

Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee
Minutes of Regular Meeting
January 18, 2024

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

Joseph M. Hall of Bellingham, Chair
Joseph A. Broderick of Blackstone
Mark J. Potter of Douglas
Anthony M. Yitts of Grafton
Mitchell A. Intinarelli of Hopedale
Chester P. Hanratty, Jr. of Millbury
Gerald M. Finn of Millville, Vice Chair
Jeff T. Koopman of Northbridge
James M. Mitchell of Sutton
Tyler D. Bartlett of Upton
James H. Ebbeling of Uxbridge

Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick, Superintendent-Director
Michele Denise, Vocational Director
Dr. Matthew Connors, Vocational Director
Kerri Baltramaitis, Vocational Director
Sosie DerKosrofia, Student Council Representative
Elise Bogdan, Recording Secretary

Members Absent:

Edward D. Cray, III of Mendon
Paul J. Braza of Milford

Item 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by the Chair, Mr. Hall. Dr. Fitzpatrick informed the Committee that he was notified in advance that Mr. Cray, Mr. Braza, and the District Treasurer, Mr. Pilla, would be unable to attend. Mr. Pilla, who had a previously scheduled engagement, offered to participate remotely via Zoom. Dr. Fitzpatrick said he would present the prepared November 30, 2023, Treasurer's Report on behalf of Mr. Pilla

Item 2. Secretary's Report – A. Yitts

2.1. On a motion by Mr. Yitts seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was unanimously voted to waive reading of the minutes of the regular School Committee meeting of December 14, 2023 and to accept the minutes as written.

Item 3. Treasurer's Report – Dr. M. Fitzpatrick

3.1. On behalf of the District Treasurer, Superintendent-Director Dr. Fitzpatrick presented the Treasurer's Report dated November 30, 2023. Dr. Fitzpatrick noted that the report reflected \$83,000.00 in reimbursable project funds for the oil tank removal. The report reflected an ending balance of \$2,927,046.21 for Total Funds, \$945,101.59 in Project Funds, and \$1,981,944.62 in Local Funds. On a motion by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Broderick, it was unanimously voted to approve the November 30, 2023 Treasurer's Report as presented.

Item 4. Sch. Com. Officers Election/Appointments for 2024

At the request of the Chair, Mr. Hall, the Superintendent-Director, Dr. Fitzpatrick, led the School Committee through the election/appointment process. Terms of service began in January 2024 and would end at the regular meeting held in January 2025.

4.1. Chair: On a motion made by Mr. Broderick and seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was voted to elect Mr. Joseph M. Hall as the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee Chair.

4.2. Vice Chair: On a motion made by Mr. Broderick and seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was voted to elect Mr. Gerald M. Finn as the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee Vice Chair.

4.3. Secretary: Applying his prerogative at the School Committee Chair, Mr. Hall appointed Mr. Anthony M. Yitts as the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee Secretary.

4.4. Assistant Treasurer: Applying his prerogative at the School Committee Chair, Mr. Hall appointed Mr. Chester P. Hanratty, Jr. as the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District Assistant Treasurer.

4.5. Payroll/AP Warrant Signer (one required): Applying his prerogative at the School Committee Chair, Mr. Hall appointed Mr. Hanratty as the Payroll/AP Warrant Signer for the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District.

Alternate Payroll/AP Warrant Signers (two required):

4.6. a. Alternate Payroll/AP Warrant Signer #1: Applying his prerogative at the School Committee Chair, Mr. Hall appointed Mr. Braza as an Alternate Payroll/AP Warrant Signer #1 for the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District.

4.6. b. Alternate Payroll/AP Warrant Signer #2: Applying his prerogative at the School Committee Chair, Mr. Hall appointed Mr. Ebbeling as an Alternate Payroll/AP Warrant Signer #2 for the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District.

4.6. c. Alternate Payroll/AP Warrant Signer #3: Applying his prerogative at the School Committee Chair, Mr. Hall appointed Mr. Cray as an Alternate Payroll/AP Warrant Signer #3 for the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District.

