

REVISED Minutes of the Regular Session
Chariho Regional District School Committee
October 21, 2025
CHS Library and Conference Room

Members Present

Louise Dinsmore, Chair
Laura Chapman, Vice Chair
Tyler Champlin
Polly Hopkins
Craig Louzon
Linda Lyall
Larry Phelps
Patricia Pouliot
Jessica Purcell
Karen Reynolds
Dianne Tefft

Administration Present

Gina M. Picard, Superintendent
Dr. Michael Comella, Assistant Superintendent
Gregory Zenion, Director of Admn. & Finance
Angela Brasil, Clerk

Other

Atty. Jon Anderson

Members Absent

Donna Chambers

Call to Order - This body opened in public session at 6:00pm with Chair Dinsmore leading the Pledge of Allegiance and moment of silence, in memory of Eve Smith, a Teacher Assistant who served at Chariho Middle School for many years and recently passed away. This body moved to Executive Session at 6:31pm and they reconvened public session at 7:00pm.

Executive Session - convened from 6:31pm until 6:55pm.

Reconvened Open Session - 7:00pm

Closing and sealing of Executive Session Minutes - Superintendent Picard recommended sealing and closing the minutes of tonight's executive session as they pertain to matters of the following: discussion of the job performance, character, or physical or mental health of a person(s); Discussion and/or action pertaining to collective bargaining; and Matters which relate to the privacy of students and their records.

Disclosure of Executive Session Votes - There were eleven members present, with Member Chambers absent from this executive session. Vice Chair Chapman reported five votes from tonight's executive session as follows: 1. Vote to reorder the executive session agenda - Approved unanimously. 2. Vote to approve the executive session minutes from 9/23/25 - 10 in favor, with one abstention (Champlin). 3. Vote to approve homeschooling requests - Approved unanimously. 4. Vote to approve a personnel matter - Approved unanimously. 5. Vote to end executive session and return to open session - Approved unanimously.

Recognition - Member Tefft read the following aloud: Congratulations to the Chariho High School Cross Country Team for winning the Sophomore Race at the Manhattan Invitational on Saturday, October 11th, 2025 - Luke Baxter, Izaia Brown, Cam Coggeshall, Gus Frelove, Aila Grant, Leo Haxton, Jack Korus, Elijah Marland, Sam Prentiss and Noah Waterman. Congratulations to ALL of our Fall Senior Athletes as they prepare to end their final season as Chariho Athletes in their selected sports. Member Lyall read the following aloud: Congratulations to Chariho sophomore Abby Tiernan who was named the Rhode Island Player of the Week by the American Volleyball Coaches Association/MaxPreps for the week ending Oct. 5th. Congratulations to Attorney Jon Anderson on receiving recognition in the 2026 edition of "Best Lawyers."

Public Forum - Chair Dinsmore opened this public forum per usual, by reciting the rules related to the public forum and reminded all that Public Forum is for discussions relative to items that are NOT on our agenda for the evening, those would be relegated to discussion when that item came up on the agenda this evening. Tonight's public forum speakers were: **Jasmin Roy, Councilwoman in Hopkinton**, who also introduced herself as the vice chair of the South County chapter of *Moms for Liberty*, presented options available to teachers for representation aside from their current Union (NEA). She presented two pamphlets which Member Polly Hopkins requested copies of and received.

Scott Daigle, of Richmond, inquired about “eminent domain”, which he heard was part of a discussion at a subcommittee meeting. Member Purcell inquired if he was at that meeting, and if he was not, this would be considered hearsay. Additionally, an audience member mentioned that there was a video of this meeting circulating online. Chair Dinsmore inquired if Mr. Daigle had viewed such a video and he stated that he did not but he will do so and return. No further discussion occurred on this matter at the public forum.

Alex Mckendall, of Richmond, stated being concerned about the social media policy. He would prefer that it default to “No” and have an opt-in for “Yes”, explaining that his child was posted on social media but his family did not want that to happen and filled out a form to express those wishes at the beginning of school. Superintendent Picard will follow up with him and investigate the matter. If he selected “no” for his child, then it shouldn’t have happened. Alex said that when he inquired with the school, they said he had not filled out a form. Superintendent Picard explained that it’s a digital form now, but we do re-share the forms at special events. He reiterated that he would prefer the form default to “no”. Member Hopkins commented that this falls into the Library Media Policy she was targeting. She feels things like yearbook pictures should be segregated out from social media pictures, for example. She will make this recommendation for a future agenda item.

Goldie Williams, Richmond, commented about “imminent domain” and said that she did not see it in the minutes (of the aforementioned subcommittee meeting). Further, she stated that the Charlestown Elementary parents don’t want their kids to be on the bus for 45 minutes to an hour. Chair Dinsmore asked her if this part of her questioning is more related to the agenda item regarding the Elementary School capital improvement plan for this evening. As it did, she will reserve further comments until that agenda item comes up this evening.

