

Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee
Minutes of Regular Meeting
September 17, 2020

The regular meeting of the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee was in the BVT School Cafeteria. The following members, staff and others were present:

Joseph A. Broderick of Blackstone
Chester P. Hanratty, Jr. of Millbury
Joseph M. Hall of Bellingham, Chairman
Gerald M. Finn of Millville, Vice Chairman
Anthony Yitts of Grafton, Secretary
Paul J. Braza of Milford
Julie H. Mitchell of Sutton
James H. Ebbeling of Uxbridge
Mitchell A. Intinarelli of Hopedale
Jeff Koopman of Northbridge
David R. Bartlett of Upton

Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick, Superintendent-Director
Barbara Auger, Treasurer

Amy Sutherland, Recording Secretary

Members Absent:

John C. Lavin, III of Douglas
Dennis Braun of Mendon

Dr. Fitzpatrick expressed condolence to the Braun family in the recent passing of a family member. Given the loss, Mr. Braun will not be in attendance.

Item 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Hall.

Item 2. Secretary's Report – A. Yitts

2.1. On a motion by Mr. Yitts, seconded by Mrs. Mitchell, it was unanimously voted to waive the reading of the minutes of the regular meeting of August 31, 2020 and to accept the minutes as presented.

Item 3. Treasurer's Report – B. Auger

3.1. The Treasurer's report was presented dated August 31, 2020. The report reflects an ending balance of \$8,256,510.78 for Total Funds, including \$975,086.72 in Project Funds, and \$7,281,424.06 in Local Funds. On a motion by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Braza, it was unanimously voted to approve the August 31, 2020 Treasurer's Report as presented.

It was suggested that Ms. Mangano work with Ms. Auger to create a new category to be included on the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District Treasurer's Report inclusive of CARES Act funding generated by the District member communities. The Committee voiced a preference for the Treasurer to expand future reports to include the District's aggressive alternative, non-local tax revenues.

Item 4. Comments by Student Representative – Isabella Caccavelli

Student Representative Isabella Caccavelli provided an update on current activities. All new freshman students were provided school tee-shirts via a drive-thru activity at the school. Two-thirds of the freshman class participated in this event. Student representatives are in the process

of planning events for the year. A meeting with the full school council will be held via a zoom platform.

Item 5. Vocational Director's Report – M. Denise

5.1. School Committee members were provided with an update on the current FY21 admissions status. A total of 1,226 students are currently enrolled. Beginning in October, there will be a kickoff admission virtual session with the sending schools' guidance counselors. Additionally, a virtual middle school presentation is planned for the months of October and November. There continues to be discussion regarding options to replace the annual open house. Research is also being conducted on an online admissions application option. A question was raised regarding the possibility of researching students who have declined acceptance to determine if there is a pattern. The school is designing a plan on how best to handle school tours which incorporates COVID-19 safety requirements.

5.2. A List of new students for 2020-21 school year was provided to the Committee. A total of 865 applicants applied to BVT. Of the 865 applicants, 314 freshmen and six upperclassmen candidate seats were accepted. Additional acceptances are expected as any vacancies surface.

Item 6. Business Manager's Report -L. Mangano

6.1. The Business Manager reported that the Unreserved Fund Balance has been certified by the state, dated August 24, 2020, at \$626,653. It was noted that this is well within \$1,280,148 allowable as five percent of the operating budget.

6.2. Donation Approval – 2008 Nissan Altima

6.2.a. The School Committee is in receipt of a donation from Ms. Claudia Neithercut of a 2008 Nissan Altima. On a motion made by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Finn, it was voted unanimously to accept the donation of the 2008 Nissan Altima.

