GREATER FALL RIVER VOCATIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
251 STONEHAVEN ROAD, FALL RIVER, MA
DISTRICT OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM
AUGUST 13, 2026

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, Donald DiBiasio of Somerset, Jeffrey Begin of Swansea and Paul Jennings of Westport.

Absent: William Flanagan of Fall River

Also, in attendance were: Brian Bentley, Superintendent-Director, Leslie Weckesser, Assistant Superintendent-Principal, Warley Williams, 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 led the Pledge of Allegiance.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin, and voted unanimously to approve the June 4, 2026 minutes, as submitted.

There was no Citizen Input.

Mr. DiBiasio provided a summary of Prime Contract Change Order (PCCO) No. 019 and Prime Contract Change Order (PCCO) No. 020, which have been approved by the School Building Committee and need to be reaffirmed.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin, and voted unanimously to reaffirm PCCO No. 019 for a total amount of $193,690.13 and PCCO No. 020 for a total amount of $138,286.44.

Mr. Jennings noted that the Enhance Mats proposal has been placed on hold and will be discussed at a later time.

Mr. DiBiasio provided a summary of the proposal for custom mobile hoppers for the dust collectors. The Committee discussed the type and size of the containers, as well as the process for removing the waste collected. Mrs. Weckesser noted that Mr. Myles Brilhante is working with the waste management company to determine the cost and appropriate disposal method for the collected waste.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin, and voted unanimously to reaffirm the Custom Mobile Hoppers Proposal for a total amount of $13,000, as submitted.

Mr. DiBiasio provided a summary of the PSI-NESP Storage Products Proposal.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin, and voted unanimously to reaffirm the PSI-NESP Storage Products Proposal for a total amount of $67,293.75, as submitted.

Ms. Petrasso provided a summary of the $36 million Bond Anticipation Note (BAN) sale. She noted that she worked with UniBank to determine the amount needed to complete the project and that it was determined that a $36 million dollar one-year BAN would provide the necessary funds.

Mr. DiBiasio asked Ms. Petrasso whether she had consulted with Colliers, the project's Owner's Project Manager (OPM), to ensure that the correct amount of money was being borrowed. He expressed concern that the District needs to be cautious about overborrowing and the financial burden that excess borrowing could place on the sending communities. Ms. Petrasso responded that she continuously receives updated cash flow information from Colliers, which she provided to UniBank in determining the amount needed for the BAN.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin, and voted unanimously to approve the $36 Million Bond Anticipation Note (BAN) Sale, as submitted.

Ms. Petrasso read the following vote language:

I, the District Secretary of the Regional School District School Committee (the "Committee") of the Greater Fall River Regional Vocational School District, Massachusetts (the "District"), certify that at a meeting of the Committee held August 13, 2026, of which meeting all members of the Committee were duly notified and at which a quorum was present, the following votes were unanimously passed, all of which appear upon the official record of the Committee in my custody:

Voted: We hereby determine, in accordance with G.L. c.70B, that the cost of the school design and construction project authorized by vote of the Committee duly passed on February 10, 2022, being financed with proceeds of a portion of the Notes, together with all other bonds and notes of the District previously issued to pay costs of this project, does not exceed the portion of the total cost of the project that is not being paid by the school facilities grant and we hereby approve the issuance of notes and bonds to finance this project under G.L. c.70B.

Further Voted: to approve the sale of $36,000,000 4.00 percent General Obligation Bond Anticipation Notes (the "Notes") of the District dated August 20, 2026, and payable August 19, 2027, to BofA Securities, Inc. at par and accrued interest, if any, plus a premium of $392,400.00.

Further Voted: that in connection with the marketing and sale of the Notes, the preparation and distribution of a Notice of Sale and Preliminary Official Statement dated July 30, 2026 and a final Official Statement dated August 6, 2026, each in such form as may be approved by the District Treasurer, be and hereby are ratified, confirmed, approved and adopted.

Further Voted: that the District Treasurer and the Chair of the Committee be, and hereby are, authorized to execute and deliver a significant events disclosure undertaking in compliance with SEC Rule 15c2-12 in such form as may be approved by bond counsel to the District, which undertaking shall be incorporated by reference in the Notes for the benefit of the holders of the Notes from time to time.

Further Voted: that we authorize and direct the District Treasurer to establish post issuance federal tax compliance procedures and continuing disclosure procedures in such forms as the District Treasurer and bond counsel deem sufficient, or if such procedures are currently in place, to review and update said procedures, in order to

monitor and maintain the tax-exempt status of the Notes and to comply with relevant securities laws.

