman of the School Committee.

It was moved by Attorney Flanagan to nominate Mr. Donald DiBiasio as the Vice Chair of the School Committee, seconded by Mr. Begin and voted unanimously to elect Mr. DiBiasio as the Vice Chairman of the School Committee.

It was moved by Mr. Begin, seconded by Mr. DiBiasio and voted unanimously to appoint Ms. Jill Brilhante as the Treasurer of the School Committee.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Attorney Flanagan to appoint Mr. Jeffrey Begin as the Assistant Treasurer of the School Committee.

It was moved by Attorney Flanagan, seconded by Mr. DiBiasio and voted unanimously to appoint Mrs. Helena Neves as the Secretary of the School Committee.

Mr. Jennings thanked members for their support and noted that the current School Committee subcommittee assignments will remain unchanged unless members request modifications.

There was no Citizen Input.

Mr. DiBiasio provided the MSBA Project update and noted that the project is on time and within budget. Work on the first, second, and third floors has largely transitioned to punch-list items. Significant progress has also been made shops, including the completion of polished concrete floors. Shelving installation and remaining ductwork is underway. Auto Collision and Dental Assisting, still require additional work related to equipment and finishing details and are expected to be completed by August 17. The summer months will be especially busy as the district coordinates the move into the new building. Surplus equipment and furnishings are being removed through auctions and other disposal efforts. Once students and faculty leave campus for the summer, construction crews will have greater access to complete exterior work, including parking lots and site improvements.

Mr. Bentley provided an update on the signage for the new building. Images of the were included in the packet. The signage includes themed graphics and displays that reflect the school's identity, history, and whole community. There will be a prominent "Diman" feature wall, sports imagery, and themed visuals in areas such as the fitness center, school store and automotive waiting area. Additional murals will highlight regional history and contributions from surrounding communities, including Fall River, Somerset, Swansea, and Westport. Stairwells will each feature unique community identifiers and historical information. Mr. DiBiasio noted that designs also include flexible digital or graphic elements that can be updated over time.

Mr. Bentley presented the dedication plaque to the School Committee for consideration and approval. The proposed dedication would recognize the citizens of Fall River, Somerset, Swansea, and Westport for their support in making the new building possible. It would also include acknowledgments of key groups involved in the project, such as the School Committee, School Building Committee, Outreach Committee, architect, owner's project manager, and construction manager.

It was moved by Attorney Flanagan, seconded by Mr. DiBiasio and voted unanimously to approve the dedication plaque, as presented.

Mr. Bentley provided a summary of Prime Contract Change Order (PCCO) No. 017, which has been approved by the School Building Committee and needs to be reaffirmed.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Attorney Flanagan, and voted unanimously on a roll call to reaffirm PCCO No. 017 for a total amount of $318,201.67.

Mr. Bentley provided a summary of the Metal Fabrication Shop Press Brake Relocation proposal. He noted that the machine needs to be disassembled and relocated by a specialized company due to its hydraulic and precision components. Mr. DiBiasio noted that the actual transportation will be handled separately with additional support from Suffolk, who will also assist with removing connected sheet metal and unused lighting.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Attorney Flanagan, and voted unanimously to reaffirm the Metal Fabrication Shop Press Brake Relocation proposal at a cost of $21,800.

Mr. Bentley provided a summary of the technology procurement requests which are for the removal of various technology items. Mr. Benoit added that the technology items in the building were identified as having ongoing educational value and that removing for continued use would be more cost-effective than purchasing full replacements. Mr. DiBiasio further explained that some of the technology items may not remain in use within the new school, but they are still considered valuable for educational purposes—particularly for student training in Office and IT-related fields.

Mr. Bentley also noted that approval for a Cradlepoint system is also being sought. Mr. Benoit noted that the proposal includes the antenna setup, to support network connectivity in the new building. It enables failover to the network, ensuring that services such as telephone systems and related communications remain operational and stable.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Attorney Flanagan, and voted unanimously to reaffirm the IT Procurement as: Ockers Proposal: WAP Uninstall - 96 Access Points - $8,250, Ockers Proposal: MDF/IDF Uninstall - $8,700, Ockers Proposal: Auditorium Sound System Uninstall - $5,500 and HUB Tech Proposal – Cradlepoint Failover - $8,782.83.

Mr. Bentley provided a summary of the proposal to purchase athletic equipment. It was clarified that the pricing for the cost for the athletic equipment was initially misstated packet. The corrected and confirmed cost is $51,222, which represents the best available pricing for the system.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Attorney Flanagan, and voted unanimously to reaffirm the Athletic Equipment Procurement – Matrix Proposal - $51,222.

