

Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District

Budget Subcommittee

Meeting Minutes

January 25, 2024

Members in Attendance:

Gerald Finn of Millville
Chester Hanratty of Millbury
Christopher Pilla, District Treasurer
Edward Cray of Mendon
Joseph Hall of Bellingham

Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick, Superintendent-Director
Anthony Steele, Asst. Superintendent-Principal
Nicole Ferguson, Business Manager
Jaime Patriarca, Assistant Business Manager
Jacqueline Raad, Assistant Business Manager

Members Absent:

Tyler Bartlett of Upton

Guests in Attendance:

Yvette Martin, Director of Student Services
Edward Evans, Academic Curriculum Coordinator
Michele Denise, Vocational Coordinator

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 4:34 p.m. by Mr. Hall in the Superintendent's Conference Room.

Approval of minutes from prior meeting

Mr. Hall asked members to review minutes from the January 18, 2024 Budget Subcommittee meeting.

Motion: On a motion moved by Mr. Finn to approve the Budget Subcommittee meeting minutes of January 18, 2024 as written, seconded by Mr. Hanratty; motion voted and unanimously approved.

Agenda items

Ms. Denise opened the meeting with a review of the District Wide/Principal/Coordinator/Student Services budget, which had an overall decrease of \$6,500 or 2.75% from the prior year budget. The main drivers of the decrease related to the following items:

- \$ 0.8K *DW Prof. Dev. Other Exp.*: Moved LinkedIn Learning from MultiMedia Tech-Software
- (\$ 7.3K) *Student Services Contract Svc.*: Viewbook Professional Photography only done every two years and reduction in 8th grade tour transportation

Next for review was the Guidance and Special Education budget, presented by Ms. Martin, which had an overall increase of \$74,258 or 36.89% from the prior year budget. The notable changes over prior year budget were as follows:

- \$ 42.5K *SPED IEP Contract Services*: Addition of SPED Liaison due to increased caseload, and increased BCaBA monthly hours needed
- \$ 10.3K *Guidance Dues/Subscriptions*: Addition of counseling for students and families (\$20K grant funded) and electronic transcript conversion (1964-2003)
- \$ 5.9K *SPED Contract Services*: Psychological assessments nearly doubled in cost
- \$ 3.9K *Guidance Psychological Services*: Psychological assessments nearly doubled in cost
- \$ 3.5K *Guidance Tutoring*: Increased student need

- \$ 3.4K SPED S&M Non-Instructional: Psychological testing library moving to digital version for better variety, and small increase in supplies due to enrollment
- \$ 2.5K Guidance Med/Therapeutic Services: An unexpected student need surpassed FY24 budget and is anticipated to continue into FY25
- \$ 2.1K SPED Dir Contract Services: DESE Audit requires additional time with consultant

Mr. Evans then began the review of the Academic department budgets which reflected an overall increase of \$94,407 or 56.02% from the prior year budget. The notable changes were as follows:

- \$ 38.3K Soc. Studies Textbooks: Renewal of digital subscription (every 6 years)
- \$ 25.9K Science Instr. Equip. <\$5K/Unit: Chemistry room renovations for 2 classrooms
- \$ 12.5K PhysEd Instr. Equip. <\$5K: Replacement of aging wall mats hung behind the basketball hoops in the old gym for student safety, and replacement of the competition benches
- \$ 10.3K Math Textbooks: Statistics on-line access renewal (every 3 years)
- \$ 4.6K Foreign Language Textbooks: Spanish II and III textbook replacements
- \$ 2.1K English Textbooks: Various new and replacement novels
- \$ 1.9K Humanities S&M: Music supplies needed for addition of chorus and band
- (\$ 0.4K) Humanities Oth Instr Material: Decreased for film music resources purchased in prior year
- (\$ 0.8K) Math S&M: Reduced for graphing calculators purchased in prior year, offset by slight increase in supplies

There was a lengthy decision regarding the replacement cycle of textbooks and their coinciding digital subscriptions. Mr. Finn brought to the committee's attention that the majority of the budget increases to the academic cost center are generated from textbooks and digital subscription renewals. Mr. Hall questioned if it was possible to even out the budgetary impact from year to year. Mr. Pilla suggested that Mr. Evans work with the publishers to develop yearly contracts to minimize drastic changes to the budget.

Next, Ms. Denise presented the Vocational department budgets. Overall, the budget request reflected an increase of \$49,442 or 9.05% from the prior year budget. The significant changes were as follows:

- \$17.4K Maintenance of Shop Equipment: Mainly due to safety checks on CNC equipment in Manufacturing Technology, recalibration of Engineering equipment after warranty has ended, Biotechnology equipment safety certification and micropipette calibration, and extended warranty for laser in Paint and Design.
- \$12.9K Supplies & Materials: Mainly due to anticipated inflationary costs, partnered with increased enrollment (Engineering & Biotechnology), and the removal of prior year budget constraints
- \$11.2K Textbooks: Rotation of new textbook purchases based on predetermined schedule
- \$ 8.9K Instructional Equipment <\$5K: Represents "must haves" from the supplemental handout, offset by reductions for items purchased in the prior year
- \$ 1.0K Coord. Civic Acts/Comm. Svc.: Expected inflationary cost increases for advisory dinner
- (\$ 0.3K) Vocational Shop Repairs: Updated machines in Welding and Copy Center resulting in less repairs, offset by increase in Engineering equipment warranty.
- (\$ 1.5K) Co-Op Ed.: Reduction in mailings and testing materials needed, based on trend

During the review, Ms. Denise turned the committee's attention to supplemental handouts. The handouts itemized equipment needs in more detail for both FY25 operational budget request "Must Have's" and FY25 additional vocational equipment requests from other funding sources. It was noted that the FY25 operational budget requests for "Must Have's" is the lowest that it has been in over four years, and other funding sources for additional vocational equipment requests are still underway.

Ms. Denise then directed the committee’s attention to the supplemental handout that showed vocational enrollment trends by shop. Ms. Denise further articulated that enrollment is trending as expected, and spoke to declines in Culinary Arts and Multimedia shops. She also noted that Biotechnology’s first year was FY22, and will reach maximum capacity in FY25.

Next, Ms. Ferguson presented the budget summary, which reflected an overall increase of 7.18% for areas presented to-date when compared to the FY24 Budget. It was reiterated that budget items reviewed to date were first pass Department Requests and as the Subcommittee continues through the process presented budgets will be evaluated further in the Administrative review.

Special Note: Consistent with the District’s standard budget building process [at this juncture] the Budget Subcommittee will continue to receive and review all departmental spending requests. Once fully collected, the Subcommittee will explore and investigate all options (including grants and donations) to secure items prior to including it within local municipal assessment consideration.

The next scheduled meeting is set for Thursday, February 22, 2024 at 4:30 p.m.

Areas for follow-up:

Mr. Finn’s request for analysis of 5% software increases

Open Item at this time

Adjournment

Motion: to adjourn made by Mr. Hall at 6:20 p.m.; seconded by Dr. Fitzpatrick; motion voted and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted by,
Jacqueline Raad, Recording Secretary