Item 7. Assistant Superintendent-Director's Report – A. Steele

7.1. Mr. Steele provided a report on the opening of school for the 2020-21 school year (which opened under Tier 2). The first day of school, September 8, 2020, began with students returning on a rotating two-week basis. One grade level was on campus for in-person learning with safe conditions that are fully compliant with all guidelines, precautions, and protocols; while the other three grade levels participated in distance learning. The school has conducted two fire drills. The school is working on a plan to move to Tier 3 but not until the landscape confirms it is safe to do so. The analysis includes looking at bus transportation and capacity guidelines within the cafeteria. The optimistic hope is that Tier 3 could be implemented in November with the inclusion of a second-grade level. There was a faculty meeting and all precautions were put in place to make the staff feel safe. The Administrative Team are updated regularly by the CDC. The state is requiring that all students receive the flu vaccine by December 31, 2020. There are medical and religious exemptions. There is no requirement for faculty to receive a flu shot. The state has not provided any guidelines for enforcement for those who do not follow this mandate.

7.2. The School Committee was provided with a document entitled "Blackstone Valley Tech Athletic Department Guidelines for Fall 2020." The coaches will be required to take the NFHS "Covid-19 for Coaches and Administrators" training. All athletes are required to wear masks. Participating schools will be placed in PODS and will only play schools in those pods to limit

exposure to other communities. The season will run from September 18, 2020 – November 20, 2020. The purpose of the pods will be positioned geographically to consider transportation costs and limitation for contact. BVT will be in a POD that consists of Hopedale, Grafton, Nipmuc, Northbridge, Blackstone-Millville, and Whitinsville Christian. There will be only one fan allowed per student. There will be no playoff structure. Football, volleyball, and cheerleading will be a floating season from February 22, 2021 – April 25, 2021.

Member Hanratty expressed concern that only 25% of students can return to school but 100% can play sports. He also was concerned about the cost for buses for these sports. He thinks the goal should be to get the students in the classrooms. Mr. Hanratty made a motion to not have primary sports until all the students can return to the classroom. There was no second to the motion.

The Committee was informed that all the coaches have returned and that practice times and days will be staggered. There will be no additional funds expended for buses. It was also explained that BVT will maximize the eligibility for transportation reimbursement.

7.3. Mr. Steele provided an update on BVT Decennial Evaluation. The Committee was informed that the NEASC Evaluation will not be delayed but in fact will follow the previously established schedule. The anticipated decennial visit will take place in the Spring of 2022.

Item 8. Policy Subcommittee Report – M. Fitzpatrick

8.1. The School Committee is in receipt of new policies for the following: Emergency Plans, Interim Policy on COVID Related Issues, Face Covering Policy, Remote Learning, and Remote Learning Addendum. This document includes advance planning for emergencies and disasters. It also establishes interim policies on COVID related issues. There was a section which was worked on by public health experts for face coverings. Masks must cover the nose and mouth and must be worn by all individuals in school buildings, on school grounds, and while riding on school transportation; even when social distancing is observed. Dr. Fitzpatrick expressed his appreciation for all who took part in the development of these documents.

There was discussion about when this policy should be implemented. It was suggested that there should be a compliance period for these policies to be in effect for students. Although the recommendation was made that this be implemented by October 5, 2020, the consensus was that this is too soon. It was suggested that this be broken up into two separate motions; one for policy and one for implementation.

Approval of Policy:

On a motion made by Mr. Bartlett, seconded by Mrs. Mitchell, it was unanimously voted to approve the new policies for the emergency plans, Interim Policy on COVID Related Issues, Face Covering, Remote Learning, and Remote Learning Addendum as written.

Implementation of Policy:

On a motion made by Mr. Koopman, seconded by Mr. Intineralli, it was unanimously voted to have the implementation period be by the next regular school committee meeting which is October 15, 2020; at which point an implementation update will be provided.

Item 9. Superintendent-Director's Report – M. Fitzpatrick

9.1. School Committee members received a document entitled “Little Beavers Enrichment Center Proposal.” This proposal would allow staff to bring their school aged child/children to school and participate in the District’s temporary childcare program on remote learning days. The preliminary fee for participation is proposed at \$15.00 per day. However, all aspects of the program will be modified to incorporate School Committee recommended changes. This program is limited to BVT staff’s children and participation is limited to the duration of time that the employee is on campus. This service will be from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. during regular school days. No children will be on campus without the parent/guardian also on campus. Children must be enrolled in grades 1-7 (ages 7 to 13) and in remote/hybrid learning to be eligible for this program. The employees, or parent, will be responsible for supplying all materials for their child. This includes daily schedule, headphones, classroom supplies, etc. Lunches, snacks, and water will be supplied by employee. The work area for children will be the same each day and the staff member/parent of individual children will be responsible for cleaning and sanitizing the desks, tables, and other items. This service is being offered as a supportive service to the staff, but this service can cease as schools and child services begin returning to normal as determined by the District. The school insurance company indicated that there will be no increase on the rider plan. Based on speaking with staff, it is anticipated that there could be approximately 28 students attending the program.