Mr. Bentley provided a summary of the moving services proposal from Walecka & Sons for a not-to-exceed cost of $1,163,500. Mr. DiBiasio noted that the figure is inclusive of full moving services, but does not include rigging. He also noted that the proposal includes prevailing wage for all moving services, but it has been confirmed educational-related moving work is not subject to prevailing wage requirements. Mr. DiBiasio noted that Ms. Petrasso is continuing to work with the vendor to refine and potentially reduce the cost. He further noted that the current figure was approved to allow the project to proceed without delay.

Attorney Flanagan raised the question of what happens to any unused portion of the not-to-exceed moving services budget if the final cost comes in under the $1,163,500 figure. Mr. DiBiasio noted that the if final moving costs come in lower than the not-to-exceed amount, the remaining balance would stay within project’s budget.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Manuels, and voted unanimously to reaffirm the Moving Services Proposal by Walecka & Sons for a not-to-exceed amount of $1,163,500.

Mr. Bentley noted that the automotive technology lift procurement proposal from Mohawk Lifts, in the amount of $32,929.66, and the Chemical Lab Pack – Triumvirate Environmental Proposal in the amount $12,264 also require approval.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin, and voted unanimously to reaffirm Automotive Tech Lift Procurement - Mohawk Proposal in the amount of $32,929.66.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Attorney Flanagan, and voted unanimously to reaffirm the Chemical Lab Pack – Triumvirate Environmental Proposal in the amount of $12,264.

Ms. Petrasso provided an overview of the MSBA project expenditures. Invoices from Colliers, KBA, and Suffolk reflect the billing for the month of March for the project. An invoice from Yankee Engineering was also included for approval.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard, and voted unanimously to approve the following MSBA Project expenditures: Colliers Invoice #0001171381 dated 4/30/2026 for the amount of $158,336.54, KBA invoice #20006.01-46 dated 4/30/2026 for the amount of $149,537, Suffolk Construction application no. 31 dated 4/30/2026 for the amount of $4,210,471.67, and Yankee Engineering invoice #35272 dated 4/28/2026 for the amount of $3,605.

Mr. DiBiasio provided the House Building Subcommittee report, noting that work across Fall River, Westport, and Somerset is ongoing and is expected to be completed by the end of the school year. He also reported that he and Mr. Begin will collaborate to increase future possible projects in Swansea and Somerset.

Mr. DiBiasio reported that two applications have been received for the 2026–2027 Housebuilding Program. Mr. Cabral will meet with both applicants to gather additional information. Once those meetings are complete, he will return to the committee with updates before any further action is taken.

Mr. Bentley deferred to Mrs. Weckesser for the 26-27 student handbook update. The handbook was updated to reflect correct job titles, wording and clearer language. The lunch schedule was also updated for the new building. The cell phone policy has been updated to explicitly include newer devices such as Meta AI glasses to ensure current technology is properly addressed.

Attorney Flanagan raised the question regarding AI use in academics. Mrs. Weckesser clarified that guidance on AI is already included under the district's academic integrity policy. In addition, district leaders are planning a full day of professional development focused on AI for both staff and students in the upcoming year.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Manuels, and voted unanimously to approve the 26/27 Student Handbook, as submitted.

Mr. Bentley reported on personnel.

Mr. Bentley reported on Advisory Board appointments and reappointments.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Manuels, and voted unanimously to appoint Payton Acosta, Carpentry & Cabinet Making, Amanda Borges, Health Assisting, Jesse Botelho, Carpentry & Cabinet Making, Jeremiah Chicca, Electricity, Stacy Penacho, Health Assisting, Martin Smith, Automotive Technology, Tracy Toupin, Health Assisting to the identified programs for a term of three years.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Manuels, and voted unanimously to reappoint the following individuals to their respective programs for a term of three years.

Kristopher	Charest	AC		Kyle	Medeiros	DA		Joshua	Rosa	FM
John	Pacheco	AC		Mary Jane	Miranda	DA		Ed	Salmonsen	FM
Dennis	Abdow	AM		Albertina	Bell	DR		Kevin	Foley	GC
Megan	Barbosa	AM		Christopher	Julius	DR		Monique	Francisco	HA
Chapin	Dean	AM		Jorge	Pais	DR		Matthew	Machado	HA
Richard	Duquette	AM		Robert	O'Melia	EL		Cynthia	Mello	HA
David	Fazzina	AM		Jordan	Hubert	ET		Vanessa	Valcorba	HA
Alexis	Medeiros	AM		Warren	Levesque	ET		John	Bisbano	HV
Michael	Medeiros	AM		Christopher	Makuch	ET		Martin	Kawa	HV
Robert	St. Pierre	AM		John	Marsula	ET		Victoria	Bradbury	MA
Robert	Teves	AM		Eden	McCausland	ET		Martin	Fogle	MA
Michael	Valerio	AM		Kyle	Medeiros	ET		Kimberly	Ouellette	MA
Thomas	Menchi	AT		Carl	Sawejko	ET		Grant	Dean	MFW
Kimberly	Moniz	BU		David	Auclair	ET		Joseph	Duarte	MFW
Alan	Abdallah	CA		Andrew	DeMedeiros	ET		Michael	Medeiros	MFW
Travis	Araujo	CC		Eric	Ganczarski	ET		Edward	Majewski	PL
Stephen	Marciszyn	CC		Sergio	Antunes	FM		Firas	Khatib	PW
Elijah	Moniz	CC		Kathleen	Burt	FM		Joseph	Pereira Jr.	PW
Michael	Servant	CC		David	Coon	FM		Robert	Petit	PW
Joe	Shaker	CC								