Further Voted: that any certificates or documents relating to the Notes (collectively, the "Documents"), may be executed in several counterparts, each of which shall be regarded as an original and all of which shall constitute one and the same document; delivery of an executed counterpart of a signature page to a Document by electronic mail in a ".pdf" file or by other electronic transmission shall be as effective as delivery of a manually executed counterpart signature page to such Document; and electronic signatures on any of the Documents shall be deemed original signatures for the purposes of the Documents and all matters relating thereto, having the same legal effect as original signatures.

Further Voted: that each member of the Committee, the District Secretary and the District Treasurer be and hereby are, authorized to take any and all such actions, and execute and deliver such certificates, receipts or other documents as may be determined by them, or any of them, to be necessary or convenient to carry into effect the provisions of the foregoing votes.

I further certify that the votes were taken at a meeting open to the public, that no vote was taken by secret ballot, that a notice stating the place, date, time and agenda for the meeting (which agenda included the adoption of the above votes) was filed with the City Clerk of the member city of Fall River (the "City Clerk"), and the Town Clerk of each of the member towns of Somerset, Swansea and Westport (collectively, the "Town Clerks" and, together with the City Clerk, the "Clerks") and copies thereof posted in a manner conspicuously visible to the public at all hours in or on the municipal buildings in which the offices of the Clerks and the District Secretary are located, or in accordance with an approved alternative method of notice prescribed or approved by the Massachusetts Attorney General as set forth in 940 CMR 29.03(4), at least 48 hours, not including Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays, prior to the time of the meeting and remained so posted at the time of the meeting, that no deliberations or decision in connection with the sale of the Notes were taken in executive session, all in accordance with G.L. c.30A, §§18-25, as amended.

Ms. Petrasso provided an overview of the MSBA project expenditures. Invoices from Colliers, KBA, and Suffolk reflect the monthly billing for the project. Ms. Petrasso noted that the Enhance Mats proposal has been removed from consideration and that several of the invoices on the list provided had been previously approved by Mr. Jennings via email.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Ms. Menard, and voted unanimously to approve the MSBA Project Expenditures, as presented on the submitted list.

Mr. Jennings permitted Mr. Albernaz to provide a student report, although it was not included on the agenda, as a courtesy since Mr. Albernaz was present at the meeting. Mr. Albernaz reported on the excitement surrounding the new building, the upcoming Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, and ongoing issues related to changes to student schedules.

Mr. Williams informed Mr. Albernaz that a video is being developed to provide students and parents with information on how to access the new school building. Mr. Williams acknowledged that changes to student schedules can be challenging, but noted that students are also being prepared for the transition to college and future endeavors. He explained that developing student schedules is a complex task and that adapting to changes helps students build resilience and prepares them for the future. Mrs. Weckesser added that student schedule changes are a multi-step process that incorporates the District's Vision of the Graduate, provides opportunities for electives, and further enhances students' career pathways.

Ms. Menard left the meeting at 6:02 PM.

Mr. Begin provided the LPN Sub-Committee report. He noted that the LPN Program currently has 35 students enrolled for the upcoming school year. The LPN Student Handbook has been reviewed with no major changes noted. Mr. Begin reported that the LPN Program buildout at Bristol Community College (BCC) was completed at a cost of $107,779, which is higher than the original estimate of $80,000. The cost will be paid from the LPN revolving account.

Mr. Begin stated that the LPN Sub-Committee reviewed the recommendations outlined in the Board of Registration in Nursing (BORN) site visit report, including the need for additional personnel. The adjunct instructor position will be advertised. A new position of Assistant Program Director and Compliance Officer has also been proposed. Mr. Bentley added that the position will be a 12-month position and that the individual will assist the Program Administrator and the instructors. Mr. Begin stated that the position will initially be established for one year and will be reviewed next year to determine whether it has been successful and should be continued to support the ongoing operation of the program.

Mr. DiBiasio expressed concern regarding the District's continued funding of the LPN Program and questioned whether the addition of another position was financially sustainable. Mr. Begin noted that the program is currently self-supporting. Ms. Petrasso added that she is closely monitoring the LPN Program's financials and ensuring that the District receives the appropriate Chapter 70 funding.

It was moved by Mr. Begin, seconded by Mr. Manuels, and voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the LPN Sub-Committee relative to the LPN Program Additional Personnel, as presented. *Approved with Mr. DiBiasio voting against.*

Mr. DiBiasio deferred to Mr. Williams for a brief summary of the changes to the 2026–2027 Staff Handbook. Mr. Williams noted that the majority of the changes consisted of updating names, titles, and telephone extensions. The most significant change was the addition of language pertaining to civil rights and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including definitions and expectations to ensure staff understand and comply with these requirements.