Helen Sheehan, Richmond, stated that at the last meeting it was expressed that the school committee budget doesn’t affect taxes. She believes it does as she paid over \$6,000.00 in taxes “to Chariho Schools”.

Justin Bentley, Hopkinton, Commended Superintendent Picard on all the hard work they have done and continue to do for Chariho. He stated that she’s doing a great job.

Catherine Soderstrom, Hopkinton, thanked and commended this Committee for all the presentations provided leading up to today. She found them to present clear alternatives and were extremely informative.

Catherine Giusti, Hopkinton, spoke about core values of kindness, tolerance, and respect. She referenced that Member Hopkins shared information regarding eminent domain on her facebook page and included a photo of children holding a flag with a swastika to a photo of children holding an LGBTQIA+ flag for pride. She feels this represents Anti-LGBTQIA+ propaganda and shared it and her sentiments with Chair Dinsmore. Ms. Giusti feels public officials hold responsibility for the things they say and share and this particular post was very harmful, especially to the LGBTQIA+ community who are part of Chariho’s motto “All Kids. All The Time”, and questions what kind of leadership that some members of this school committee are modeling for the Chariho community.

Business - (A) Presentation by Chief Operations Officer at RIDE, Mario Carreno, regarding transportation: Mr. Carreno stated that transportation costs are very high and empty buses are wasteful. The cost of buses are up 61% over the last 10 years, 20% up since covid and is higher than any other expenditure. He stated that we have a fragmented system. Private schools have their own routes too and there are limited vendors throughout the state. Statewide buses typically transport foster children, homeless kids, special education students, and others that go outside our district. The state has ample capacity as do many of the buses currently being used in the districts. In some cases, every bus shaved off the budget can save up to \$1 million dollars. He would like to offer an audit to collect data to help us budget more efficiently. He feels if the state could transport more children, the district will save money. In phase two they will conduct an independent review of existing bus route systems, and he is aware that

not every district has the optimal profile for routing these buses. Currently, there are a lot of arbitrary town boundaries and feels we should work together with neighboring districts to close gaps and save money. This audit is \$8,500.00. Chair Dinsmore said that this presentation is timely due to our stage 2 planning discussion this evening and thanked him. Member Chapman inquired about the length of this audit (begins 10/27 and runs approximately 2 weeks and encompasses 10 northern districts). Mr. Carreno will have the information by budget time. Member Chapman also asked if removing boundary lines would be helpful regarding making transportation more efficient. Mr. Carreno believes it will, and realizes it will require coordination of bell times. Member Purcell asked if changing boundary lines was relative to just State transportation or melding local boundary lines; it is both. He is committed to working together with the district to discuss how they want to save. Member Purcell is concerned that Chariho already covers 126 square miles and this feels like we are being asked to help solve a State problem. Last year, this Committee supported a resolution about us, as a District, handling our own transportation for students going out of the district. Mr. Carreno stated that the State system offers a fixed cost and has the capacity to come into our towns and allow the district to save by absorbing their riders. Member Purcell asked if Chariho kids can just hop on the State buses for free and who would bear the responsibility for those kids. These are all questions that would have to wait until more information is gathered. Member Chapman inquired if this would be applicable to afterschool programs; no, this is for am/pm routes only. Member Louzon brought the conversation back to liability - Mr. Carreno stated that parents who would require this transportation would sign up for it. Member Hopkins stated that this sounds like the State would be in competition with Ocean State Transit, our current transportation company. She is concerned about familiarity for the kids. Tracey Silvia from Richmond is concerned that we already have to put three kids in a seat and that we should be thinking about adding buses, but agrees that Chariho should spend the money on this audit. Scott Daigle, Richmond, stated that bell times would have to be aligned as well as start and end times for school that are currently contractual. This would have to be a point of negotiation, for everyone. Atty. Anderson stated that Mr. Daigle is correct and suggested that Mrs. DiCenzo in Pawtucket is very knowledgeable in this area; (Mario C. said this isn't something for consideration until stage 3). Goldie Williams, Richmond stated that there may be issues with students who have special or behavioral needs as well. No further discussion or action taken this evening. No vote taken.