Mr. Jennings reported that the district received 31 applicants for the Assistant Superintendent-Principal position, which was narrowed down to four candidates who were interviewed. Attorney Brilhante noted that the process is being conducted in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 39 which states that the Superintendent makes the recommendation for appointment.

Mr. Bentley noted that noted that four applicants were interviewed on April 14, 2026, as part of the selection process for the Assistant Superintendent/Principal position. Following the interview of the candidates and consideration of the needs of Diman Regional Vocational Technical High School, including the transition to a new building, new technology, and the needs of the students, he is recommending Warley Williams for the position of as Assistant Superintendent/Principal at Diman.

Mr. DiBiasio reflected on the hiring process, noting that this round produced an unusually strong pool of candidates. He stated that this was the first time that four applicants were all highly qualified and capable of performing the role.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin, and voted unanimously on a roll call to appoint Mr. Williams as the next Assistant Superintendent/Principal.

Attorney Brilhante noted that the appointment is subject to successful contract negotiations.

Attorney Brilhante stated that agenda items F, G, and H would be held and addressed in executive session. These items relate to contract negotiations involving both DAA and non-union personnel. They will be discussed during executive session and then revisited in open session for any action.

Mrs. Weckesser reported on the 25/26 school calendar change. Families will be notified that lunch will not be served on the last three days of the school year.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Attorney Flanagan, and voted unanimously to approve the 25-26 School Calendar Changes, as submitted.

Mr. Bentley reported on the student travel requests.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Attorney Flanagan, and voted unanimously to approve the out-of-state/overnight travel request submitted by the SkillsUSA Advisors for students to participate in the SkillsUSA National Competition, which is will be held from June 1, 2026 to June 6, 2026 in Atlanta, Georgia.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Attorney Flanagan, and voted unanimously to approve the out-of-state/overnight travel request submitted by Mrs. Zenni for three students to participate in the Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) National Competition from June 14, 2026 to June 17, 2026 in Nashville, TN.

It was moved by Attorney Flanagan, seconded by Mr. DiBiasio, and voted unanimously to reaffirm the out-of-state/overnight travel request submitted by Mr. Salsinha for two students to participate in the Project MFG Competition Finals being held in San Diego, California from May 4, 2026 to May 9, 2026.

Mr. Bentley noted that the Spring Advisory Board reports were included in the meeting packet an asked if there were any questions. Mrs. Weckesser noted that the format was changed this year, starting with data review in the fall and shifting to a more open, interactive meeting to gather feedback. The change received positive responses, with participants finding it more engaging and productive.

Mrs. Weckesser noted that a staff member suggested that the Westport Fire Department could accept and properly dispose of the approximately 200 school flags through a flag-burning ceremony in early June. The flags will be gathered and stored until disposal. The intent is to ensure the flags are retired respectfully and to replace them with new ones.

It was moved by Attorney Flanagan, seconded by Mr. Begin, and voted unanimously to surplus the American Flags in the building.

Mr. Bentley report on the use of facilities request.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Attorney Flanagan, and voted unanimously to approve the use of facilities request by Brian Jacob from the Fall River Water Department to use the student parking lot on Saturday, May 30, 2026, from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. for their open house and to waive all Use of Facilities fees.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Attorney Flanagan, and voted unanimously to reaffirm the use of facilities request by Kierra Marcelino to use various spaces in the existing building to take engagement photos on Saturday, May 2, 2026, from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., and has requested that all fees be waived.

Mr. Bentley reported on the request to Establish the Andrew Bartelt Veloso Memorial Scholarship.

It was moved by Attorney Flanagan, seconded by Mr. Begin, and voted unanimously to establish the Andrew Bartelt Veloso Memorial Scholarship in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the family.