There was a recommendation to have not only the staff member clean this area but have the school custodian provide cleaning at the end of the day. There will be a cost estimate for the custodial cleaning. A suggestion was made to review the cost of program and see if this should be increased. The goal of this program is to not make revenue. The District will need to set up a separate revolving account for this money. There was a suggestion that a motion be crafted to include an end period of this program.

The Committee would like to have a special meeting on September 24, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. to act on the proposal.

9.2. The Committee was provided with an updated Delineation of the FY21 Subcommittees. There is vacancy on the Capital/Expansion Planning Subcommittee. Thank you to all who are serving on these committees.

9.3. A listing of Academic and Vocational Team Leader Appointments for FY21 was shared with the Committee.

9.4. Renditions of the Biotech & Chemistry Laboratories were presented at the meeting. These lab areas were made possible due to the awarding of the Skills grant in the amount of \$830,106.00.

9.5. The District is in receipt of an email dated September 11, 2020 regarding the CVRF Grant. Dr. Fitzpatrick shared that Valley Tech’s award would be in the amount of \$270,000. The award money must be spent by December 30, 2020. BVT is also receiving money from the partnered communities to assist with Valley Tech’s Distance Remote Learning. There was also an email from the Northbridge Town Manager, Adam Gaudette, regarding the approval of \$45,000 from the Town of Northbridge toward BVT’s CARES Act Funding request. BVT is thankful for those communities who provided funding.

9.6. The Committee is in receipt of a resignation from BVT Cafeteria Cook, Paula Caffrey, effective September 22, 2020.

Item 10. New Business

- BVT will be providing flu shots on campus.
- BVT has won the Markham Award for the 9th time in a row.
- NESDEC Board of Directors' Budget Subcommittee has approved BVT proposed pilot project entitled "Advanced Distance Learning for Career Technical Education" in the amount of \$9,900.00.

Item 11. Items for the Good of the Committee

The monthly compilation of news clippings and correspondence was made available for the School Committee's review.

Item 12. Next Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meeting – J. Hall

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on October 15, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

Item 13. Meeting Closure

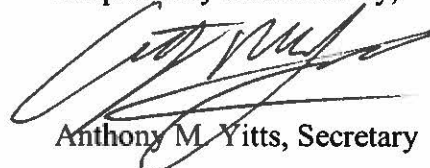
13.1. The meeting was closed as declared by Chairman Hall.

13.2. On a motion by Mr. Broderick, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 p.m.

Listing of Materials Used in the Meeting:

- Item 2.0. Minutes of Regular Meeting of August 20, 2020
- Item 3.1. Treasurer's Report dated August 31, 2020
- Item 5.1. FY 21 Admissions Applicant Status
- Item 5.2. List of New Students for 2020-21 School Year
- Item 6.1. E & D Calculations dated August 24, 2020
- Item 6.2.a. Donation Acceptance
- Item 7.2. BVT Athletic Department Guidelines Fall 2020
- Item 8.1. New Policies
- Item 9.1. Little Beavers Enrichment Center
- Item 9.2. Delineation of Sub Committees FY21
- Item 9.3. Team Leader Appointments FY21
- Item 9.5. Emails dated September 11, 2020:
 - CVRF Grant
 - CARES Act Funding
- Item 9.6.a. Resignation Notice – Paula Caffrey
- Item 10. NESDEC memo dated August 12, 2020
- Item 11. Items for the Good of the Committee

Respectfully submitted by,



Anthony M. Yitts, Secretary