(B) Vote to select the elementary school facility option for STAGE 2 Application to RIDE regarding the 5-year Capital Improvement Plan. Superintendent Picard stated that the main bond in 2024 was not successful. Our main campus bond passed in November 2024 for \$15 million. We still need an Elementary Capital Improvement Plan per State law. We began working again in November 2024 and our goal is to move toward a bond for our Elementary School facilities. We work hard to keep them working well, and looking good, but they are 90 year old buildings. The infrastructure will not support what we need to move forward either. Without an elementary improvement plan we are only allowed to expend \$500,000.00 per year on repairs, and that goes quickly. Doing nothing will not help us. We would need capital reserves and taxes would have to go up. RIDE allows us to bond for services to repair or replace these aging buildings, so in August 2025, this School Committee approved S/L/A/M as our architects in this process and Colliers as the project manager to start this process, and they were able to plan and present these options to us. The goal is to have safer, equitable, modern Pre K through Gr. 4 learning spaces. Some people are interested in bringing grade 5 back to elementary school as well, but this would never be possible in our current facilities. We have spent \$6 million dollars between FY20 through present on repairs to our current elementary schools. The basic snapshots (slides) are online under the Necessity for School Construction tab. When Superintendent Picard arrived at Chariho in 2020, this School Department had contracted RGB who had a plan that never came to fruition. They spent over \$400,00.00 on that plan. Since 2020, we have spent over \$1.7 Million dollars on planning only. The General Assembly said we need the Architects to participate but it is important that this is Stage 2 and these designs are conceptual. We are presented with **three options: (1) One unified Elementary School; (2) Renovate current schools to "like new" condition; (3) Build three new Elementary Schools.** Option three is the most expensive and option one allows for the greatest amount of resources for our students. It is important to note that S/L/A/M did not decide on these options. The School Committee decided on what they wanted S/L/A/M to present. We had 106 responses to our questionnaire about what everyone would like to see happen and the results are as follows: In first place - one unified

elementary school; in second place - three new elementary schools; in third place - Renovations to like new; and there was a fourth - do nothing - which is last. Ultimately, everyone wants us to do what is best for kids and be fiscally responsible in that task. There was interest in increasing our CTE options and possibly expanding that to lower grades (K-8). We presently have three bonds that are preparing to sunset. If this passes, we could have shovels in the ground by November 2026. Another question we received is "if student enrollment is declining, why build new schools?" The schools are aging, regardless of enrollment. Pipes are bursting, other things are failing, and we want to avoid a tragedy. We do want to reduce our footprint as well and efficient buildings help us to do that. RIDE does not recommend repairs, so they're not reimbursable if we cannot guarantee the building will last another thirty years. Contingencies are built into the planning process to protect us against rising costs. This evening, the School Committee must affirm an option. We plan to continue with community engagement throughout this process, and we need to keep our focus on teaching and learning. Mr. Zenion provided sample reports for the cost of all three options and identified that there was a minor error which he corrected for the Committee.

Chair Dinsmore explained that this Committee was advised that this discussion could occur prior to a motion to allow for full explanation and feedback prior to a motion and a vote. She would like the discussion to include all positive and challenging aspects of the construction, including audience opinion. Therefore, she asked Member Chapman to randomly draw forth one option (a card) for full discussion. **The first option pulled for discussion was to construct "One Unified School."**

Discussion: Member Pouliot stated that she and other members visited a unified school being built in Johnston. While she initially felt one unified school for all PK-4 may be too large to feel welcoming for small children, upon visiting the construction site it felt intimate and cozy. It has an "open concept" vs. a compartmentalized look but teachers have great sight lines while students would be passing or moving about the corridors. She also stated that she feels the ongoing costs would be more manageable in a unified school (heating, transportation, etc.).

Member Purcell has shared a challenge - that we would have three empty buildings, but the regionality of our district is our strength. Additionally, she emphasized the importance of keeping class sizes small, and that smaller buildings are better for small children. She is also concerned about the following: enrollment projection and where we might find land, including how much that land would cost; Moving grade 5 back to an elementary school; she likes the current parity of PK-4, 5-8, and 9-12 in our district. On the positive side, she is aware that this would not be a cookie-cutter design. We would be able to design the building for our needs, and how we want it to look. The CTEs are important to us and come with revenue, however, she feels that Pre K is important too. Alternative education is good for all grade levels and operational efficiency would be better in a unified building, also, she prefers that Chariho students can stay in their schools without disruptions during construction.

Member Lyall stated that she agrees with things that both Member Pouliot and Member Purcell have said, and from a practical standpoint, we can build one new school and avoid student displacement. She personally worked in a grade level 3-5 school with 1,200 kids and it never felt "too big". They managed by separating the kids into "houses" and they loved it. There is also more opportunity for creativity. She's not against rebuilding the three current schools but knows that their current footprint will limit us in that creativity.