Item 5. Student Recognitions - Dr. M. Fitzpatrick

5.1. The M.A.S.S. Certificate of Academic Excellence (Superintendent's Scholars Award) is awarded annually to two senior students based on their academic and vocational standing. Dr. Fitzpatrick congratulated the Class of 2024 recipients on their academic achievements:

a. Ella Rogozenski of Northbridge (Engineering & Robotics) is a recipient of the Superintendent's Scholars Award.

b. Laney Beahn of Douglas (Engineering & Robotics) is a Superintendent's Scholars Award recipient.

5.2. Dr. Fitzpatrick recognize the following students who recently earned the highest

award in Scouts (Boy Scouts of America), the Eagle Scout Award:

a. Jacob Giancola is a resident of Upton (BSA Troop 132) and a senior in our Engineering & Robotics program. Jacob's Eagle Scout project involved constructing a Bocce Ball Court at Saint Gabriel's Church. Dr. Fitzpatrick said Jacob notified him that he had a work conflict and is arranging to attend the next school committee meeting in March.

b. Mitchell Trottier is a resident of Sutton (BSA Troop 243) and a senior in our Automotive Technology program. Mitchell's Eagle Scout project involved landscaping enhancements at the Dudley Gendron Post 414.

c. Luke Tellier is a resident of Blackstone (BSA Troop 1) and a senior in our HVAC&R program. Luke's Eagle Scout project involved cleaning the fishing area, installing benches, and constructing a storage shed at the Blackstone Valley Boys and Girls Club.

Dr. Fitzpatrick congratulated Mitchell Trottier, and Luke Tellier on earning the rank of Eagle Scout.

Item 6. Comments by Student Council Representatives - Ellie Poitras & Sosie DerKosrofian

Sosie informed the Committee that Ellie had a Doctor's appointment and could not attend. First, Ellie informed the Committee that the Student Council holiday drive was a huge success. She also reports that the Council has planned two upcoming events to make dog toys with seniors. They look forward to an annual winter retreat with planned community service projects. In March, some students will attend the Massachusetts Association of Student Councils (MASC) Spring Conference in Hyannis, MA. The Council is also working on the National Gold Council of Excellence and hoping to earn that for the sixth year.

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

7.1. Mrs. Denise informed the Committee that Mr. Steele could not attend the meeting. Therefore, the Vocational Directors (Michele Denise, Dr. Matthew Connors, and Kerri Baltramaitis) would present on his behalf. Mrs. Denise presented the Committee with a copy of the preliminary proposed 2024-2025 School Calendar. On a motion made by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Hanratty, it was voted to approve the proposed 2024-2025 School Calendar as presented with four remote days.

Dr. Fitzpatrick noted that since 1997, BVT has voluntarily operated under an extended school year calendar of 193 teaching days, so even if the District used four remote days, BVT would exceed the 180-day minimum school year requirement.

7.2. Mrs. Denise informed the Committee that the 2024-2025 Program of Studies is available on the school website, and course recommendations are made through the PowerSchool portal. Both are used in course selection and career planning.

7.3. 2023-2024 Demographic Update/Admissions: Mrs. Denise distributed two handouts at the meeting: a selected population report (school) from the DESE School Profile reports for

2023-24, 2022-23, and 2020-21. The report reflects the diverse population (first language, not English, English language learners, students with disabilities, high needs, and low income) compared to the sending towns and the district average. The other DESE report and handout were the enrollment by race for 2023-24, 2022-23, and 2021-22. The report reflects the diverse population (African American, Asian, Hispanic, White, Native American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic) compared to the sending towns and the district average.

7.4. Campus Changes: Dr. Connors updated the Committee on the grant-funded dust collector timeline (removal and installation) for the Construction Technology program. A meeting was held to determine the least disruptive window for the 8-week process, which is scheduled to begin on March 18, 2024, and temporarily displace some students in March and April. Plans for relocation of students include looking at field trips and outside jobs if weather permits, in addition to on-campus renovations for a building in the backlot for shed building projects.

7.5. MASS CTE New Teacher Award: Dr. Connors informed the Committee that the recipient of the MASS CTE New Teacher Award was Michael Godowski, Auto Technology Instructor. Mr. Godowski has been a tremendous asset to the program and was instrumental in bringing in the new instructor, Bryan Erickson.

7.6. MASS CTE Vocational Student Award: Dr. Connors informed the Committee that Eleanor (Ellie) Poitras, the Student Council Representative to the District School Committee and an accomplished student, is the recipient of the MASS CTE Vocational Student Award.