Mr. Bentley reported on the acceptance of gifts.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin, and voted unanimously to accept the $1,900 donation by an anonymous community member to be distributed to the 2025–2026 Outstanding Vocational Students.

Mr. Bentley reported the surplus requests of equipment and materials.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Manuels, and voted unanimously to approve the surplus of equipment and materials, as submitted.

Ms. Petrasso reported on the FY25 End of Year Audit Report and noted that there were no findings.

Ms. Petrasso provided a summary of the monthly financial report and noted that current budget balances for FY26 have been emailed to all department heads, along with detailed budgets for FY27. Department heads have been asked to begin reviewing their remaining FY26 funds and identify potential purchases for the remainder of the year.

Ms. Petrasso provided an overview of the expenditures in excess of $10,000.

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

Mr. Bentley deferred to Mr. Benoit for an overview of the request to purchase teacher Chromebooks. Mr. Benoit explained that some of the current devices are approximately 17 years old, and with teachers preparing to move into a new building, it is appropriate to provide updated technology.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Attorney Flanagan, and voted unanimously to approve the Teacher Chromebooks Proposal as an FY26 expenditure, pending available funds.

Ms. Petrasso provided an overview of the transfer of funds request.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Manuels, and voted unanimously to approve the Transfer of Funds, as submitted.

Mr. Bentley provided the Superintendent-Director’s report, which included updates on student enrollment, cooperative education, the LPN program, and key upcoming dates. He noted that the LPN program has 30 students enrolled for next year’s class and is showing strong enrollment and continued progress with accepted students and ongoing program activities. He also highlighted important upcoming dates, including the ribbon cutting scheduled

for August 21, faculty's first day back on August 31, and the first day of classes for students on September 3. In addition, he announced a final walkthrough event for alumni scheduled for July 12 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Graduation is scheduled for June 9, 2026.

The next meeting will be June 4, 2026 at 5:30 PM.

Attorney Brilhante stated that reasons to go into executive session and noted that agenda item g. Discussion of School Psychologist/504 Coordinator Position and Job Description and agenda item h. Discussion of LPN Program Job Descriptions: Program Administrator, Financial Aid Coordinator, Instructor, Clinical Adjunct will not be addressed as they will be referred to the Job Description Review Sub-Committee. He also noted that there will likely be a vote relative to agenda item f. Discussion of DAA job descriptions.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Manuels, and voted on a roll call at 6:43 pm to enter into Executive Session with Mr. Jennings, Mr. DiBiasio, Mr. Manuels, Attorney Flanagan, Ms. Menard and Mr. Begin voting yes.

It was moved by Attorney Flanagan, seconded by Mr. DiBiasio and voted on a roll call at 6:55 p.m. to rise into Open Session with Mr. Jennings, Mr. DiBiasio, Mr. Manuels, Mr. Begin, Attorney Flanagan and Ms. Menard voting yes.

Attorney Brilhante recommended a vote on agenda item 3.1.f regarding the DAA job descriptions and propose a motion to accept the job descriptions as negotiated and secondarily to enter into the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) as provided by the DAA and as negotiated.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Manuels, and voted unanimously to accept the job descriptions as negotiated and secondarily to enter into the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) as provided by the DAA and as negotiated.

It was moved by Attorney Flanagan, seconded by Mr. Begin, and voted unanimously to refer agenda item 3.1.g. Discussion of School Psychologist/504 Coordinator Position and Job Description and agenda item 3.1.h. Discussion of LPN Program Job Descriptions: Program Administrator, Financial Aid Coordinator, Instructor, Clinical Adjunct to the Job Description Review Sub-Committee.

It was moved by Attorney Flanagan, seconded by Mr. Begin, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:57 p.m.

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

Materials Included:

April 9, 2026 and April 14, 2026 Minutes
Student Report
Signage Images
Prime Contract Change Order No. 017
Metal Fabrication Shop Press Brake Relocation Proposal
Reaffirmation of IT Procurement: Ockers Proposal: WAP Uninstall - 96 Access Points; Ockers Proposal: MDF/IDF Uninstall; Ockers Proposal: Auditorium Sound System Uninstall; HUB Tech Proposal – Cradlepoint Failover
Athletic Equipment Procurement Matrix Proposal

Moving Services Proposal - Walecka & Sons
Automotive Tech Lift Procurement - Mohawk Lifts
Chemical Lab Pack – Triumvirate Environmental Proposal
MSBA Project Expenditures
Community Projects List
26/27 Student Handbook
Advisory Board Reappointment List
Spring Advisory Board Reports
Surplus Lists
FY25 EOY Audit Report
Monthly Financial Report
Student Activity Agency Accounts Report
Expenditure Report
Transfer of Funds
Superintendent's Report