Member Reynolds finds that the one unified school will help build the "real" Chariho community, as it is in middle and high school, and she would love that to start earlier in their education. Safety is a number one priority. She felt the unified school they visited is a very safe building and didn't feel closed off, it was very well laid out. She also feels that we should be doing more for our younger (Pre K - K) students. As Member Pouliot mentioned, she also feels that a unified school can bring more student services to the kids in the Davinci spaces, the windows and natural light are phenomenal, which will definitely increase learning time. It seems that S/L/A/M and Collier's built the building district wanted and she would love to have the opportunity to do that for Chariho as well. The bathrooms in the unified school we visited are

also very well designed. It is also the best financial option, but how will the towns utilize the empty buildings?

Member Chapman offered that one positive she'd like to explore is moving grade 5 back to the elementary school and would love to incorporate that into a unified school option. She feels the transition at age 10 or 11 is tough enough. Since they can build up this seems like a good idea, also we can free up space at CMS to incorporate more CTE classrooms. In a regional district, earlier integration is positive. The downside would be finding land. It's unknown and hard to determine what additional costs would. How would the efficiencies offset the additional cost of a 30 year bond? If you're adding this onto the cost of our annual budget you need to know a realistic number of what we're spending and saving.

Member Tefft asked when the current three bonds would be due, and how they would be incorporated into this new bond. Mr. Zenion answered no. Superintendent Picard added that the Main Campus bond is new (15 Million) and is split into two parts (7.5 million each) to expedite the work. Member Tefft asked about the estimated projected bond payment over the next 30 years. Mr. Zenion provided examples only, but (in the example provided for one unified school) it is expected to be close to \$2.6M Million (per year) for 30 years, when we realize a total of 65% in reimbursements the payment will be closer to a total of \$80M. (Note: the original total is 117 Million but this includes securing the land).

Member Dinsmore stated that she may be repeating what others have said but does want to be on the record. We are a regional school district and one unified school embraces that identity. This is the most fiscally responsible option which can also (potentially) bring grade 5 back to the elementary school. This is a top priority for her as it offers a way to bridge the gap from Elementary to Middle School in a more positive way. The other two options would make that very difficult. If we are able to achieve operational efficiencies, she would like to see us codify what operational efficiencies mean. Any savings should be identified in advance and put toward paying down our debt sooner. She stated that she has challenged the Superintendent and her team to think of "big picture goals", and there was mention about potentially expanding the CTE programs. She is considering this vision for the district in the long term, and the opportunity to bring in more CTE programs is a big strength. The issue with buying land is the timing. It's a risk but there have been potential prospects for 27-33 acres. When we move forward with Stage 2, we need to show RIDE that we are actively in the process of procuring this land. If voters end up rejecting the bond proposal, we will ensure a contingency to stop the sale of that land. We have to trust the experts on this. Additionally the unified school option will not displace our students, and this is a big deal. You've seen what happened during Covid, we don't want to subject the kids to that kind of displacement again.

Member Champlain agreed with all that has been shared. He believes that a unified school makes the most sense so he doesn't have more to add.

Member Reynolds believes this option will also offer a better safety plan for parents and kids at drop off with the new school. Currently, the drop off with parents all along Rte.138 at Richmond Elementary School is just not working.

Member Pouliot understands that reverting three empty Elementary schools back to the towns is a fear, but it's possible that Richmond can use it for a Senior Center, as they've been wanting one for a while.

Member Louzon asked Mario Carreno from RIDE if the district chooses one unified school and includes grade 5 would we end up being penalized for having too much vacant space at the middle school? Mario stated that the district could plan to bring CTEs in for grades 7 and/or 8 and many districts have moved their grade 5 kids back to their elementary schools because 7% of 4th graders across the state leave to go to elementary schools elsewhere who still have a grade 5 there.

Superintendent Picard added that South Kingstown is building a new High School with the goal to bring kids back, but what we see in the CTC is opportunities for the future. Director Auth in our CTC is currently working with AI opportunities for our school and we do get calls about entry in middle school programs, especially with the Farm to School initiative. Chariho is a beacon across the state and we recently hosted

the CTC board meeting which was a huge success. We were highlighted at the Health and Wellness breakfast too. We have created Waste Warriors, Native Pollinators, Indigenous Food experiences, Farm to Table initiatives and many more. Member Purcell asked if this body would need to decide on grade levels tonight, they did not. She hopes to see kids doing more outdoor learning and keep a holistic approach to learning.

Public Opinion

Sharon Davis, Councilwoman in Richmond, distributed a short narrative that supports building a unified elementary school and provided numbers relative to how that might affect the Hopkinton tax base. She is confident that the cost is well worth making this project a reality for our students.