7.7. MASS CTE Friend of Vocational Technical Student Award: Dr. Connors shared that Steve Christy Sr. at LEI, for all of the incredible field work at BVT, is the recipient of the MASS CTE Friend of Vocational Technical Student Award.

7.8. Out-of-State Field Trip Approval presented by Mrs. Denise:

a. On a motion made by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was unanimously voted to approve an out-of-state field trip request for the Ski & Snowboard Club (40-50 students and 4 chaperones) to travel by bus to Waterville Valley Ski Resort in Waterville Valley, NH on Saturday, March 2, 2024.

7.9. Freshman Exploratory Statement: Dr. Connors distributed a handout at the meeting, which included an exploratory status report for the Class of 2027. 94% of students received a top-three shop choice (297 students). 6% of students received a shop choice lower than the top three (18 students). An interesting data point: 172 students (54% of the freshman class) changed their top choice at some point between the initial shop selection and the November Career Night. The handout also included charts of the first-choice shop selections for the Class of 2027 and trends by Class from the Class of 2024 to the Class of 2027.

Dr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Hall thanked the Vocational Directors for the detailed report and

the insightful formation.

Item 8. Budget Subcommittee Report - J. Hall

8.1. First Round Line Item Series: 3000, 4000, and 7000: Mr. Hall, Budget Subcommittee Chair, informed the Committee that the Budget Subcommittee met on January 4th, 11th, and 18th and has reviewed the 3000, 4000, and 7000 series. They are anticipating that Governor Healey will file her FY25 budget next week. Mr. Hanratty mentioned field conditions needing repair in the future.

Item 9. Superintendent-Director's Report - Michael F. Fitzpatrick

9.1. An FY24 Grants to Date document was shared with the Committee. The FY24 total to date listed, as of January 10, 2024, was \$885,842, with an additional \$190,950 in progress.

9.2. Dr. Fitzpatrick reminded the Committee that a National Transportation Security (TSA)/Vendetti Bus Company training exercise (EXIS Tabletop Exercise) will held at BVT on January 31, 2024. The Committee was invited to attend and observe.

a. The District received a \$5,000 financial donation from Vendetti Bus Company to be partially applied to culinary expenses associated with being the host site for the training exercise on January 31, 2024.

9.3. BVT Van Donations

a. BVT is in receipt of a financial donation supporting a school passenger van from UniBank in the amount of \$4,000.

b. BVT is in receipt of a donation in the amount of \$2,500 from bankHometown for the school's passenger van program

9.4. Analysis of the Governor's State of the State Address, which was delivered on January 17, 2024, was shared with the Committee. The Governor's new endeavors are ambitious; the budget is expected to be filed next week, and the Student Opportunity Act, which will be supported, primarily targets urban schools.

a. Correspondence of a letter to the Governor dated January 9, 2024 to consider not to impose an admissions lottery at vocational-technical and agriculture high schools in Massachusetts was shared with the Committee.

9.5. Notification of Resignations & Retirements

a. A Notification of retirement letter dated 12/6/24 from Rosario O'Neil, Spanish Teacher, Foreign Language, was accepted with an effective retirement date of 8/28/24.

b. A Notification of resignation letter dated 1/2/24 from David Chipman, Custodian, was accepted with an effective date of 1/5/24.

c. A Notification of retirement letter dated 1/2/24 from Amy LaFrance, Administrative Assistant Student Services, was accepted with an effective retirement date of 5/31/24.

Item 10. New Business

Donation for approval: On behalf of Nicole Ferguson, Business Manager, the Superintendent-Director Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick presented a donation: a 2014 Toyota Prius from Thomas F. Keaney. The vehicle would be used for instructional and valuable training purposes in the automotive programs at BVT. On a motion by Mr. Broderick, seconded by Mr.

Intinarelli, it was voted to accept the donation as presented.

Dr. Fitzpatrick informed the Committee that the Massachusetts School Building Authority is inviting schools to pursue reimbursement under its Accelerated Repair Program (ARP) after a temporary pause in 2023. The reopening in 2024 is for the partial or full replacement of roofs and windows/doors. Dr. Fitzpatrick suggested that the District take advantage of the opportunity; given the state’s timeline, he would ask the School Committee to consider meeting next month, possibly February 15, 2024, to look at eligibility to participate in the ARP.

