Greater Fall River Vocational School District
MSBA School Building Committee Minutes
September 14, 2026

In attendance:

Brian Bentley	**Ed Hill**	**Carl Sawejko**
Myles Brilhante (5:39 pm)	**Paul Jennings**	Aaron Soares
Jennifer DeMariano	Decio Matos (remote)	**Katie Warren**
Donald DiBiasio, Chair	**Debbie Pacheco** (remote)	**Leslie Weckesser**

Also in attendance:

Charles Roberts, Colliers
Greg Joynt, KBA
Paul Freeman, Suffolk

Absent:

Paul Beaudoin	Lisa Desrosiers	Richard Medeiros
Tina Bell	Kathryn Dufour	**Joan Menard**
Glenn Benevides	**Deborah Kenney**	**Melissa Petrasso**
Emanuel Botelho	**Steven Kitchin**	Maria Torres

***BOLD –Voting Member**

Mr. DiBiasio called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm. and called for a roll call.

Mr. DiBiasio called for a motion to approve the August 10, 2026 meeting minutes.

It was moved by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mr. Hill, and voted on a roll call to dispense with the reading of the August 10, 2026 minutes and approve them, as recorded.

Mr. Roberts provided the Colliers project update. The Suffolk requisition is approximately $6.6 million, bringing the project to a confirmed 88% of the total project completion, with approximately $800,000 remaining to complete Phase 1. Change orders are currently in the $2 million range, and there is approximately $8.3 million in retainage. Requests to release retainage will be submitted by subcontractors and reviewed on a case-by-case basis before being brought to the School Building Committee for approval. Mr. Roberts noted that some subcontractors do not have any remaining work associated with Phase 2.

Mr. DiBiasio asked how long retainage is typically held. Mr. Joynt noted that, statutorily, retainage funds cannot be held at substantial completion. The team can conduct a fair assessment of any outstanding items and consider reducing the retainage based on the items that have been identified. He also noted that all workmanship carries a one-year warranty. Mr. Roberts added that, on past projects, a recommendation was made to set aside a portion of the retainage to address any outstanding issues and release the remainder.

Mr. Roberts continued with the financial report. He reported that the balance of contingencies, holds, and allowances is $19,264,805, including a construction contingency balance of $2,279,525, MSBA Additional Funding of $8,337,481, Owner's Contingency of $2,755,839, Construction Manager's Contingency of $2,151,234, Holds of $2,336,516, and Allowances of $1,404,210. Mr. Roberts noted that FF&E and IT expenditures exceeded the budgeted amounts and recommended that, once reconciled, the additional expenditures be funded from the Owner's Contingency.

Mr. Roberts reported an additional $400,000 expenditure for asbestos removal from the gym floor. He noted that approximately $8 million to $10 million may remain. While additional ledge blasting may be required, it is not expected to be nowhere close to $10 million. Mr. Joynt added that there is an underground storage tank that will need to be removed. Although the tank is relatively new, potential contamination would not be expected to result in remediation costs approaching $10 million. Mr. Roberts concluded that the project remains in a strong financial position.

Mr. Joynt and Mr. Freeman provided the KBA and Suffolk project update. Mr. Joynt presented photos from the ribbon-cutting, first day of school, and new building. Phase 2 – Demolition & Fields is underway, with demolition and abatement progressing as planned. Area 1 has received clearance, Area 2 is awaiting clearance, and Area 3 is expected to be completed by week's end. Additional blasting for the track retaining wall, site drainage, and permanent power work are ongoing. Work on the lower fields will begin after completion of the permanent parking.

Mr. Joynt reported that building signage and landscaping work are ongoing. He noted that the Student Commons is still awaiting installation of the wall graphics. The Trade Hall has been cleaned out and is already being used by students. The gymnasium floor is complete, and work on the bleachers is nearing completion. In the Auditorium, only minor punch list items remain, with AV work being completed. Mr. Freeman noted that training on the AV system is scheduled for Wednesday.

Mr. Joynt noted that, once completed, the front of the building will provide parking for staff and visitors. He added that the parent drop-off and bus loops are extensive and are expected to help alleviate traffic on Stonehaven Road. The loops are segregated from one another and separated from the parking areas. Mr. Freeman noted that the Phase 2 fence configuration will be the final fence relocation and will enclose only the perimeter of the athletic fields.

Mr. Hill asked how frequently Suffolk is being contacted regarding issues now that the building is occupied. Mr. Freeman responded that Suffolk is actively communicating with administration to address issues as they arise. Mr. Bentley added that meetings are held each day to review and address outstanding issues. He further noted that Mrs. Weckesser is closely monitoring the issue list to ensure it is reviewed and kept current.

Mr. DiBiasio reported that during a walkthrough of the building, the majority of the shops appeared to be substantially complete, with the exception of Auto Collision. Mr. Freeman noted that Auto Collision is experiencing issues with the spray booths. The booths have been commissioned and are expected to be operational by the end of the week. He added that the location of the curtains is still being determined, and Suffolk is working to resolve the remaining issues.