Mr. Colasante, from Hopkinton, offered that the new unified school being built in Johnston is doing so well because they have Mayor Polisena at the helm. He added that the building in Cranston is large and looks like a spaceship and is woefully over budget. He does not approve of the big group learn and think model. They ended up having to increase their budget by 3 million to accommodate a student with a hearing disability. Johnston is also offset by the Amazon fulfillment center building that went up recently. Putting in a new unified elementary school was an easy choice there because they had \$2 Million in incentives. Additionally, Cranston has a new building going up and they also have a huge tax base. He is here tonight advocating for the people who cannot afford a tax increase. He feels that our towns don't have the tax base to afford this, and there are too many examples in the state where these new builds are going way over budget. Member Dinsmore stated that some of the Committee visited the Johnston and Pawtucket schools. With the unified space we can be very intentional in designing that space. We just need to be vocal and intentional for what will serve our students best.

David Way of Richmond, asked what the price per square foot would be for one unified school. Superintendent Picard explained that we are not at that stage yet. Holly Demers from Colliers said there is a very specific formula that RIDE uses, which includes soft costs plus furniture, IT budgets, etc, based on student counts. Mr. Way feels that despite these unknowns, if we have met with builders we should have a price per square foot. Chair Dinsmore reiterated that we are not at that stage yet. Mr. Way stated that he is on a (school) building committee himself and these buildings have everything a school needs; they've found significant savings in the engineering portion of the build. He feels that if we go to a builder with a specified budget, they should work within that budget. Additionally, the reimbursement may come from the state but that is state taxpayer money and this Committee shouldn't spend it so easily. Chair Dinsmore encouraged Mr. Way to join our Building Committee when the opportunity arises. We will not be choosing a builder until we have identified the option we are choosing to forward.

Helen Sheehan, of Richmond, stated that she respects all the opinions offered tonight, but as a licensed clinical social worker she feels there are numerous studies supporting smaller learning environments. Further she supports a fourth option - just doing an upgrade to our current three buildings (not to the extent they are "like new") and ask RIDE for the 65% reimbursement anyway.

Mr. Alex Mckendell, of Richmond - stated he would like to know more about the "hearsay" issue regarding eminent domain. He is concerned as this happened to his family and doesn't feel it's right. Many of the present School Committee members replied that they are NOT in favor of using eminent domain in any case. Member Louzon added that he would feel the Superintendent wasn't doing a good job if she did not provide *all* the available options.

Goldie Williams of Richmond inquired how this Committee will know how many of the proposed student enrollment will go off to charter schools or elsewhere and will the new school have an area designated for kids with special needs that will be calm and quiet? Chair Dinsmore explained that we have to look at the entirety of the demographic numbers, and currently the total is 1,281 and that all concerns will be taken into consideration and prioritized.

Ms. Reynolds from Hope Valley is concerned with the land we acquire, cautioning that old farmlands may have chemicals in the soil. She encourages a very deep soil evaluation so we don't run into problems there. Additionally, there are many aquafills in this area. She'd rather see the fourth option of repairing the current elementary schools at a lower cost. She feels no-one cared about losing Hope Valley Elementary School and the displacement of those students to other elementary schools, namely Richmond Elementary. In her view, the smaller buildings and smaller classrooms help kids learn. With so many of the population being elderly, they simply cannot afford a tax increase. She stated that approximately 80% of the taxes she pays in her town go to the school department, the remaining 20% goes to services such as the local volunteer Fire Department and the Police Department.

Mr. Robert Burns, Councilman (Vice Chair) of Hopkinton, stated that it's time the community comes together and realizes the implications of "kicking the can down the road" again. This burden will land on the next generation. It's a tough decision, and isn't about left vs. right, it's about stepping up to the plate and doing what's right for the children in our community. He understands that the Town Councils and the School Department have their differences, however, we need to keep the kids in mind, and it's time the adults take on this burden so it doesn't fall to the kids. Member Hopkins inquired with Mr. Burns regarding the current renovations of the "Crandall House" and if it is on time/on budget. Ms. Sharon Davis, councilwoman in Hopkinton, stated that the project is both on time and under budget. Mr. Burns stated that material prices aren't going to get any better if we wait. As a person who deals in construction, he buys, on average, \$50K worth of steel every month. He's well aware of the costs.

Mr. Simon Manlove of Hopkinton gave a data overview to this Committee relative to a study he completed on transportation costs to and from the current elementary schools versus a one-school model that is being proposed. Taking data from the current bus schedules he explained that the one school model will be more cost effective and safer. Currently, the Elementary students have a shorter ride to and from school than the older kids who are on campus at Chariho High School and Chariho Middle School. Also, each elementary school stop is a bit longer due to the bus monitors who have to view the bus area at each stop, this is the only sample bias. Currently the longest time an elementary school student is on the bus is approximately 75 minutes; in a unified school model, that time would be cut to 55 minutes or less. The boundary lines so far have a 55 minute spread, so this unified school can be built in any of the three member towns and we'd still get the benefit of shorter bus rides.