Mr. DiBiasio noted that on page 41 of the Staff Handbook, under the section addressing racism, the final sentence, stating, "In the US, this racial hierarchy has White people ('Caucasians' or 'people of European heritage') at the top," will be removed from the handbook.

Mr. Bentley reported that the 2026–2027 LPN Student Handbook was reviewed by Mrs. Young. Language recommended by the Board of Registration in Nursing (BORN) was incorporated into the handbook to ensure that the requirements are equitable and fair for all students.

Mr. Bentley reported that the 2026–2027 Financial Aid Handbook was reviewed and updated by Stephanie Ferreira. Changes included updated tuition due dates, program address, Pell Grant minimum award, FAFSA deadlines, and Cost of Attendance information for ATI testing, NCLEX, books, and uniforms.

Mr. DiBiasio noted that the Policy Sub-Committee is recommending approval of the 2026–2027 Staff Handbook, LPN Student Handbook, and Financial Aid Handbook.

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

Mr. Jennings began the discussion regarding the acquisition of the Locust Street property and deferred to Attorney Brilhante for an overview of the process. Attorney Brilhante reported that he and Mr. Jennings had met with the property owner's representative. Following several calls and two appraisals, the property owner agreed to sell the house and three lots for $800,000. The first step is to post the proposed purchase in the Central Register, followed by execution of the purchase agreement.

Ms. Petrasso added that she contacted DESE and DOR to determine whether electricity rebate funds could be placed in E & D to be used to purchase the property and received approval to proceed. Ms. Petrasso quoted the applicable Massachusetts General Law regarding the required publication in the Central Register, including the determination and reasons for the acquisition, the names of parties with a beneficial interest, the property location and size, and the proposed purchase price or rental terms. The notice must be published at least 30 days before the governmental body executes a binding agreement to acquire the property. She also contacted the Office of the Attorney General and was informed that the office does not handle land acquisitions. Attorney Brilhante noted that once the funds are placed into E&D, the sending communities will likely need to be notified of the District's plans, although their assessments will not increase.

Ms. Petrasso reported that the Central Register posting does not occur immediately. Attorney Brilhante asked when the rebate funds are expected to be received. Ms. Petrasso responded that the rebate funds from the electricity supplier are expected in September.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Manuels, and voted unanimously to allow the Administration to proceed with whatever is necessary to potentially acquire the Locust Street property.

Mr. Bentley reported on personnel.

Mrs. Weckesser reported on the Vocational Paraprofessionals agenda item. She stated that there is a need for two vocational paraprofessionals to assist across the shops and provide coverage during breaks and prep periods. The positions would be funded through the Perkins Grant, with the goal of providing on-the-job mentoring and developing paraprofessionals who may eventually become licensed instructors.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Manuels, and voted unanimously to approve the creation of two Vocational Paraprofessional positions and corresponding job descriptions, to be funded through the Perkins Grant for the 2026–2027 school year.

Mrs. Weckesser provided a summary of the 2025–2026 End-of-Year Report. She noted that the format was revised and was well received by staff. The report is organized around the 2024 and 2025 student results and asks teachers to identify their accomplishments and areas of focus for the upcoming year. Mrs. Weckesser noted that

the report was prepared before the 2025–2026 data was finalized, which presented a minor challenge. The report will be updated with the final data and provided to teachers for review. The updated report can also be incorporated into teachers' Professional Practice and Student Learning Goals. Mrs. Weckesser noted that the data from the report will be used to help guide and inform discussions at the Advisory Board meetings.

Mrs. Weckesser provided a summary of Year 1 progress under the three-year School Improvement Plan. She noted that each administrator reviewed the plan's objectives and established benchmarks. A one-page document was created to provide a clear overview of the areas of focus, progress toward each objective, and districtwide priorities for the 2026–2027 school year. Mr. DiBiasio asked if the one-page document can be posted on the website. Mrs. Weckesser added that the document is forward-thinking as the District moves into the new building and recognizes the hard work and contributions of staff.

Mr. Bentley reported on the student travel requests.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Manuels, and voted unanimously to approve the out-of-state travel request submitted by Emanuel Botelho, Soccer Coach for students to attend a D1 College Soccer game at Bryant University in Smithfield, RI on September 2, 2026 from 4:30 pm to 9:30 p.m.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Manuels, and voted unanimously to approve the international trips submitted by Peter Chace, International Club Advisor, for students to participate in the April 2028 school vacation trip to Iceland and the June 2028 trip to Austria, Hungary, and Romania, following the projected end of the 2027–2028 school year, as submitted.