Mr. Roberts reported on the DESE final inspection, noting that the new building was recognized as one of the most complex in the state while also meeting a high standard of safety. Mrs. Weckesser emphasized that the positive working relationship with the inspectors was instrumental throughout the inspection process. Mr. Bentley added that the DESE inspectors were understanding of the ongoing construction.

Mr. DiBiasio began the discussion regarding gymnasium mats and noted that protecting the gym floor is in the district's best interest. Mr. Joynt explained that the proposed walk-off carpet mats are commonly used in school facilities, are pressure-resistant, and can be rolled onto carts for storage. Each cart can hold up to 10 rolls.

Mr. Jennings expressed concerns regarding the mats' weight, the durability of the seaming tape, and the effort required to move the carts. Mr. Joynt noted that other schools typically use protective mats or PVC liners. While he had not installed this specific system, he noted that heavier-duty options can last six to 10 years, although the seaming tape would still require replacement. He also stated that moving approximately 1,000 pounds on a cart with casters should not be problematic.

Mr. Jennings stated that he did not oppose the purchase but suggested exploring a better option due to concerns about weight and durability.

Mr. DiBiasio noted that the PTO typically holds its craft fair fundraiser in the gymnasium but has requested to use the Trade Hall because the gymnasium is not currently available due to the lack of floor protection. Mr. Joynt cautioned that the Trade Hall is not an assembly space and was not designed or permitted by code for large gatherings; therefore, he did not recommend using it for outside functions. Mr. Bentley noted that the Trade Hall provides the necessary in-and-out accessibility. Mr. Joynt suggested contacting the Fire Department for guidance.

Dr. Warren asked whether the less expensive mat option, at a cost of $6,000, is worth the risk. Mr. Jennings asked what other options are available. Mr. Joynt stated that he has no operational concerns with the proposed mats and noted that they are the type typically used in school facilities.

It was moved by Mr. Sawejko, seconded by Mr. Hill, and approved by roll-call vote to accept the Enhance Mats proposal as submitted, at a total cost of $15,359.61. *Mr. Jennings opposed.*

Mr. Freeman reviewed PCCO No. 21, an out-of-scope change order totaling $348,247.22 and consisting of multiple Project Change Orders (PCOs). He highlighted PCO 918 in the amount of $210,026.41 for additional lockdown indicator lights. The change order also includes a $50,000 hold for drywall patching and paint touch-ups, to be tracked on a time-and-materials basis. In response to questions from Mr. Bentley, Mr. Joynt reported that 39 indicator lights are installed in corridors and large shops and are activated during a lockdown. The PA system provides the audio notification, while the lights provide the visual notification.

Mr. Freeman also highlighted PCO 993 in the amount of $82,000 for additional stone required for gradation in the student parking lot.

It was moved by Mrs. Weckesser, seconded by Mr. Hill, and voted unanimously on a roll call to approve Prime Contract Change Order (PCCO) No. 021 for the total amount of $348,247.22, as submitted.

Mr. Freeman reviewed PCCO No. 021.1 and highlighted PCO 922, which covers costs associated with flooding at the existing building. The change order includes Clean Harbors' costs to remove and dispose of contaminated water and electrician costs for the three generators, funded from the Construction Manager's contingency. Mr. Freeman noted that most PCOs are for premium time and lost or damaged materials.

Mr. Freeman reviewed PCO 980R1 (PR-074 – Track Surface Color) and PCO 981R1 (PR-075 – Track Surface Type and Color). PR-074, totaling $49,780.47, upgrades the track color, while PR-075, totaling $259,799.31, upgrades the surface type and color. Mr. Joynt noted that the proposals were revised to reflect an orange surface with three black exchange zones. He explained that PR-075 provides a higher-grade, longer-lasting surface. Mrs. Weckesser asked how often does it need resurfacing. Mr. Joynt stated that resurfacing is typically needed every 10–15 years. Mr. Soares added that the upgraded surface is more conducive to training and provides athletes with a surface comparable to those used for competition.

It was moved by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mr. Hill, and voted unanimously on a roll call to approve PCO 981R1 (PR-075 – Track Surface Type and Color) at a total cost of $259,799.31, as submitted.

PCO 980R1 (PR-074 – Track Surface Color) will be voided by Suffolk.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 13, 2026, due to the holiday and the School Committee meeting scheduled for October 15.

It was moved by Mr. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Hill and voted unanimously on a roll call to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 pm.

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

Materials:
August 10, 2026 Minutes
Monthly Dashboard
Gymnasium Mats Proposal
Prime Contract Change Order - PCCO No. 021
Prime Contract Change Order - PCCO No. 021.1 (Internal Change Order)
PR-074 & PR-075