Mr. Avedesian of Ashaway stated that he is grateful for Town Councilor Burns' comments tonight. It will just get more expensive if we wait and this should be about the kids. We need better, safer schools. He asked Mr. Zenion about the sunsetting bonds and our ability to pay a future bond including when we would have the benefit of reimbursements. Mr. Zenion explained that reimbursements are calculated into the payments. Regarding the three bonds ending in FY27: we will pay \$577K on the 2010A bond and \$471K on the 2010G bond, we will also pay \$693K on the Cala 2017 Bond. After 2027 these are finished. Every year, there is principal put aside and the last of these payments are due on June 30, 2027. We will have approximately \$800-\$900K to use which will pay off all of those and/or go toward the 2028 J2 Bond. The Campus 2025 bond is split into two parts, each \$7.5M. The first half has an initial payment of \$375K only and in FY28 \$362K, but bumps to just over \$1.1M in 2029 (a ten year bond). To break this down: FY 27 - \$2.9M (10 year bond); FY 28 - \$2.3M (10 year bond); and FY 29 - \$3.0M (10 year bond). The new construction proposed for the elementary school(s) will be a 30 year bond. The \$800-\$900K, depending on interest rates, will afford us a little offset for FY28. Mr. Avedesian thanked Mr. Zenion, and encouraged this Committee to make an informed decision and to remain aligned.

Motion: After public comments, Member Champlin made a motion for this Committee to move forward with the plan of one unified elementary school for stage 2, seconded by Member Louzon.

Discussion: Mr. Champlin feels he has heard enough and doesn't feel we need to visit comments on the other options as many of the comments have already included thoughts on those as well. Member Hopkins stated that she has done a lot of listening to constituents this evening and feels we'd be most successful if we move forward with the renovation plan. She feels there is too much push back on one unified school. Member Chapman asked Mr. Zenion clarified where the one unified school stood

regarding least to most expensive of the three options and asked if we could entertain discussion about the option of Renovate to like new at this time. Superintendent Picard stated that the School Committee created these options and asked the members to remember that the option for renovations includes to “like new” as the building would have to be guaranteed to last for at least 30 years to be eligible for RIDE reimbursement. Ms. Kathryn Colasante of Richmond feels the old buildings are nice and that hearing this information repetitively is a means to make people believe it. She attributes that to the old Jacobs report and being told to ignore it then the Necessity of School Construction committee referencing that report just the same. That report carried a facilities index score which needs to be over 65 or more to identify the need to rebuild - when it took place, CALA’s score was 60 and it was the newest building; It was identified that CALA was previously in mobile trailers; the score at that time for Charlestown Elementary was 32, for Ashaway Elementary it was 40 and for Richmond Elementary it was 37. She is shocked that RIDE is suggesting renovation to like new as they just want to “right size” our buildings. She feels that is too big (referencing Gilbane Const. information) and prefers smaller spaces to minimize distractions. She feels that “group learning” isn’t necessary. She also feels that using behavior modification on teachers is prevalent and not in the best interest of our kids. Additionally, in South Kingstown, with renovated schools now being considered for affordable housing, she wonders why that’s good enough for people to live in but not good enough for kids to learn in. Mrs. Catherine Guisti as a former School Committee Chair and current member of a group called “Chariho United” expressed that they are willing to work with everyone and rally behind whatever decision this School Committee makes in this regard. However, she is cautioning all members to stand behind their ultimate decision. With the majority of the Hopkinton Town Council seemingly on board per Mr. Burns’ and Ms. Davis’ comments this evening, there being four in total who have expressed their interest in this endeavor, she hopes this School Committee will remain committed to their choice both here and in the public.

Vote: Member Tefft asked for a Roll Call vote on this issue. Member Champlin (Yes); Member Lyall (Yes), Member Purcell (Yes), Member Hopkins (No), Member Dinsmore (Yes), Member Chapman (Yes), Member Tefft (No), Member Reynolds (Yes), Member Louzon (Yes), Member Phelps (No), Member Pouliot (Yes). The vote is 8 to 3, motion carries. *Approved.*

Motion: Member Champlin made a motion to extend this meeting past 10:00pm, seconded by Member Purcell. Discussion: None. Vote: 8 in favor (Champlin, Chapman, Dinsmore, Louzon, Lyall, Pouliot, Purcell, and Reynolds); 3 against (Hopkins, Phelps, Tefft). *Approved.*