Item 11. Items for the Good of the Committee:

The monthly compilation of news clippings and correspondence packet was provided at the meeting for members to review individually. Articles of interest were noted: Students across the Commonwealth asked for financial literacy classes, which BVT offers its students. The School Committee of the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School is proposing a new school building project to serve its students better students. The current project plan is estimated to cost approximately \$445 million. Dr. Fitzpatrick said he is delighted to see them expand their ability to serve their students in a modern facility. Comparatively and elsewhere, BVT has been cautious and conservative in its request for funding.

Item 12. *Executive Session Per MGL Chpt. 30A, §21(a) # 2

On a motion by Mr. Broderick, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, a roll call vote was taken to go into executive session at 7:06 p.m. because discussion of this subject in open session would be detrimental to the School District. The roll call was as follows:

Mr. Hall – Yes	Mr. Broderick – Yes	Mr. Finn – Yes
Mr. Potter – Yes	Mr. Yitts – Yes	Mr. Intinarelli – Yes
Mr. Hanratty – Yes	Mr. Mitchell – Yes	Mr. Bartlett – Yes
Mr. Ebbeling – Yes	Mr. Koopman – Yes	

On a motion by Mr. Broderick, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, a roll call vote was taken to come out of executive session at 7:18 p.m. The roll call was as follows:

Mr. Hall – Yes	Mr. Broderick – Yes	Mr. Finn – Yes
Mr. Potter – Yes	Mr. Yitts – Yes	Mr. Intinarelli – Yes
Mr. Hanratty – Yes	Mr. Mitchell – Yes	Mr. Bartlett – Yes
Mr. Ebbeling – Yes	Mr. Koopman – Yes	

Item. 13. Executive Session Items

13.1. Decide: Release Status of Exec. Session Minutes of December 14, 2023:

On a motion by Mr. Yitts, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was voted to release the minutes of the executive session of December 14, 2023 because the subject matter would not be detrimental to the District.

13.2. Act Upon Deliberations Conducted During Executive Session: On the recommendation of the Negotiation Subcommittee and by a roll call vote, the deliberations in the executive session with non-union personnel were voted and approved.

Item 14. Next Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meeting - J. Hall

The next regularly scheduled School Committee meeting will be held on March 14, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

Item 15. Meeting Closure:

15.1. The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 7:19 p.m.

15.2. On a motion by Mr. Broderick, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was voted to adjourn at 7:19 p.m.

Listing of materials used in the meeting:

Item 2.1. Minutes of Meeting of December 14, 2023

Item 3.1. Treasurer's Report dated November 30, 2023

Item 4.1. Suggested Motion: District School Committee Chair

Item 4.2. Suggested Motion: District School Committee Vice-Chair

Item 4.3. Appointment: District School Committee Secretary

Item 4.4. Appointment: District School Committee Assistant Treasurer

Item 4.5. Appointment: District School Committee Payroll/AP Warrant Signer

Item 4.6.a. Appointment: District School Committee Alternate Payroll/AP Warrant Signer 1

Item 4.6.b. Appointment: District School Committee Alternate Payroll/AP Warrant Signer 2

Item 7.1. Proposed 2024-2025 School Calendar

Item 7.3. 2023-2024 Demographic Update/Admissions (handouts available at meeting)

Item 7.8.a. Out-of-State Field Trip: Ski Club-Waterville Valley Ski Resort: March 2, 2024

Item 7.9. Freshman Exploratory Statement (handout available at meeting)

Item 9.1. Summary FY24 Grants and Donations

Item 9.2.a. Vendetti Bus Company Financial Donation

Item 9.3.a. BVT Van Donation – UniBank

Item 9.3.b. BVT Van Donation – bankHometown

Item 9.4.a. Correspondence to the Governor

Item 9.5.a. Notification of Retirement: Rosario O'Neil, Spanish Teacher, Foreign Language

Item 9.5.b. Notification of Resignation: David Chipman, Custodian

Item 9.5.c. Notification of Retirement: Amy LaFrance, Administrative Asst. Student Services

Item 10. New Business: Donation Acceptance

Item 11. Items for the Good of the Committee

Respectfully submitted by,

Anthony M. Yitts, Secretary