Mr. Bentley report on the request of a Dance Team Assistant. The request is due to the large number of students participating in the Dance Team. The assistant will be paid a stipend of 75% of the Dance Team Coach stipend.

It was moved by Mr. Manuels, seconded by Mr. Begin, and voted to approve the request for a Dance Team Assistant, per the DTA contract. *Mr. DiBiasio abstained.*

Mr. Bentley reported on the acceptance of gifts.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Begin, and voted unanimously to accept the donations for the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony from Black Salt LLC - $500.00; Carl's Collision Center, Inc. - $500.00; Dynamic Interiors, LLC. - $1,000.00; LAL Construction - $500.00; North Atlantic Corp. - $500.00; RALCO Electric, Inc. - $500.00 and T. A. Restaurant - $750.00.

Ms. Petrasso provided a summary of the monthly financial report and noted that she will begin working on the EOY report next month. She also noted the column on the report which shows all encumbrances previously approved.

Ms. Petrasso provided an overview of expenditures in excess of $10,000. A list of expenditures was provided, including items previously approved by Mr. Jennings via email. Mr. DiBiasio questioned the purchase of hardcover books when every student has a school issued Chromebook. Mrs. Weckesser noted that there is still a need to buy a small number of hardcover books.

Mr. Jennings asked how the District is doing with supplies for the start of the school year. Ms. Petrasso reported that she worked with all department heads and that the District is in good shape. She noted that additional items may need to be purchased once everyone has finished unpacking.

Mr. DiBiasio asked whether the District has received any reimbursement for the supplies and equipment damaged in the flood. Ms. Petrasso stated that she submitted a claim but has not pursued it further. Mr. Begin asked whether the insurance company had inspected the damaged items. Ms. Petrasso explained that the incident is considered a flood, for which the District does not have coverage. She added that the builder's risk policy does not provide coverage, as it applies solely to the new building.

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

Ms. Petrasso provided an overview of the transfer of funds request and noted that the request is intended to complete the end-of-year cleanup and zero out line items.

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

Ms. Petrasso provided an overview of the Student Activity Agency Accounts and explained that a new account needs to be established for the Class of 2030, per the guidelines.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Manuels, and voted unanimously to establish a student activity agency account for the Class of 2030.

Ms. Petrasso also explained that according to the student activity accounts any account that has remained inactive over three years should be closed and recommended closing such accounts. Any funds remaining in those accounts will be used to offset the purchase of more checks and deposit slips for all the student activities accounts.

Mr. Begin questioned the large balance in the School Store account. Ms. Petrasso explained that, as the new school store is established, funds from the account will be needed to purchase a new point-of-sale (POS) system, supplies, and new apparel. Mr. Begin asked which entity will operate the school store. Mrs. Weckesser responded that the Graphics Communication program will operate the store. Ms. Petrasso noted that she is exploring a cashless option.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Manuels, and voted unanimously to is to close any inactive student activity agency accounts, as presented.

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

Mr. Bentley provided the Superintendent-Director's report, which included updates on student enrollment, important building dates and a housebuilding program update. The current projected enrollment for the 26/27 school year is 1496 with the goal of reaching 1500. The Ribbon Cutting Ceremony is scheduled for August 21st. Staff return on August 31 and students on September 3rd. The footing has been poured, the foundation will be poured next week and backfilling is to be completed by the 28th.

Mr. DiBiasio questioned how total enrollment has increased to approximately 1,500 while enrollment from the sending towns has not increased. Mr. Bentley stated that he was unsure of the reason but would look into the matter and provide a response.

The next meeting will be September 10, 2026 at 5:30 PM.

It was moved by Mr. DiBiasio, seconded by Mr. Manuels, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

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

Materials Included:

June 4, 2026 Minutes
Prime Contract Change Order No. 019 & 020
Enhance Mats, Custom Mobile Hoppers & Storage Products Proposals
$36 Million BAN Vote Language
MSBA Project Expenditures
26/27 Staff Handbook
26/27 LPN Student Handbook
26/27 Financial Aid Handbook
Vocational Paraprofessionals Job Description
25/26 End of Year Report
School Improvement Plan Progress Report
Monthly Financial Report
Student Activity Agency Accounts Report
Expenditure Report
Transfer of Funds
Student Activity Agency Accounts
FY25 Financial Audit Report
Superintendent's Report