Business (C) Approval and vote of Bond Counsel. Motion: Member Louzon made a motion to approve Karen Grande as our Atty. for Bond Counsel, seconded by Member Reynolds. **Discussion:** Member Champlin asked to be walked through the timeline. Superintendent Picard stated that Atty. Grande will put specifics into the legislation for November; We do all our homework in December; The bill will go into the General Assembly’s hands by January. This ensures the election question is correct. Then it moves to the Secretary of State’s office to print the ballots for the election in the Spring. Atty. Grande agreed. Member Champlin asked if this is presuming that RIDE will accept our Stage 2 submission. Superintendent Picard stated that it is highly unlikely that RIDE would deny it, but the General Assembly can override RIDE. Member Chapman asked if the bond doesn’t have to be approved by RIDE why are we doing this? Atty. Grande explained that the bond doesn’t go through RIDE, just the application. The General Assembly prevails. Mr. Zenion stated that Karen Grande has been our bond counsel for over twenty years. **Vote:** Unanimous in favor. *Approved.*

Business (D) Approval and vote of Superintendent’s Goals for School Year 2025-2026. Motion: Member Louzon made the motion to approve the Superintendent’s Goals for School Year 2025/2026, seconded by Member Reynolds. **Discussion:** Member Lyall stated that she appreciates that the Superintendent has included measurable items. Member Chapman asked if the first three goals are state mandated and the fourth goal has flexibility. Superintendent Picard answered that just the first listed goal is state mandated. It encapsulates all that is listed in the state regulations. Chair Dinsmore inquired about the meaning of “stretch growth”. Superintendent Picard explained that if a student, in an alternate setting

for instance, has made growth over a period of time, but has not reached proficiency, they are in “stretch growth”. Differently abled students’ families feel this in their hearts. Helping them to close the gap based on individual needs is important. Dr. Comella will share this information further in November. Regarding increasing goals by 3% in the district, we are doing very well right now, especially in the special needs classes. Member Chapman stated that the School Committee does change frequently and may not be used to the acronyms used in the goals. She suggested a key. Superintendent Picard thanked her for that input. Additionally, Member Chapman asked how the district captures students who may need intervention if they don’t have a plan in place (MTSS). Superintendent Picard answered that our ongoing data supports the need for those interventions. If a student drops by a significant number of points in regular assessment data, we will likely catch it first. Sometimes these things are due to sudden trauma, however, we can pull up the district data quickly. Member Dinsmore asked if there is a quantifiable number for expanding internships. Superintendent Picard explained that this is a High School goal overall, and we’re holding ourselves accountable above and beyond the expectation. Chair Dinsmore would love the School Committee, or a subcommittee, to collaborate with the Superintendent on creating these goals. She appreciates them and feels a liaison allows for more collaboration. Superintendent Picard reminded her that many School Committee members are on school SIT teams and those teams have input as well. Member Reynolds reminded her that the makeup of the SIT teams is a balanced group of educators, parents, and school committee members, as well as a few students. Superintendent Picard explained that the SITs are already thinking forward; If we have not met 80% the goals must be aligned with ELA, Math and Science. Member Purcell would like to see more for the younger kids but the Superintendent explained that information is embedded in the district assessment data; Member Purcell would like to see more PE activity and focus on health and wellness. **Vote:** Unanimous in favor. **Approved.**

Member Hopkins asked the Chair for permission to leave the meeting at 10:28pm. At this point, there were 10 voting members still present.

Business (E) Approval and vote of District Legal Counsel Contract. Motion: Member Purcell made the motion to approve the district legal counsel contract, seconded by Member Champlin. **Discussion:** None. **Vote:** Unanimous in favor. **Approved.**

Business (F) Approval and vote on the following grants - 1. MOA for Distribution of Categorical Funding of RIDE Career & Technical Education Program \$208,042.00. 2. Education Northwest Grant in the amount of \$18,000.00 for State Action Collaboration for High School Alternatives. Motion: Member Reynolds made a motion to approve the grants as presented, seconded by Member Louzon. **Discussion:** None. **Vote:** Unanimous in favor. **Approved.**

Business (G) Approval and vote of Commitment of FY 25 Funds. Motion to TABLE made by Member Champlin, seconded by Member Louzon. **Discussion:** Member Champlin would like to have some in-depth discussion on this and we are already past our regular time this evening. Unanimous in favor. **Approved to TABLE.**

Business (H) Approval and vote of Budget Transfers; Budget Updates for discussion. Motion: Member Louzon made a motion to approve the budget transfers as presented, seconded by Member Champlin. **Discussion:** None. **Vote:** Unanimous in favor. **Approved.**

Consent Agenda Items for approval and vote - Member Champlin made a motion to pull item **A.** Minutes from the Regular Session of the Chariho School Committee on September 23, 2025, seconded by Member Louzon. **Discussion:** None. **Vote:** Unanimous in favor. **Approved.**

Motion: Member Louzon made a motion to move the remainder of the Consent Agenda Items (B through E) seconded by Member Reynolds. **Vote:** Unanimous in favor. **Approved.**

B. Bill Review - as presented

C. Personnel Actions- Occurred in Executive Session

D. Permission to Issue Bids/Request Quote - None

E. Donations - read aloud by Member Louzon

1. Gratitude to Madison and Derek Gluchacki (Gluchacki Racing) for their participation in the Richmond Elementary School Reading Challenge. 2. Gratitude to RICAN for their donation of snacks to Richmond Elementary School.

Motion: Member Louzon made a motion to approve consent agenda item A .(Approval of the regular session minutes from 10.21.25), seconded by Member Reynolds. **Discussion:** None. **Vote:** 9 in favor (Chapman, Dinsmore, Louzon, Lyall, Phelps, Pouliot, Purcell, Reynolds, and Tefft); 1 abstention (Champlin). **Approved.**

Reports - Superintendent Picard offered the following reports:

A. Subcommittee Report - Health and Wellness Subcommittee minutes from 10.7.25 - as presented. The superintendent stated that this subcommittee is doing an amazing job. We had a wonderful turnout at the health and wellness conference this year. We were joined by students and Dr. Kirakosian who represented us very well for the work we've done for the Farm to School initiative. Many people came up to us to ask how we got this to happen which was a wonderful experience.

B. Superintendent Report

1. RI Comprehensive Assessment Update - There will be a much more robust presentation next month but here are some updates: The Commissioner and State put out data for us to review. We are happy to say we are showing encouraging progress for Chariho students. We are continuing to watch some areas very closely. With nearly every student participating in State assessments, the results provide us with a very clear picture of how they are doing with their statewide peers. The Chariho students made notable gains across several subject areas this year. English Language Arts - both Elementary and High School students showed improvement. High School students performed very strongly with over 70% at meeting or exceeding expectations on the SAT. Math scores also showed substantial gain with students improving nearly 10 percentage points compared to last year. That is very difficult to do. We are really proud of that work. Science results were another area of growth as students across grade levels demonstrated stronger performance on the State's next generation Science assessment. These gains reflect the hard work of our students and teachers as well as the commitment to high quality instruction. Charo Middle School continues to show steady progress in both math and ELA. A reflection of the dedication of our teachers and the school's strong improvement plan. These gains also build on the solid foundation created at our elementary schools, showing how each level of our district works together to support student success. In addition, our students with special needs continue to show growth in ELA math at the elementary schools. While we are encouraged by these results, there are some areas that need continued attention. Broadcast math squads at the elementary level dipped slightly and some schools showed more variability than others. We also continue to see achievement gaps for students who are economically disadvantaged and ensuring that all students have equitable access to success remains our top priority by focusing on early support in reading and math as well as targeted interventions. We are working to ensure that every student has an opportunity to thrive as a district. Our focus extends beyond individual test scores. We are guided by Charo's vision of a graduate which defines success as students completing their high school journey ready for college career and life and also the vision of the graduate work that you've all approved. These assessments are one important measure of progress along that path, but they are not the whole story. We remain committed to providing every student with the knowledge, skills, and learner qualities needed to graduate with confidence and purpose. We are grateful to our teachers, our staff, our families, and our community members for their continued support and helping every student succeed. Together, we are ensuring all Chariho students are prepared not just to graduate, but to thrive in any opportunities that await them.

2. Coming events - can also be found on our district website calendar at the following address: <https://www.chariho.k12.ri.us/> under the District Information tab. Tomorrow is unity day, also our anti-bullying prevention month with the student education advisory panel. It's one of their district initiatives. Kudos to them! Wear orange if you want to support them as well as a way to show our unity,

or even better show an act of kindness if you don't have anything orange. We have our flu clinic at the middle school. That's one of our larger community events. If you didn't get your flu shot but want it, you can go to the middle school tomorrow at 3:30 to 6:30. Our virtual parent workshop is this Thursday, which is in the e-update.

School committee requests for future agenda items or legal opinions

From Member Hopkins: Policy Subcommittee for the Policy on Media and Photography - to separate some items to allow photographs for things like yearbooks; Specifically dealing with Social Media at school events; Elementary Schools.

From Chair Dinsmore: I think that you'll probably the school committee members will probably be getting a notice about this, but we've talked a lot about revamping the (Superintendent's) evaluation process to be more thoughtful and meaningful, as well as whether or not there should be a subcommittee of the full committee to discuss this. I do think that we need a special meeting because our agendas are so large and we don't necessarily want to be here until 11:00. um if we put that on the agenda. I know next month Dr. Comella is going to be presenting on RICAS, and I think that there are other things that are going to be on and the bond discussion. It is going to likely be a really lengthy discussion. It's her preference that we have a special meeting for this purpose.

Motion: Member Louzon made a motion to adjourn this meeting, seconded by Member Champlin. Discussion: None. Vote: Unanimous in favor. **Approved.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:40pm.

Respectfully submitted by

Angela Brasil, Clerk
Chariho Regional District School Committee